

# IIEP NEWSLETTER

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## Improving school management: a promise and a challenge

**I**MPROVING the quality of schools remains high on the agenda of governments all over the world. In recent years, more attention has been given to the need to improve school management and strengthen the role of the headteachers. Research findings as well as recent policy reforms back this up. Much research has demonstrated that the quality of education depends primarily on the way schools are managed, more than on the abundance of available resources, and that the capacity of schools to improve teaching and learning is strongly influenced by the quality of the leadership provided by the headteacher. At the same time, policy-makers – in Asia as elsewhere – have used these research results to move towards more school-based management and autonomy. These reforms invariably affect internal school management and the role of the headteacher. They give more responsibility to the schools and demand new non-traditional managerial skills from the headteacher. However, change in the schools and classrooms is very limited for the following *two* reasons:

*Firstly*, in many countries, this policy has not been the expression of internal pressure or debate, but rather the result of the demonstration effect

*When faced with complex problems, a simple solution is very attractive. Improving the quality of schools is a difficult challenge, and one of the more popular solutions resides in strengthening the capacities of headteachers. 'A good headteacher guarantees a good school', they say. While this contains a certain truth, concentrating capacity-building efforts on headteachers alone is not sufficient. A recent seminar on 'Better school management: the role of the headteacher', organized in Shanghai from 19 to 21 September 2000 by the Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning (ANTRIEP) provided some useful insights on the matter.*

of seemingly successful external models. As a result, these policies are not necessarily adapted or properly understood by those mainly concerned,

the headteachers themselves. Thus, before implementing a new policy, public awareness needs to be raised,

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# Headway for headteachers

**T**HE 'moment of truth' in education is what children learn. Research and experience both show that learning is not attributable to one particular factor such as textbooks, curriculum or even teachers. It depends on the whole context of learning, the combination of an ensemble of inputs. The outcome of schooling is contextual.

Similarly, improving the overall performance of an orchestra does not depend on improving isolated components, such as a better instrument or a better musician; it mainly depends on how the ensemble performs together and how all the different elements are orchestrated. Thus, just as an orchestra's performance relies largely on the quality of its conductor, so school or pupil performance depends mainly on the headteacher.

As far as headteachers are concerned, two other sets of factors need to be taken into account: how much leeway they have for action and what are the demands made on them.

The latitude for action is increasing. *First*, as school autonomy has increased, more depends on the headteacher. The headteacher has been given more freedom of choice, more power of discretion. But when more authority is delegated, more responsibility needs to be taken. Headteachers have to define what the local needs are and how to adapt system-wide requirements to their school and its environment. Moreover, school programmes include not only academic topics but also a wider social agenda.

*Second*, as schools become increasingly democratic, more actors are given a say in the decision-making process.

Where power moves interested parties follow. When more authority is given to schools, teachers become more involved – they do not just want to take orders, they want to take part. The headteachers cannot just give instructions – they must listen to their

colleagues, solicit their views and draw on their experience. The parents as well want to be heard – after all, schools are entrusted with what they cherish most, their children's future. Moreover, not only are children better educated, but so are their parents who often have strong opinions about how their children should be taught and how schools should be run. Local political authorities and interest groups also have ideas about what schools should and should not do.

Needless to say, the fact that all these parties are interested, does not mean that all their interests converge. On the contrary, they are often opposed. This means that although headteachers have gained more autonomy, they also have to meet increasingly diverse demands from all sides and are often caught in conflict. Headteachers get headaches.

The school works on children as an ensemble, through the overall context it provides. But then the school context itself is also changing.

Hence, simply granting headteachers more authority and leaving them to fend for themselves in a more demanding environment is insufficient and ineffective. Good schools require good teachers and principals, high standards, adequate resources and real accountability. Demands must be followed by assistance so that they can be met, standards must be followed by insistence so that they will be kept. Headteachers must therefore be placed in a more enabling environment, by training, support and supervision. They need to be trained, given regular support and supervision.

How can this be done? IIEP is currently undertaking research with several partner institutions to find the best ways of providing this support and creating an suitable environment for headteachers. Putting the ideas into practice is the purpose of the training activities we propose to implement together.

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# The impact of HIV/AIDS on education

*In some countries of Southern Africa, nearly one adult out of three is infected with HIV/AIDS. This alarming figure gives an idea of the calamity that has hit Africa and is threatening other regions of the world. Fortunately, the rate of prevalence is not so high in many other countries of sub-Saharan Africa – 8 per cent of adults are infected on average in the continent. Nevertheless, the number of newly infected persons is increasing fast in several other regions. And in its wake, the pandemic is leaving a rapidly increasing number of orphans and exacting a heavy toll on many education systems.*

In less than two decades, the HIV/AIDS crisis has been transformed from a medical curiosity to an international emergency that has impacts as devastating as any war. Unlike other epidemics, it primarily affects young adults, and although it strikes the poor, it also heavily affects the skilled, the trained, the educated, the income-generators, and the family care-givers, i.e. the groups most vital for development. It not only obstructs any goals set by *Education For All*, and hampers a nation's overall development, but reverses these by destroying

productive capacity and social connectedness.

