

## RECOUP Working Paper No. 36

# The Impact of Aid on Education Policy in Kenya

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**Abstract**

Despite a long history of post-independence aid to education, Kenya's relationships with overseas donors have, until recently, been markedly fractious. Donors' concerns about transparency and corruption, in the context of a political regime which became increasingly authoritarian, led to sharp reductions in aid to Kenyan education during the 1990s. That was notwithstanding the patent gender, ethnic and geographical inequalities that characterised the education system. However, political change in 2002 and new Kenyan commitments to reach agreed international education targets and to improve educational planning, facilitated some return of donor confidence. This paper shows that the influence of donor agencies on Kenyan educational policy was substantial over subsequent years. Nevertheless, it also documents the continuation of significant gaps between aid practice and the objectives for its harmonisation, alignment and coordination, as espoused by the international community in the Paris and Accra accords.

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## **Introduction: New principles underlying aid relationships**

In March 2005, a step change in the relationship between aid donors and recipients was signalled by a new international agreement about the ways in which aid would be agreed and delivered. The Paris Declaration promised that donor agencies would align themselves behind the objectives for poverty reduction set by developing countries themselves, they would utilise local systems to deliver and track aid resources, they would coordinate and share information amongst themselves to avoid duplication, and both donor and recipient authorities would be mutually accountable for the results achieved (OECD DAC 2005).

These principles were further extended three years later, at a follow-on conference in Accra. Henceforth, it was agreed that donors would provide information on their planned programmes 3-5 years in advance, they would use country systems to deliver aid, rather than donor systems, and they would not impose their own conditions on how and when the aid resources would be used – rather they would use conditions based upon recipient countries' own development targets and objectives (Accra Agenda for Action 2008).<sup>2</sup>

Although these principles had for some years been informally accepted by some of these parties as being, in principle, desirable, the actual practice of aid was often far from meeting their aspirations. This was for a number of reasons.

First, as a matter of detail, the procedures by which most agencies approve their country aid programmes are rooted in a calendar of events which is determined ultimately by their own parliamentary practice. This can affect everything from when the estimates for budgetary expenditures are accepted to whether or not expenditure commitments which extend beyond one or two years into the future, or which outlast the length of a particular parliament, can be made.

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<sup>2</sup> See: [www.oecd.org/document/22/0](http://www.oecd.org/document/22/0).

Secondly, and more fundamentally, aid budgets are vulnerable to changes in the economic and financial climate in industrialised countries, and the possibility of defending the integrity and wisdom with which aid funds are being, or have been spent is seen as having a crucial influence on the renewal of aid pledges. This means that aid ministers have to be able to defend the outcomes of their expenditures, and to demonstrate the transparency with which they have been made. Many developing- country budgetary systems make such demonstration difficult, and the outcomes of particular programmes of aid can often not be associated with particular expenditures made upon them in an unambiguous way.

Thirdly, developed-country aid lobbies and officials have views – often strongly held - about the best ways of tackling poverty in developing countries. Their opinions may be based upon experience in many different international settings, and/or research results which have identified key programmatic aspects necessary for effective targeting. Over the years since 2000 they have also been strongly influenced by the targets contained in the Millennium Declaration, adopted with the intention of halving world poverty by 2015.

For these and other reasons, developing countries may find that the design and conduct of partnerships with the international community, in ways which reflect Paris principles, continue to be elusive. Given the power of these constraints, it may be that the admirable aspirations of Paris and Accra represent a triumph of hope over reason, in view of the continuing differences between donor and recipient conditions for many of the countries concerned.

This paper assesses the extent to which such circumstances have influenced the modalities, process and impact of aid to education in Kenya. It adopts a case-study approach, using documentary sources and interviews with senior officials from the donor community, from NGOs in Kenya and from the Kenyan Government. Thirty interviews were arranged with senior officers from each of the bilateral and multilateral agencies having a profile of support to the education sector, with government agencies dealing with aid to education and education policy, NGOs having an educational

presence/role and with research institutions with an interest in the sector. The interviews followed a semi-structured format with specific questions focusing on the development of Kenya's SWAp, the Paris and Accra accords, and the perceived impacts of aid, whilst giving interviewees freedom to expand on their own experiences and opinions. The paper combines macro-level analyses of enrolments, government planning and expenditures, based upon documentary sources, and insights from senior officers' perceptions of the nuanced processes that have delivered them. The paper begins with a brief account of the growth of education in Kenya since independence, before turning to an assessment of the role of international aid in its growth and development.