The 'Impact of HIV/AIDS on Education' workshop, held at the IIEP in Paris on 27-29 September 2000, focussed specifically on how the functions of education systems, formal and nonformal, were being affected by the HIV/AIDS crisis. The main purpose of the workshop was to exchange experiences on the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on the education system, identify measures that have been introduced to cope with this from the community to the national level, and identify the strategies to be applied to introduce such measures successfully. Other areas covered in the workshop included discussing some of the methodological problems faced by researchers in assessing the impact of HIV/AIDS on education, identifying training needs of education administrators and planners, and identifying knowledge gaps on HIV/AIDS and education in order to determine areas for further research.

The 50 participants contributing to the discussion were ministry

of education planners and officials including two ministers of education; researchers from the field; and personnel from international donor agencies. Most participants were from the heavily HIV/AIDS affected countries in Africa, but some colleagues working in Asia also attended.

## Main areas of concern

Several urgent areas were raised in the workshop including:

- the slowness of ministries and international agencies to recognize and respond to the severity of the HIV/AIDS pandemic as it devastates education systems;
- difficulty in obtaining accurate data to determine the impact of HIV/AIDS on the education system including: trauma, stigma and death of teachers, managers, administrators, and children in vulnerable groups; loss of organizational and management capacity; and macroeconomic, household and other costs and their effects on communities and the larger country;
- difficulty in not being overwhelmed with the trauma, to maintain a sense of hope and proactive purpose, and to re-energise personnel;
- lack of resources and capacity to gather routine system data (both quantitative and qualitative);
- lack of resources and capacity to aggressively design, implement and



It is estimated that 10.4 million children below the age of 15 will be orphaned by the end of 2000 because of AIDS

monitor interventions and to work to prevent new infection;

➤ the need to think of different educational and supportive structures, particularly at the local level, but within a national public campaign to combat and cope with the HIV/AIDS impact; and

➤ while there is a lot of information still needed to be collected to give a more accurate understanding of the impact of the pandemic, sufficient is known to mobilize actions. A parallel approach of gathering further accurate information, as well as implementing and monitoring new measures is required.

## Areas of impact

HIV/AIDS seems to have greatest impact on four main areas of the education sector. It affects education from a **demand** point of view – there is less demand on the current formal system because there are fewer children seeking to enter or stay in the education system. This is due to the following: there are fewer children born; there are greater numbers of sick children; more children are unable to attend school for economic reasons; and more children must leave the education system due to changed familial, social, and economic circumstances.

The capacity of the education system to **supply** schooling services is also decreasing. This is because large numbers of teachers and other staff may become infected, resulting in impaired performance and high attrition rates in the system. In addition, as the impact of HIV/AIDS is felt on the productive sector of the economy and the health budget, government revenues will decline and/or be reallocated – resulting in a smaller education budget. The overall dealing with widespread trauma can also overwhelm individuals and communities. The nonformal education system will play an increasingly important role to help provide meaningful educational services to children, especially to vulnerable

groups such as girls and orphans affected by trauma and stigma.

The **quality of education** is also affected negatively by this phenomenon. There are fewer teachers working; they may be less motivated and affected by family trauma or illness themselves; and many families experience decline in purchasing power, making the acquisition of books etc. harder. In addition, reductions in the education budget are most likely to affect non-salary expenditure – resulting in less teaching input. Loss of central and provincial administrators/managers, experienced teacher mentors, and teacher educators in universities and colleges also affects the quality of planning, training, and support.

**Equality of opportunities** will most likely be affected negatively. Due to biological and social factors, female students seem to be adversely affected sooner than male students. School safety, social stigmas and lack of empowerment issues are of increasing concern for girls in the current formal school system. In addition, disadvantaged groups will have fewer resources on which to call in order to confront the pandemic and its effects, resulting over time in a more direct relationship between poverty and HIV/AIDS prevalence.

The challenge that countries affected by the pandemic face is how to protect both the formal and nonformal education system from its ravages, and simultaneously adapt to the new needs that the context has created.

## Recommendations

A foundation for action needs to be put in place to enable mobilization to occur. To move ahead, several suggestions were made at the workshop including:

- secure committed and informed leadership for a long-term national programme across sectors;
- obtain further accurate information for what's happening in the system, to whom, and under what circumstances;
- analyze the information and have it fed into the decision-making process;

➤ share information extensively to various groups in ways that can be easily understood;

➤ develop consensus where possible within education departments – central and regional, and with the help of local practitioners;

➤ establish necessary structures and processes within the system – HIV/AIDS initiatives need to be integrated across all core functions of the education sectors, formal and nonformal;

➤ establish needed personnel policies for those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS;

➤ mobilize resources – get dedicated flexible budget lines within Ministry programmes to put resources where and when they are most needed in local administrations and with NGOs, and create partnerships with funding agencies to get additional resources; and

➤ strengthen partnerships between groups including politicians, government officials, NGOs, churches, academics, the media, unions, Parent/Teacher Associations (PTAs), local leaders and funding agencies. Listen to what teachers and district officials have to say about what needs to be done, how it can be done, and the role that they, themselves, should play.

As measures are introduced in order to stabilize and protect core education functions, there is a continued need to obtain further accurate information about what is happening in the field; to share information widely on what works, what doesn't and why; and to build capacity to cope. These three priority areas form the basis for IIEP's ongoing *HIV/AIDS and Education programme*.

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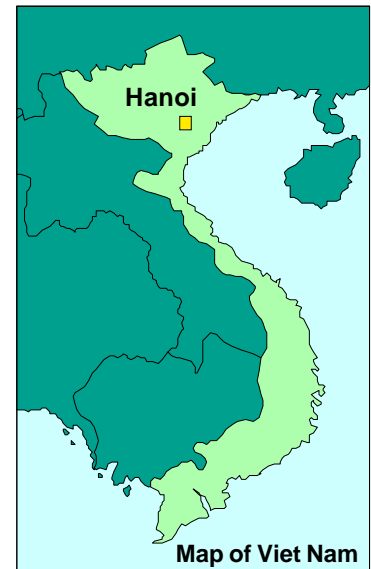
### Further reading:

Michael J. Kelly. 2000. *Planning for education in the context of HIV/AIDS*. Fundamentals of Educational Planning, No. 66. Paris: IIEP/ UNESCO, 108p. ISBN 92-803-1198-0

Copies can be obtained through IIEP Publications and Dissemination, [information@iiep.unesco.org](mailto:information@iiep.unesco.org)

## Workshop prepares large-scale sample design for Viet Nam

*Education systems in most countries of the world are increasingly being seen as providing pathways to national economic development. This trend, coupled with the enormous expenditures that are devoted to education, has precipitated demands by governments and the public for higher levels of scrutiny and accountability concerning the quality of education. Educational planners can only address these demands if they are able to employ modern research methodologies to monitor the general conditions of schooling and to evaluate the educational achievements of students.*



**M**ECHANISMS for monitoring and evaluating education systems have already been put in place by most developed countries. In recent years, a number of developing countries have also shown interest in launching monitoring studies as part of an overall strategy for making informed decisions about planning the quality of education.

One of the fundamental requirements for ensuring that these kinds of studies provide valid data for educational planning purposes is to apply scientific probability sampling procedures – in which samples of schools and students are selected with known probabilities from a national target population. The application of these sampling procedures prevents the occurrence of major biases in sample estimates, and also ensures that sample estimates are accompanied by the correct measures of stability.

In early 2000, the Viet Nam Ministry of Education and Training commenced planning for one of the largest surveys of the quality of education ever conducted in South-East Asia. This survey will gather data during 2001 about the conditions of schooling and the quality of educational outcomes from 70,000 Grade 5 students and 7,000 teachers in 3,500 primary schools across Viet Nam's 61

Provinces. The Ministry recognized the need to build the capacity of its educational planners to apply the most modern sampling procedures to this very important research initiative and therefore joined forces with the IIEP to organize an intensive training workshop on the topic of 'Computer-based methods for the design and evaluation of survey sampling procedures in large-scale studies of the quality of education'. Other ministries of education in South-East Asia also expressed an interest in having their educational planners trained in this area, and so it was decided to extend participation in the workshop beyond the borders of Viet Nam.

The workshop was held in Hanoi from 30 October to 3 November 2000 and was attended by 25 educational researchers and planners from 10 countries (Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam).

A decision was made to focus the training provided at the workshop on a 'real' problem in survey sampling: the design and evaluation of a national sample of schools for use by Viet Nam in its forthcoming Grade 5 survey. After undertaking an analysis of the technical, logistical, and financial constraints associated with this study,

the participants used the IIEP's specialized sampling software (SAMDEM and IIEPJACK) to explore computer-based sample design options and to examine techniques for the evaluation of each option. The final sample design selected for application in Viet Nam employed a stratified two-stage design in which schools were selected at the first stage with probability proportional to their Grade 5 enrolments – followed by the selection of a simple random sample of 20 Grade 5 students in each sample school.

On the last day of the workshop the sample design for Viet Nam's study was finalized and presented to representatives of the Ministry of Education and Training. The workshop participants were delighted to have had this unique opportunity to work together as a cross-national team on the production of a very complex large-scale sample design that would have immediate application in Viet Nam. The workshop also provided an excellent test of the performance of the IIEP's specialized sampling software, and the feedback provided by participants will be used to revise and improve these valuable planning tools.

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## Improving school management ...

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both within the society and within the school community in particular.

*Secondly* – and more crucially – policy declarations are not accompanied by policy measures at central level which strengthen the position of the headteacher. In most countries, selection and recruitment practices have not changed, capacity-building initiatives cover few staff and professional development opportunities, if they exist, remain scarce. Headteachers, especially in the more remote areas, are isolated and receive little or no support from the administration. In many countries, there are fewer incentives to become or remain a headteacher. The overall result of the weak reforms is that there is a wide discrepancy between the current unchanged profile of the headteacher and the ideal profile of an innovative pedagogical leader.

This should not inhibit policy-makers from giving schools more autonomy and highlighting the importance of the headteacher. However, it does underline the urgent need to develop an integrated policy at central level aimed at improving school management and strengthening the role of headteachers. Such a policy

should:

- clarify the areas of autonomy and the levels of accountability so that headteachers feel supported rather than overburdened;
- accompany such autonomy and accountability with a strong and consistent support system, especially for newly-appointed and/or isolated headteachers;
- improve recruitment and selection procedures encouraging the early identification of potential candidates and introducing a system of mentoring by experienced innovative headteachers;
- develop a motivating career path, by offering professional development opportunities and strengthening in-service training;
- set up a mutual support system and discussion forum for headteachers.