### **Development of education since independence**

The colonial educational legacy in Kenya continued to affect educational development in the country long after its attainment of independence in 1963. In common with practice elsewhere, the colonial government had provided few formal education opportunities for African children, and until as late as 1967 state schools for Africans in Kenya remained small in number, most being run by missions with some government support<sup>3</sup>. In its election manifesto, the Kenya African National Union (KANU) emphasised a commitment to providing free universal primary education (FPE) and, on gaining power, it implemented changes which began to correct the disadvantages that had been suffered by African children prior to independence.

Segregated education was dismantled, and selection examinations for African children after grade 4 were replaced by a seven-year primary span. An education commission was established (Government of Kenya 1964), which identified the needs for education both to meet the skilled 'manpower' needs of the economy and to aid the eradication of poverty (Eshiwani 1993, 27). The removal of barriers to African progression resulted in the upper grades of primary schooling expanding sharply, with grade 7 enrolments tripling in the first three years of independence. By consequence, the primary gross enrolment ratio (GER) is estimated to have risen from around 60 to 79

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<sup>3</sup> In recognition of these segregationist inequalities and the associated devaluation of their culture, Africans had established Independent schools as early as 1910. Enrolments reached a peak in 1939, but the movement was closed by the colonial government in 1952 (Eshiwani 1993, 18).

between 1964 and 1970, indicating that a major expansion of the primary school system had indeed been achieved (Somerset 2009, 235).

This progress at primary level occurred notwithstanding the continued use of school fees. The first serious attempt to make schooling fee-free occurred in 1974, when fees were abolished for the first four grades of primary schooling. However, communities continued to be responsible, via 'self-help', for providing the additional classrooms and teachers' houses required as schools expanded. This led to the introduction of building levies which, in many communities, exceeded the levels of tuition fees previously charged. Predictably, the initial enrolment gains proved volatile. In recognition of the damaging cost-burden, a new government led by Daniel arap Moi prohibited, in 1978/9, the levying of direct school charges on parents. Henceforth, additional construction for schools was to be provided cooperatively by the communities served by the schools. But this initiative, too, proved short-lived. The costs of school construction and expansion were high and the use of informal building levies and other charges on parents began to creep back over subsequent years. These increasing private costs, together with the growing problems of overcrowding and declines in the quality of teaching instruction, caused enrolment gains to be lost<sup>4</sup>. The introduction of a new 8-4-4 education system did nothing to alleviate this burden, since the costs of the required additional books and facilities fell mainly on parents and communities, thereby exacerbating the falling enrolment rates during this period (Eshiwani 1993; Amutabi 2003). The trend was further accelerated by the reintroduction of user charges in 1988 – mainly as a consequence of the World Bank's newly invigorated neo-liberal stance against 'excessive' government spending - and the primary GER/NER exhibited a secular decline over the remaining years of the century. By consequence, the GER fell over these two decades to 95 in 1990 and to between 85 and 90 in the last half of the 1990s (Table 1).

Complementing – and perhaps underlying - this lack of progress in meeting the quantitative enrolment challenge, the shortcomings in the quality of Kenya's primary education system were also

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<sup>4</sup> Somerset (2009) provides a detailed account of the sequencing of these events and a discussion of their causes.

neglected. Regional and gendered disparities in resource allocation were substantial, with certain areas being favoured according to the ethnic group of the prevailing political elites, resulting in skewed resource distribution across schools, whilst gaps between enrolments for males and females also remained high (Kimalu et al. 2001; Alwy and Schech 2004).

**Table 1: Aspects of the Kenyan Education System since Independence (primary, secondary and tertiary levels)**

Year (1)	Primary Education enrolments ('000's) (2)	GER (3)	NER (4)	Pupil/Teacher ratio (5)	Secondary Education enrolments ('000's) (6)	GER (7)	NER (8)	Pupil/teacher ratio (9)	University enrolments (10)	GER (11)	Technical college enrolments ('000's) (12)	Pupil/teacher ratio (13)
1965	1042.1	54	-	34	47.9	4	-	19	921	0.14	1.3	9.2
1970	1427.6	58	-	34	126.8	9	-	22	2786	0.28	2.4	17
1975	2881.2	109	88	33	226.8	13	-	-	6327	0.79	5.4	-
1980	3926.6	115	91	38	407.3	19.5	-	26	9155	1	8.6	20
1985	4702.4	99	-	34	437.2	20	-	20	9148	1.2	7.8	15
1990	5392.3	95	52.5	31	616.2	17.2	-	18 ***	35421	1.6	-	-
1995	5545.0	85	58.6	30	632.4	24	-	-	-	-	-	-
2000	4782.0**	87*	65	34	1908.7	39	33	-	20,561	-	9039	-
2005	6075.7	106.5	75	45	2470.4	48	41	25	-	3****	-	-
2008	6868.8	111.5	82	47	3077.2	58	49	30	-	-	29,697	-

### Notes and Sources

Enrolment data for the Kenyan education system are unreliable, and inconsistent between different sources. The above table provides a set of enrolment data which partly reconcile the contradictions between sources. Some problems remain, in that the GER data are not entirely consistent with the enrolment trends, if population growth was a steady 2.7% per annum throughout the period, as is often maintained.