Some countries have already implemented some of these solutions. In Korea, recruitment patterns have changed in order to attract younger candidates and a scheme has been set up to allow some school communities a say in their selection. In Sri Lanka, a 'school-based management policy' has redefined the areas of responsibility at the different management levels, including that of headteachers. In Malaysia, a system of early identification of promising future headteachers was recently developed. The

selected candidates are given training which includes mentoring by experienced headteachers, before starting their job. The most comprehensive efforts have been made in Hong Kong and different states in Australia, but the challenge for most countries remains to turn piecemeal and uncoordinated reform efforts into a global policy framework.

Setting up and implementing such a new policy will encounter different obstacles. The number of headteachers is daunting: about 10,000 in Sri Lanka, some 200,000 in Pakistan and over a million in China. Training such numbers will require creativity. At the same time, it should be kept in mind that the headteacher is only one of the actors, and that his/her interests do not always coincide with those of the teachers or the community. Policies such as putting school budgets in the hands of the communities (done in some Indian districts) gain little sympathy among school staff, while strengthening in-school supervision might be popular among headteachers, but less so among teachers.

Many participants highlighted the difficulty of motivating headteachers. The strongest motivation seems to lie not so much in the financial incentives, but in seeing their own school improve. The lack of power which incapacitates their ability to improve their school is demoralizing. But giving them more autonomy has led in several countries, such as the USA and the United Kingdom, to an unwillingness of staff to take on headteacher positions because of the workload and stress involved.

What is also a headache for policy-makers, is the variety of different contexts in which headteachers work depending on the size and level of the school, the socio-economic development of the community, the support received from the inspectorate, and so on. Adapting policies to these different contexts is intricate. The problem becomes even more difficult, when capacity-building programmes need to be developed, as the background characteristics of each headteacher need to be taken into account. This is



Around the table at the September 2000 Antriep meeting in Shanghai

linked to perhaps the most intricate issue to solve: can we define an ideal profile of a headteacher, which will guide policy-reform and capacity-building activities. Much discussion went on in the seminar on: should a headteacher be a leader or a manager; should he/she be strong in pedagogy, administration, public-relations, personnel and financial management or in all of this? A single ideal profile might be counterproductive since so much depends on the characteristics

of particular schools, the level of school autonomy and the culture of each country.

While reforming school management offers a complex challenge, there are several reasons for hope: a policy consensus stipulates that more responsibilities and resources should be given to schools to guarantee lasting change; several successful innovations have, at little cost, led to more effectiveness in the way central ministries manage schools and headteachers; and, finally,

many headteachers have succeeded, against all odds, in transforming their schools into small centres of excellence. In the coming months, member institutions of the ANTRIEP network, including IIEP, plan to examine what has made these successes possible, how to reproduce them and what role capacity-building institutions should play in order to turn these into general practice.

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## ANTRIEP – an update on the facts

**T**HE Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning (ANTRIEP) was created in 1995 with an overall objective of developing a forum for regular interaction, sharing experiences and moving towards national capacity building through collaborative research and training activities in the region. The network has assumed credibility and respect among academics, policy-makers and national governments in Asia through its consistent and regular activities over the past five years since its creation.

The ANTRIEP *Newsletter*, published bi-annually by the network, is a medium to share and disseminate experiences of member institutions on selected topics of their interest. The *Newsletter* has played an important role in keeping the network alive, in planning activities jointly, informing a wide general public about the network and promoting its objectives among policy-makers at the national level. The circulation of the *Newsletter* has quadrupled since its first edition in 1996.

The network organizes regular seminars and meetings which provide an opportunity for face-to-face interaction between professionals, member institutions, policy-makers and experts from the region who jointly plan the network's future activities. The topics selected for the successive seminars – *Decentralization* (Delhi, 1995), *Supervision and support services* (Seoul, 1997), *School efficiency* (Colombo, 1998) and *Better school management* (Shanghai, 2000) – have been attracting increasing attention. The network publishes and widely disseminates a series of booklets which include reports of the seminars and selected papers presented at the seminar. The most recent publication in this series is the report of the Colombo meeting entitled *Improving school efficiency: the Asian experience*<sup>1</sup>.

From the very beginning, member institutions have been involved in collaborative research. A research study on *Supervision and support services in Asia*<sup>2</sup>, involving several member institutions, was completed and a report published which includes country experiences and lessons relevant to the whole region. A new, slightly more ambitious, collaborative project involving all ANTRIEP members has recently been launched. It relates to one of the major challenges facing ministries of education in the Asian region, namely improving the quality of schools by changing the ways in which they are managed. The project entitled *Improving*

*school management in Asian countries: capacity building of headteachers* includes the preparation of national diagnoses, case studies on innovative experiences, the design and development of training materials, frequent meetings to share research findings, the organization of training-of-trainers programmes, and finally the integration of the experience gained into national training programmes.

The growth of the network has now reached a level of maturity and the member institutions have become more active in the network activities over a period of time. Many member institutions benefited from the joint activities which have both encouraged them to undertake research and strengthen their capacity to do so. In certain cases their association with the network has allowed them to improve credibility in their own national context.

One of the most important and positive signs of the network's attaining maturity is the commencement of self-directed activities initiated by the member institutions themselves. Many member institutions have signed bilateral agreements between institutions with common interests to organize joint training programmes, exchange visits and participate in the programmes organized by other member institutions. Another positive sign is the move towards creating a sub-network of institutions within the same country. These moves towards bilateral co-operation and the creation of sub-networks are the encouraging signs of facilitating and promoting the network's objectives in a more sustained fashion in the future than in the past.

At present, ANTRIEP has 17 member institutions, including IIEP, from 10 countries (Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, and Sri Lanka). NIEPA<sup>3</sup> in New Delhi acts as the focal point and the current chairperson of the network is the Director of Shanghai Institute of Human Resource Development, China.

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<sup>1</sup> *Improving school efficiency: the Asian experience*. Report of the ANTRIEP meeting, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 15-17 December 1998. Paris: UNESCO/IIEP. 2000. ISBN 92-803-1195-6. 186p.

<sup>2</sup> *Supervision support services in Asia. Vol. 1: A comparative analysis; Vol. 2: National diagnoses*. G.Carron, A. De Grauwe, R.Govinda. Paris: UNESCO/IIEP. 1998. 97p. ISBN 92-803-1172

<sup>3</sup> National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration.

## Training school supervisors in Argentina

In order to construct an effective school supervision system, two basic conditions need to be fulfilled. *First*, the necessary structures and resources should be set up reforming existing norms and regulations, and technological resources should be allocated enabling inspectors to fulfill their new tasks. *Second*, these reforms can only be effective if the know-how and attitudes of school supervisors also change. Curriculum development requires pedagogical, leadership and problem-solving skills as well as experience in producing and using information, teamwork, the management of human resources, etc. At the same time, supervisors' attitudes need to change and their role and position in the education system redefined.

A study of the working conditions and qualification requirements of supervisors in some provinces of Argentina was undertaken this year by IIEP-Buenos Aires. It has helped to clarify the sort of training school supervisors will need in order to face the challenges of basic education in the coming century.

The results of the study showed that not only the level of formal qualifications of most inspectors is relatively low, but also that modern information technology resources are not widely used (less than a third have a computer in their office).

The analysis also provided infor-

*What is expected of school supervisors in Argentina today? The reformers clearly intend to enhance their guidance and technico-pedagogical assistance role. This means that the work of supervisors will become much less administrative and more concerned with curriculum development. As the managerial autonomy of schools increases and schoolheads take on more responsibility for decisions, the traditional role of a school supervisor becomes obsolete.*

mation on the size and type of training demand. Although school supervisors generally agree on the overall need for further training, opinions differ when it comes to individual training requirements. Only 42 per cent of those interviewed (particularly the younger ones) consider their training 'inadequate' or 'extremely inadequate' for the task.

As regards the type of training, most supervisors prefer formal face-to-face courses. They consider it more appropriate than distance learning courses or the more formal under- or post-graduate instruction. Apart from formal training, supervisors put a lot of value on self-learning processes such as *reading* and *on-the-job experience*. Among school supervisors, there is a general feeling that their know-how is under-utilized and that their experience should be more linked to formal training, whether pre- or in-service.

The study also produced data on the topics to be included in supervisor training as well as the institutions best equipped to provide it. At the same time,

supervisors stated what aspects should be highlighted by further training programmes and the best ways of stimulating participation.

In the light of the study's findings, educational reform should place special emphasis on supervisor training. Due consideration should be given to the importance of face-to-face courses and on-the-job experience working with other school supervisors, headteachers, and the staff of central education administrations.

Finally, it is worth remembering that the opinions of supervisors are just one of the inputs needed to determine a training policy. It should also take account of other important factors such as provincial education trends and the resources available.

As part of this project, a team of school supervisors and headteachers from San Luis Province in Argentina who took part in the survey will be visiting Europe in February 2001 to study European education systems (see p. 14).

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### IIEP-BUENOS AIRES STARTS ITS THIRD REGIONAL COURSE

**T**HE third *Regional Course in Educational Policy Planning* organized by IIEP-Buenos Aires for education planners and managers in Latin America and the Caribbean has started. This year there are 25 regular participants from Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela, and a visiting trainee from Spain. The aim of the course is to

provide participants with technical tools for diagnosis, planning, implementation, and management of educational policies at the national and local levels. It also introduces them to concepts for analyzing the rapidly changing environment in which the region's education systems operate.

The course commences with an in-country distance-learning phase which the participants undertake in their

respective home countries, and then continues on location in Buenos Aires for three months. On completion of the IIEP-BA course, a few participants will integrate IIEP's Advanced Training Programme in Paris. □

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## Providing basic technical skills for disadvantaged youth in Latin America



*As working environments evolve at a pace only a selected few can follow, and demands steadily increase for an education more tailored to the real demands of today's 'virtual' world, how can youth already at an educational disadvantage acquire the basic technical skills they need to find jobs? A recent IIEP seminar in Uruguay discussed growing concerns on this issue and analyzed some interesting innovative programmes in Latin America which provide food for thought ... and future action.*

**C**ONCERN on how to provide basic technical skills for disadvantaged youth within the context of vocational training programmes stems from several factors.

On the one hand, recent changes in the organization of work and the revolution in communications technology have profoundly affected the job market. Information technology (IT) skills are in high demand and the services sector has become a leading source of jobs. But technical skills alone are not enough and for almost any job it is also necessary to master basic skills such as oral and written expression, simple mathematics for problem-solving, logical thought, interpersonal skills, and the ability to learn on one's own.

On the other hand, disadvantaged youth who begin vocational training programmes without having finished their secondary education, are often lacking in basic 'transferable' skills which can apply to a variety of situations, not only because they dropped out at a certain level, but also because the schools they attended were not good enough.