- Data not available

\* UNESCO data show GER of 94 for the year 2000 which is markedly inconsistent with the earlier series.

\*\* data are for 1999

\*\*\* data are for 1991

\*\*\*\* data are for 2002

Column 2: 1965-1995, UNESCO Statistical Yearbook, various years; 2000, GMR 2010; 2005-2008, UNESCO Statistical Database (2010)

Column 3: 1965-1980, World Bank (various years); 1985-1995, UNESCO Statistical Yearbook, various years; 2000, Bedi et al. (2004) for the year 1999 (see annotation above); 2005-2008, UNESCO Statistical Database (2010)

Column 4: 1975-1995, UNESCO Statistical Yearbook various years; 2000-2008, UNESCO Statistical Database (2010)

Columns 5 and 6: 1965-1995, UNESCO Statistical Yearbook, various years; 2000-2008, UNESCO Statistical Database (2010)

Column 7: 1970-1985, World Bank (various years); 1990-1995, UNESCO Statistical Yearbook, various years; 2000-2008, UNESCO Statistical Database (2010)

Column 8: UNESCO Statistical Database (2010)

Column 9: 1965-1995, UNESCO Statistical Yearbook, various years; 2000-2008, UNESCO Statistical Database (2010)

Columns 10 and 11: 1965-1990, UNESCO Statistical Yearbook, various Years; 2000, UNESCO Statistical Database (2010)

Column 12: 1965-1985, UNESCO Statistical Yearbook, various Years; 2000 and 2008, UNESCO Statistical Database (2010)

The situation at secondary level was somewhat different. Secondary schooling was regarded as the key to meeting the skill-needs of the economy, but costs prevented a rapid expansion of government schools. In response, a 'Harambee' movement (the term literally meaning 'let's pull together' in Swahili) was initiated prior to independence, premised on the earlier independent schools. By the mid-1970s, the number of Harambee schools had increased from 50 at independence to 600 (Eshiwani 1993, 21), enabling the secondary school sector to grow much more rapidly than in neighbouring Tanzania or Uganda and, indeed, more quickly than the Kenyan government-aided sector itself which, in 1974, still comprised only 381 schools (Amutabi 2003, 130).

However, much like the problems encountered at primary level, the Harambee schools suffered from a lack of formalised adherence to national curricula, poorly staffed schools with unqualified teachers, consistently lower student exam performance in comparison with government schools, and an over-emphasis on technical and practical education. Despite their relative successes in terms of enrolments - rising from 4,281 in 1960 to 52,294 in 1970 (Bogonko 1992, 125) - their lack of alignment with the state system eventually led to their take-over, in 1988, as provincial state schools. Such was the demand and pace of expansion that the government was unable to avoid their becoming tools for political patronage: many newly opened schools were named after ministers and other senior politicians, despite the Ministry of Education making the establishment of such non-formal institutions illegal (Amutabi 2003).

In 2002 a National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government gained power under the leadership of Mwai Kibaki. Despite the earlier failed attempts to expand education in a sustainable way, the new government, much like its predecessors, had made education a centrepiece of their electoral manifesto and quickly implemented a third FPE initiative in 2003. An immediate increase in

enrolment of 1.3 million students over the previous year suggested that earlier problems of overcrowding and difficulties with access to materials and to qualified teachers would recur. Indeed, Sifuna (2007) suggests that the initial implementation of FPE in 2003 was complicated by the fact that, 'political expediency seemed to have superseded the need for a sound analysis and assessment of the needs, leading to inadequate preparation, consultation, planning, budgeting and a smooth implementation of the programme' (2007, 695).

Notwithstanding such dangers, educational planning in Kenya had undergone a significant turn: the introduction of a more democratically-run government augured the initiation of new relationships with international donors, and a period of much sounder planning in education, and in other sectors, was about to begin. We return to the details of these changes in a later section of this paper. Meanwhile, the evolving relationship with international aid donors is first discussed.

### **The evolution of aid to Kenya**

During the early post-independence period, Kenya was well favoured by the donor community. The country followed a capitalist, open market approach during years when the governments of most other sub-Saharan African countries were bringing much of industry under state control and otherwise heavily intervening in their economies. Although corruption was always present, it initially seemed that this was less prevalent than in many other states in the sub-continent. Kenya's political and economic interests were clearly allied with the West, and OECD countries - most notably the UK, as the former colonial power - were keen to maintain this allegiance (Mwega 2009). By consequence, total aid to Kenya rose steadily in nominal terms from Independence until around 1990, in which year more than \$1 bn. was provided in development aid (Table 2).

**Table 2: Evolution of Total Aid to Kenya**

Year (1)	ODA at current prices US \$ million (2)	ODA at 2008 constant prices US \$ millions (3)	Kenya's share of developing countries ODA percent (4)	Kenya's share of Africa's ODA, percent (5)	ODA as share of GNI, percent (6)
1980	393.44	934.42	1.2	3.8	5.84
1985	426.66	1093.96	1.3	3.5	7.16
1990	1181.29	1822.73	2.1	4.7	15.35
1995	731.36	923.71	1.2	3.4	9.18
2000	509.94	745.25	1.0	3.3	4.16
2002	378.05	561.78	0.7	2.1	2.84
2004	683.73	815.01	0.9	2.4	4.14
2006	1021.78	1161.76	0.7	1.3	4.33
2008	1527.85	1527.85	1.2	3.3	5.66

**Notes and Sources:**

Column 2: 1980-2000, Mwega (2009); 2002-2008 OECD-DAC CRS database, disbursements

Column 3: DAC Deflators for Kenya, from IMF( 2010) applied to data in Column 2.

Columns 4 and 5: 1980-2000,Mwega (2009); 2002-2008 calculated from OECD-DAC CRS current gross disbursements,

Column 6: 1980-2000, Mwega (2009); 2002-2008 calculated from IMF (2010), converted to US \$ (current) millions from Kenyan shillings and calculated as a percent of ODA

However, that year marked the high point in Kenya's aid receipts. Kenya's relatively strong economic performance during the 1970s waned over the following decade. Global recession took its toll and the economy slowed under the pressures of increased oil prices and lower international prices for Kenya's commodity exports. Kenya's balance of payments difficulties led to the introduction of an adjustment programme supported by heavy borrowing from the international financial institutions. The level of external debt in Kenya more than doubled in the 1980s, rising from US\$3.4 billion in 1980 to a peak of US\$7.5 billion in 1991, despite debt forgiveness of approximately US\$700 million during those years (O'Brien and Ryan 2001, 481).

Meanwhile, democratic processes were increasingly ignored as Daniel arap Moi consolidated his political power, and increased the executive powers of his government. The end of the cold war in 1989 caused a shift in the perceived importance of maintaining earlier allegiances, and the aid donors

became impatient with Kenya's increasingly repressive regime (O'Brien and Ryan 2001, 474). Significant proportions of donor aid were withheld in 1991, and their release was made conditional on the curbing of corruption and the introduction of economic and political reforms (Brown 2001). These tensions reduced aid flows to Kenya over the 1990s. As shown in Table 2, their real value was halved between 1990 and 1995, and renewed political repression led to further falls over the years to 2000/2. During the final few years of the Moi regime (1998-2002) aid disbursements averaged only about \$400 mn. per year – less than a third of their real value 10 years earlier.

It is important to note from Table 2 that these changes in the value of aid to Kenya were not merely a consequence of the global falls in aid volumes which occurred during the 1990s. At the beginning of that decade Kenya received almost 5 per cent of all aid to Africa - roughly similar to its proportionate share of the Sub-Saharan African population. By 2002, however, its share had been reduced to just over 2 per cent, whilst its share of global aid had fallen by two thirds (from 2.1 per cent to 0.7 per cent of the global total) over the same period. Clearly, Kenyan domestic politics and policies brought costs to the country in terms of its access to aid resources. Whereas in 1990 aid had accounted for more than 15 per cent of Kenyan national income, it represented only around 3 per cent by the early years of the new century.

Relations between Kenya and the donor community began to improve, however, with the election of the NARC government in 2002. Perceptions that governance and accountability were improving and that development spending was becoming more effective were important influences on aid flows from that date. The number of OECD-DAC donors doubled from 17 in the 1990s to 34 by 2008 and some non-OECD sources – most notably China<sup>5</sup> – also appeared. Accordingly, bilateral aid increased from \$293 mn. in 2002 to some \$1087 mn. by 2008. As shown in Table 2, in the latter year total aid to Kenya amounted to some \$1.5bn - a sum which, in real terms, was not far short of the aid peaks previously reached in 1989/90.