Faced with this situation, many vocational training courses for young people have begun to include these basic skills as part of their curricula. Once the basic skills required in the workplace have been identified, educational strategies are designed and developed for teaching them. Generally speaking, such experiments are innovative and have not been

introduced on a large scale.

At the IIEP seminar held in Montevideo, on 25 and 26 September 2000, these issues were discussed and four innovative training experiments carried out in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay were analyzed.

The link between *basic* and *vocational* skills was discussed from two angles. On the one hand, they both represent the minimum prerequisites for 'trainability', if vocational training is expected to provide more than just the ability to perform manual operations and empirical knowledge with low transferability. This basic minimum is lacking if the young person is unable to describe aspects of daily life in an ordered and meaningful way, either orally or particularly in writing, or if he or she has difficulty in applying simple techniques to resolve problems arising outside the school environment. On the other hand, the question arose as to which of the basic skills needed not only to perform a specific job but also more generally in the workplace should be covered by vocational training programmes. For example, training for self-employment in the services sector needs to place a strong emphasis on the development of basic communication, management, and workload organization skills.

What then should be defined as 'basic skills'? While some experiments put more emphasis on developing a basic level of skills needed for **any** job, adopting a somewhat wider remedial

approach to what was not learned during formal education, others were more oriented towards providing training in **specific** technical skills needed for a given occupation, or family of occupations.

These two approaches are also reflected in the teaching strategies. For example, an experiment based on the wider perspective included a class in the development of basic linguistic and mathematical problem-solving skills linked to specific technical training. Conversely, a course designed around specific work skills adopted a programme in which students worked part-time, while attending classes part-time as well, applying theoretical classwork to real life job situations for the acquisition of basic skills.

In short, *two* areas need to be explored when linking basic and technical skills. The *first* is to determine which teacher training strategies are appropriate in order to develop a teacher profile conducive to student learning. The *second* is to apply the lessons learned from these experiments to the formal education system, not only because they demonstrate innovative strategies which can be used to consolidate basic skills in the context of specific practical training, but because they also pave the way towards curricular integration, moving away from the habitual fragmentation of secondary education.

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## Setting off on the right foot

### 36th group of IIEP trainees get together in Fontainebleau

*Participants in IIEP's 2000/2001 Advanced Training Programme were taken to Fontainebleau, erstwhile fief of Napoleon, some 65 kilometres South-East of Paris, to attend a two-day orientation session on 12 and 13 October. It was an excellent opportunity for participants to escape the hurly-burly of Paris, to get to know each other in a friendly relaxed atmosphere... and, for most, to have their first glimpse of Autumn landscapes in Europe.*

**A**s in previous years, the orientation seminar provided ATP participants with an opportunity to share their professional experience and educational viewpoints with fellow participants, express their expectations of the course in terms of needed skills and to obtain more information about the content.

Work was done in both plenary sessions and small groups so as to favour more intensive discussion within the working groups, followed by full reports for all participants in plenary sessions.

The diverse backgrounds of participants was one of the most

striking aspects of the seminar. This was also evident in discussions where it was shown that education systems could vary significantly from one country to another, due to the specifics of national territory, population, level of development, culture, educational traditions, school capacity, etc.

Despite the differences, the concerns of everyone involved converged as discussions progressed. In all countries, priority is being given to the structures responsible for educational planning and management, whose role is unanimously seen as a key one.

There seems to be a general trend

towards decentralization policies in most countries, even if their form differs from one country to another. Nevertheless, the devolution of management remains the most common solution. These reforms are often provoked by a concern for efficiency, and also by the need to assign the responsibility for the education system to key players (families, teachers, associations, etc.).

Nevertheless, this kind of thinking often encounters structural constraints linked to the lack of management and supervisory skills among decentralized authorities. This drawback often explains the slow progress in implementing decentralization, and the reluctance of some decision-makers to get on board.

Financial constraints also appeared as a common feature among the countries represented. It often boils down to: how does one provide quality education for the masses?

Despite the intention of governments to provide education for everyone and at the same time ensure a high level of instruction, the question of financing education becomes increasingly crucial.

Further discussion made it possible to discern a number of solutions which seem to be working well in some countries. General policy in this area is driven by the diversification of the sources of financing. The increasing involvement of the community, the development of the private sector,



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A group of IIEP staff and trainees on the steps of Napoleon's Chateau at Fontainebleau

partnerships with NGOs and foreign donors, etc. are just a few of the financial resources that governments need to explore in order to resolve problems in education.

The challenge of new information and communication technologies was also noted by participants, both in the education process itself and in the planning and management of education systems.

As for national resources, participants unanimously agreed on the need for support in setting up clear and efficient procedures and, above all, for training of professionals and experts in education systems at all levels within the planning process.

Another topic which generated intense discussion among participants was defining the notion of educational planning and management: what is education planning? This exercise was valuable in that it underscored the meaning that could be assigned to the concept of educational planning and

management, which varies according to each person's own experience. Rather than generating possible definitions, this diversity showed the full scope of planning, which includes concerns as diverse as policy formulation, statistics, financing, quality, etc.

The expectations voiced by participants in terms of training clearly showed what they meant by planning, but also expressed a desire to be more efficient in their current and future professional duties.

Once the participants had finished, the IIEP teaching personnel provided information on the content of the Advanced Training Programme, the teaching methods and the evaluation techniques used. This information made it possible for participants to determine their individual training needs and to formulate a personal project by taking into account available modules.