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<sup>5</sup> See King (2010)

## **Aid to education**

There was little doubt that, following independence, the new government was committed to the funding of education, and in particular to the attainment of free and universal primary education. However, the government's capacity to finance education was constrained, most notably by the global oil crisis of 1975, and the post-1980 recession. Aid programmes at this time were focussed upon skills development and particularly upon aiding the fledgling university structure. Project aid reflected the interests and expertise of the bilateral agencies and did not generally lead to a consistent externally funded programme. Reflecting the bias towards the higher levels of the system, enrolment rates at universities went from 1,910 in 1969 to 7,900 in 1979, and close to 40,000 by 1989 (Amutabi 2003, 138). This substantial growth was facilitated by the maintenance of low fees and high student subsidies but with consequences for poor quality, effectiveness and efficiency (Hughes 1994). Notwithstanding the expansion of the university sector, in 1988 almost one-third of the 155,000 primary teachers remained untrained, whilst the ratio of primary schools to children had actually fallen from 1:233 in 1960 to 1:370 by the mid-1980s (Bogonko 1992, 116).

Aid to education in Kenya remained modest relative to the government's education expenditure, but it has nevertheless played an influential role at particular times. Between 1970 and 1995 the main foreign donors to education were UNICEF, UNESCO and the World Bank, each of which placed a growing emphasis on the importance of basic education (Achola and Pillai 2000). Initially, the Government of Kenya was slow to respond to this interest, since it focused on Harambee secondary schools and Institutes of Technology in an attempt to fill skill-gaps (Abagi and Olweya 1999). The apparent commitment to basic education evident in the FPE programme of 1973 can actually be seen as little more than cosmetic, since little was done by the government to replace the fee revenues lost by the schools,<sup>6</sup> and the initiative was not significantly supported by external assistance.

During the 1980s, the priorities of international agencies were focussed mainly on supporting policies of economic adjustment to cut the government's budget deficit. Public expenditure on

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<sup>6</sup> On this theme, see Nkinyangi (1982, 203).

education had risen rapidly since independence, and the economic problems of the 1980s led, at the behest of the World Bank, to a return to cost-sharing and self-help schemes which depended on communities and parents covering the costs of school buildings, teaching materials and tuition fees. As indicated earlier, this increase in private costs resulted in a sharp decline in enrolment between 1989 and 1990<sup>7</sup> and contributed to the further decline of enrolment ratios over the following decade.

It was not until the end of the Moi presidency that aid to education in Kenya would move beyond isolated projects towards programme financing, mainly because of the agencies' continued concerns over corruption<sup>8</sup>. Nevertheless, aid to education more than doubled in real terms over the decade 1995/6 to 2004/5, by which date it accounted for about 5% of public spending on education in Kenya (Table 3) using rather different modalities from those of the previous decade.

### **The Kenya Education Sector Support Programme**

The discussion which follows focuses upon the years since 2002, when the National Rainbow Coalition government was first elected. Aid's contribution to educational policy is assessed with the help of data gained in interviews with senior officers in aid agencies, in NGOs and in the Kenyan Government<sup>9</sup>. These were years in which a new vehicle for allocating funds to education – the Kenya Education Sector Support

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<sup>7</sup> ( see also Bedi et al 2002, 11; and Somerset 2009)

<sup>8</sup> One important exception was the DFID Strengthening of Primary Education (SPRED) project – financed by DFID in three phases beginning in 1992, 1997 and 2000, respectively – which was designed to improve pupil-textbook ratios, increase the proportion of female teachers and improve primary head-teacher training. Support continued beyond 2005 under the new SWAp funding arrangements (DFID 2007).

<sup>9</sup> The interviews were conducted between September 2008 and February 2009.

Year (1)	Public Expenditure (2)	Public Expenditure on Education (3)	ODA total (4)	ODA to education (5)	ODA to primary education (6)	Education expenditure as a percentage of total (7)	ODA as percentage of public spending (8)	ODA to education as percentage of public expenditure on education (9)	ODA to Primary as percent age of ODA to Educa-tion (10)
1970/71	36178.14	6363.07				17.6			
1980/81	237874.82	43147.63	35720.50			18.1	15.0		
1990/91	422763.98	70723.71	146452.54			16.7	34.6		
1995/96	429435.82	74413.83	64923.93	1884.39	982.97	17.3	15.1	2.5	52.2
2000/01*	335978.80	62417.09	60817.83	2788.88	1150.28	18.6	27.9	7.7	48.3
2002/03	379475.32	81561.29	35571.78	2474.03	395.92	21.5	9.4	3.0	16.0
2004/05	403691.60	90049.02	56198.97	4591.92	2531.55	22.3	13.9	5.1	55.1
2006/07	475196.91	102015.30	66219.37	3892.64	700.99	21.5	13.9	3.8	18.0
2008/09						19.6	15.4	5.7	42.6

**Notes and sources:**

Columns 2 and 3: Economic Survey, various years, converted to constant 2005 prices using GDP deflator from IMF (2010)

Column 4: 1980, 1990, Mwega (2009), current US prices converted into constant Kenyan shillings,(IMF 2010); 1995 and 2000 commitments and 02-08 from disbursements, from OECD-DAC CRS database

Column 5 and 6: 1995 and 2000 (commitments) and 2002-08 (disbursements) converted to constant 2005 Kenyan shillings) using deflator from OECD-DAC CRS database).

Column 7: Economic Survey, various years.

Column 10: 1995 & 2000, OECD-DAC CRS database current commitments; 2002-2008, OECD-DAC CRS database current disbursements

\* Reported commitments for 2000/01 were exceptionally high. The data shown in Columns 4, 5 and 6 for 2000/01 have been amended by taking an average of the values for the years 1999, 2000 and 2001.

Programme (KESSP) - was emplaced, strongly influenced by practice and opinion within the aid community. Its efficacy – as perceived by each of the main actors – is used in what follows to assess the balance of aid’s impact. In particular, we investigate the extent to which ‘Paris principles’

concerning harmonisation, alignment, coordination and mutual accountability have been achieved as part of the aid process in Kenya.

### *Alignment with local objectives*

Following years of decline in rates of educational enrolment, retention and completion, the NARC government was keen to see major reform of education early in their term. A new Economic Recovery Strategy established Free Primary Education as a priority<sup>10</sup>, and gave a commitment to increase spending on the social sectors. Although the attainment of UPE had been an elusive goal for the Kenyan government since independence, early actions by the new administration suggested that lessons from earlier failures were being learned. The commitment to free primary schooling was reaffirmed in the government's first policy paper on education (Sessional Paper No 1 of 2005), and it identified its proper implementation as the key to attaining UPE.

As indicated, the new political dispensation had gained the support of aid donors, and it became evident that there was substantial international interest in contributing to educational expansion and reform. In 2004, senior Kenyan education staff attended a series of training sessions and workshops run by a former leading World Bank education official, aimed at developing an understanding amongst education officials in Kenya of the principles underlying a Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) (Thomson et al. 2009, 21).

The outcome was the preparation, with strong World Bank technical support, of the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP), designed to be consistent with broader national policies set out in the Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS).<sup>11</sup> The objectives were to improve the

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<sup>10</sup> This was implemented in time to generate a major increase in enrolments at the beginning of the 2003 school year.

<sup>11</sup> The Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS) was a financial and economic reform replacing an earlier Poverty Reduction Strategy Plan (PRSP). It was based on four pillars: economic growth through enhanced revenue collection; restructuring and reforming governance institutes, rehabilitation and expansion of physical infrastructure and finally human resource development, particularly education and health. (see: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/KENYAEXTN/Resources/ERS.pdf>). This proved important for the education sector, which implemented KESSP in the same year. Moving from project to programme funding enabled (and

structure of the education system, over a five-year period, by enhancing funding flows, and improving the effectiveness and financial transparency of implementation. Explicit also was the aim of establishing strong and co-ordinated relationships with donors, whilst maintaining ownership of the policies being implemented at the national and local levels (MOEST 2005, ii). Inputs from development partners, other stakeholders and government officials ensured that by the time of its launch in July 2005, the programme had undergone a series of sector reviews and financial analyses, which had strengthened the basis for and content of the Education Sessional Paper. Following decades of poor relations with donor agencies, it was realised that a renewed concern with both the monitoring and evaluation of education would be a key factor in implementing KESSP (MOEST 2005, 270).