The attention of trainees was drawn to the importance of the terminal paper

which reflects the skills acquired during the year, and the need to write it within a given timeframe. The choice of topic for the terminal paper is of utmost importance, since it must be both relevant and completed within the assigned period.

The seminar was organized by the French National Commission for UNESCO and allowed participants not only to become acquainted with one another, but also to familiarize themselves with the town of Fontainebleau and visit its *Château*, former palace of Napoleon Bonaparte. It was here that Napoleon signed his abdication in 1814.

The lively interest shown by participants in this seminar is a sure sign of an intense year of study which will be rich in dialogue.

KHADIM SYLLA



One of the groups hard at work with the IIEP's Head of Training, Lars O. Mählck



## The Virtual Institute

An update at the end of 2000

**A**n increasing demand for its assistance and services, in conjunction with growing access to communication technology, led IIEP to create learning opportunities through distance education. Since a first course in 1994 on *Planning the development of school textbooks* using the teleconferencing system of the University of the West Indies, IIEP has organized ten distance education activities. Two years ago, the Virtual Institute was formed as the focal point for these activities.

In addition to the distance education courses, IIEP now offers continuing education activities that have been developed to serve the needs of former course participants. The changing environment of educational planning means that many have turned to the Institute for assistance in updating knowledge and skills.

The offerings of the Virtual Institute are designed to provide flexible learning opportunities that do not require travel or absence from the workplace. Rather, they depend upon a 'virtual' space in which participants work together and exchange information and experiences on important topics and techniques in educational planning. Members of the IIEP network are brought together again in a new context.

Several models have been used:

- Internet discussion forums, and
- distance education courses.

### Discussion forums

The forums are being used primarily for continuing education, and as such, are open to former participants in IIEP training

courses. Based upon a recent title in the IIEP Fundamentals of educational planning series, the specific subject treated in the previous two forums is the reduction of repetition, an important problem in many education systems. A forum was held in English in 1999 and in French in 2000. The reports can be found in their original language on the IIEP web site under 'What's new' and then 'Virtual Institute'.

An Internet based forum depends upon the active participation of the persons subscribed for a rich exchange of information and experiences. For this reason IIEP is considering opening these forums to a wider group, while continuing to encourage the active participation of members of the IIEP network.

### Distance education courses

Two types of courses are being offered: a short refresher course intended as continuing education, and three-month long courses. The refresher course, offered to both English and French speakers, was organized as a tutorial and based upon a training module on *Educational costs, expenditure and financing*.

Three-month courses are offered to between 10 and 15 institutions using a model that is intended to build both individual and institutional capacity. In these courses, a group of individuals is formed in each institution. Participants work individually, in their group and with the other groups to undertake a variety of tasks and to share information and experiences with each other. Courses are offered to selected universities on *Strategic financial management in universities* and on *Managing University-industry*

*partnerships*, and to Ministries of Education on *Using indicators in planning basic education*.

Although participants have noted that they miss some aspects of face-to-face meetings, they have also commented that it would be impossible for a number of staff members from one institution to take part in a workshop or seminar. In addition, participants remain on the job with access to information or data to be used in exercises or in reflection upon their own context. After the course is over, they can remain in contact through e-mail with their colleagues from other countries, which serves to strengthen the IIEP network in a concrete way.

### Activities in 2001

Plans for 2001 include two three-month distance education courses and two Internet forums. As soon as the specific information is available, it will be sent to those who are on the mailing list of the Virtual Institute, and it will be posted on the web site.

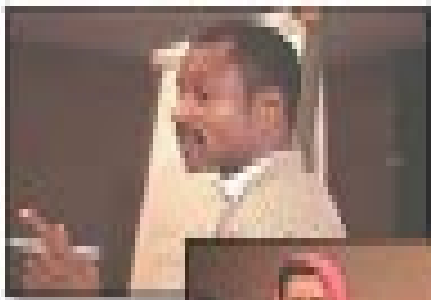
### Looking ahead

As we plan for the longer term, we would like to ask you once again for your input. Please let us know what topics you would like to discuss in distance and continuing education activities in the future. We shall be delighted to hear from you.

### Contact for Virtual Institute:

Susan D'Antoni at  
[s.dantoni@iiep.unesco.org](mailto:s.dantoni@iiep.unesco.org)  
or the IIEP Web site at  
<http://www.unesco.org/iiep>





## Announcement

# IIEP 2001 Summer School

The *IIEP Summer School* will be held every year late June or early July. Its objective is to bring together, for one or two weeks of shared work on a precise theme, a broad range of persons involved in managing or supervising education systems.

The *2001 Summer School*  
2-6 July 2001, IIEP, Paris



## Financing of education – the role families and communities can play

**EDUCATIONAL FINANCING** is more than ever a burning issue, especially since the international community has just renewed its goal of achieving universal education.

◇ *Why a Summer School? For whom?*

The IIEP wishes to create an opportunity for sharing information and techniques which are both down-to-earth and useful, and give participants a chance to exchange ideas and their own experience.

The IIEP would like to see the involvement of organizations concerned with educational development: national administrations, agencies for aid and co-operation, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), researchers.

◇ *Who finances education? How to develop education systems while assuring control over mounting costs?*

Presentations on concrete studies underway in several countries concerning the mechanisms for financing and evaluating costs will serve as a basis for discussion on financing strategies, and on the involvement of families and communities in the financing and management of schools.

◇ *How to thoroughly evaluate the costs of education and to foresee the future budgetary needs of education systems?*

The content of this part of the course will be strongly methodological. Appropriate methods for evaluating

overall educational expenses and forecasting budgeting needs will be presented and discussed, based on actual cases.

◇ *More details*

The first session of the Summer School on the *Financing of education* will take place in Paris at the IIEP Headquarters during the first week of July 2001.

The working languages will be English and French. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in both languages.

Participants should finance their stay in Paris themselves. The Institute will assist them in planning their stay and reserve hotel accommodation for selected participants.

The number of places is limited. Preliminary registration is necessary and an enrolment fee will be requested.

A leaflet providing more detailed information on the 2001 Summer School on the *Financing of education* will be sent to you on request.

For further information, please contact:

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*“An institution in touch with its environment”*

#### SEMINARS, ITCs AND WORKSHOPS

##### □ Seminar on ‘Articulating basic and technical skills in youth training programmes’

(Montevideo, Uruguay  
25–26 September 2000)

See article on page 9 of this issue for an outline of the discussions which took place at this seminar.

Contacts: [c.jacinto@mail.retina.ar](mailto:c.jacinto@mail.retina.ar)

##### □ Intensive training workshop on ‘Computer-based methods for the design and evaluation of survey sampling procedures in large-scale studies of the quality of education’

(Hanoi, Viet Nam  
30 October – 3 November 2000)

Programmed after the finalization of the July–September 2000 Newsletter, please see article on page 5 of this issue for a summary of the proceedings.

Contact: [k.ross@iiep.unesco.org](mailto:k.ross@iiep.unesco.org)

##### □ Seminar on ‘Community schools’

(Lomé, Togo  
30 November – 3 December 2000)

Organized at the request of the World Bank, this seminar constitutes a follow-up to the completion of case studies on community schools undertaken by the IIEP in Mali, Senegal and Togo. Four more countries will be invited – Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea and Niger – to share their experiences and policies regarding the rapid demand-driven development of community schools. The seminar will focus on the running of these schools (role of local communities in the organization of schooling and school management, recruitment of teachers, State regulation of their running and how such schools are funded).

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##### □ Sub-regional course on ‘Institutional management of higher education institutions’ for the Caribbean and Latin America

(Kingston, Jamaica  
29 January – 2 February 2001)

Organized in co-operation with the UNESCO Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC), the UNESCO Office in Jamaica and the University of the West Indies, this programme aims at acquainting senior level administrators with innovative methods of resource management. Within the context of declining public funding, the management of higher education institutions is confronted with new challenges, such as methods for mobilizing additional resources and ways of improving the use of existing resources.

Contact: [m.martin@iiep.unesco.org](mailto:m.martin@iiep.unesco.org)

##### □ Intensive training course on ‘Educational costs, finance and budgeting in developing East Asian countries’

(Manila, Philippines,  
19 February – 2 March 2001)

The financial crisis of 1997 had devastating consequences for the financing of education in developing East Asian countries. Putting the topic as a high priority on its agenda, the UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines asked the IIEP to animate this course under the UNESCO Participation Programme. Designed to review the approaches and techniques for cost-analysis, financial management and budgetary programming applied to education, the course will target those developing countries most affected in South-East Asia, namely: Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines.

Contact: [i.kitaev@iiep.unesco.org](mailto:i.kitaev@iiep.unesco.org)

##### □ National training course on ‘Leadership, evaluation and organization’ for department heads of Tunisian higher education institutions

(Tunis, Tunisia  
22 – 24 February 2001)

The main objective of this training programme is to sensitize department heads of Tunisian higher education

institutions to the new tasks involved and new management techniques in a context of decentralization. This training programme is part of a capacity building programme which the IIEP implements for the Tunisian Ministry of Higher Education. The course will deal with issues related to techniques and methods of academic leadership in higher education departments, evaluation of programmes and staff as well as the organization of academic tasks within departments.

Contact: [m.martin@iiep.unesco.org](mailto:m.martin@iiep.unesco.org)

#### IIEP TECHNICAL SUPPORT

##### □ Educational Financing

France (as from January 2001)

Assisting the Directorate for Programme and Development of the French MOE for the renovation of the national information system on educational expenditure.

Contact: [s.peano@iiep.unesco.org](mailto:s.peano@iiep.unesco.org)

Chad (March 2001)

Assisting the Planning Directorate of the MOE to develop the national statistical information system on education.

Contact: [s.peano@iiep.unesco.org](mailto:s.peano@iiep.unesco.org)

Mauritania (March 2001)

Support for the renovation of the country’s statistical information system.

Contact: [s.peano@iiep.unesco.org](mailto:s.peano@iiep.unesco.org)

#### IIEP-BUENOS AIRES

##### □ Study visit to Europe introducing a team of headteachers and supervisors from San Luis Province, Argentina, to European education systems

(1 – 15 February 2001)

Within the framework of the IIEP-BA research project on ‘The training of headteachers and school supervisors’ (cf article on p. 8), a study visit will be organized for the main team of supervisors and directors from the Province of San Luis, Argentina to study education systems in Europe.

Contact: [info@iipe-buenosaires.org.ar](mailto:info@iipe-buenosaires.org.ar)