The particular ways in which the KESSP programme was formulated raises questions as to whether the agenda which emerged was, or was not, a product of aid partners aligning themselves with local objectives. As indicated above, the particular characteristics of the SWAp instrument were adopted on the basis of donor opinion and advice. However as regards the content of the programme, the evidence is less clear. One major bilateral donor suggested that the priorities and objectives of the government are heeded, but only provided that the donors consider them ‘credible’:

‘The government is very prepared to have a robust negotiation and a strong case has to be made by donors. You have to be well-prepared and realistic about the discussions, and reasonable about the pace of reform ..... We, like other donors, do not dictate to the government what to do, but support the priorities of the government so long as there are credible plans.’ (Interview 1, Bilateral agency).

On the other hand, although we have shown that UPE was a consistent target of successive Kenyan administrations, it has also been argued that this commitment was somewhat nominal: the continued imposition of fees was a consistent and obvious reason for the target being unable to be met.

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necessitated) greater donor-recipient alignment and in the view of a number of interviewees, was instrumental in making education one of the better-organised ministries in the country.

The introduction of KESSP came at a time when the EFA and MDG goals had been agreed internationally, and it was not coincidental that these became more serious priority areas for Kenyan policy. The ambivalence was recognised by a number of Kenyan voices:

‘Targets, such as MDGs, determine the direction, volume and pace of external assistance. The problem is that these targets and goals are not necessarily aligned with national policies, and actually displace indigenous policy formation’ (Interview 4, Government official)

‘Funding (*of higher education*) has been absent because public allocations follow the language of the donor community. The fact that the donors would not fund higher education undoubtedly affected the government’s willingness to fund it’ (Interview 26, Government official)

‘The subsequent joint financing agreement gave special importance to primary education - largely a result of DFID’s arguing for its priority. This was based on a belief in its strategic importance’ (Interview 12, Research NGO).

The NARC government was arguably more committed to the implementation of FPE than its predecessors. Nevertheless, prior to the KESSP, its implementation had been hurried and unplanned, risking its early demise. Donor interests allocated clear priority to the primary sector, and to that extent, local and donor interests coincided. Donor objectives for UPE were externally given, as a consequence of the MDG process. The evidence suggests that the adjustment of goals was more strongly evident on the part of the NARC government (not least because many of its other objectives in the education sector were down-played or postponed) than on the part of the donor agencies.

### ***Conditions to be locally, not externally, determined***

The KESSP can be thought of as *the* development programme for education. Although it included a limited amount of recurrent expenditures, it excluded the Ministry’s salaries budget and most other recurrent items. It has comprised 23 investment programmes covering the sector as a whole, but with

a strong emphasis on the primary span. Donors have contributed some 6% of the KESSP budget. The dominant foreign partners have been the Fast Track Initiative (FTI)<sup>12</sup> and DFID which have provided some 37% and 23% of external funding, respectively (Figure 1). A joint financing agreement (JFA) was drawn up in 2005 between the Kenya government, the World Bank and DFID, to pool funds in support of KESSP. Funding from the FTI and monies from some other donors, including CIDA and UNICEF also contributed to the pool. The JFA covered only those investment programmes which reflected the priorities of its contributors – a sub-set which was kept under review<sup>13</sup>. Monies from the pool have typically been drawn down in two tranches per year, subject to the production of ‘satisfactory’ (from the perspective of the aid agencies) quarterly financial monitoring reports by the government.

Delegates to the Accra meetings agreed that aid agencies would not impose their own conditions on how and when resources would be used – rather they would use conditions based upon recipient countries’ own development targets and objectives. Whilst donor inputs have been important for the implementation of KESSP, there is widespread agreement that external partners have not been able to dictate their own terms to the Government of Kenya. One bilateral agency respondent indicated that the initiative on priorities for discussion at Joint Review Meetings was taken by the Ministry representatives, but that donors influenced the allocation of funds for specific programmes, based upon technical criteria. Nevertheless, both external funding, and the experience brought by the donor organisations have been highly influential for recent educational development in Kenya. There have been large cumulative funding deficits/gaps for KESSP which, in June 2008, stood at Ksh16.37 billion (MoE 2008, 5). Aid has been needed to address these, and there are other deficiencies in the Ministry’s skills and infrastructure which aid has helped to overcome.

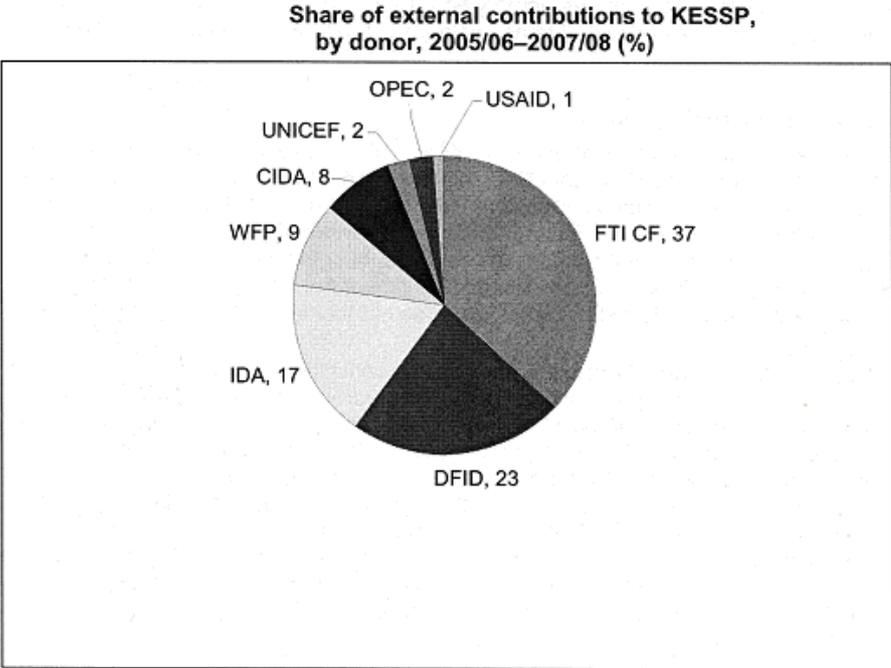
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<sup>12</sup> The Fast Track Initiative, started in 2002, is a multilateral instrument to support the education MDGs, funded by the World Bank and a range of bilateral donors. See Thompson et al (2009) for further details on its implementation in Kenya

<sup>13</sup> Until 2009 these had been almost exclusively those IPs which focussed upon basic education, rather than higher. This was thus a means of aid being targeted on the achievement of the MDGs.

The question as to whether aid conditions have been based upon Kenya’s own development targets and objectives is, however, complex. There is an elision here, based upon when targets (and their associated conditions), accepted as a result of international pressure, become truly ‘owned’ and thus no longer imposed from outside. There is evidence of a gradual shift in Kenyan perceptions on this matter. On the one hand, it was recognized by some that, initially, clear conditions have to be met by the recipient if an aid partnership is to be viable:

FIGURE 1:



Source: Thompson et al 2010:26

‘The tying of aid to the international targets and goals ... may not always be consonant with the policies and priorities of the recipient governments. But vehicles such as FTI are clear on what the funds are to be used for, and the conditions that countries have to meet before applying for the funds’ (Interview 4, Government official).

Indeed, interviewees from the Ministry of Finance indicated that the initial desirability of accepting aid from the Arab countries, the volume of which had increased significantly since 2000, had been their lack of insistence on conditionality. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Education ‘accepts that some conditionality is necessary – after all, it is a partnership and if the government does not listen, the donors will move away’ (Interview 22). Evidence for increasing ownership is clear from Ministry officials, one of whom suggested, ‘There is really no pressure to focus on the MDGs from donors, as the government is conscious of the MDGs in the planning of education’ (Interview 19, Government official). This is also reflected by donor interviewees, who remained positive about the direction that dialogue was taking, and the participants involved within the Kenyan government:

‘There is now more of a discussion with individuals [in government] who themselves have strong expertise.’ (Interview 3, Bilateral agency), and:

‘There is a dialogue, but it is not confrontational. There is strong ownership of KESSP – not policy conditionality from the agencies, but support in implementing a policy which has been designed by Kenyans. The issues for discussion focus upon implementation rather than policy.’ (Interview 27, Multilateral agency)

Thus, over time, the agenda for negotiation moved away from the larger matters of policy goals towards the details of their implementation. What began as external conditions at the outset of the aid relationship became increasingly accepted by the Kenyan government as rational mechanisms for resource allocation in education.

### ***The use of local systems to deliver and track aid resources***

Almost all aid resources for education have been channelled via one or more of the KESSP investment programmes. However, over its first three years (2005-8) only 6% of KESSP expenditures were financed by aid, and the programme as a whole accounted for only some 13% of total Ministry of

Education expenditures. Accordingly, donor support remained a small part of Kenyan public spending on education.

The fact that aid funds were pooled for KESSP expenditures itself meant that local systems for the delivery of aid resources were being used. However, interviews with aid agency staff revealed considerable criticism of the local systems used for delivering aid, particularly financial resources, to the schools. This partly stemmed from differences between donor budget calendars and those of Kenya. But it was also clear that some donors had concerns about the capability of some staff members in executive positions in the Kenyan government, and/or were sceptical that corruption had been sufficiently overcome. These parties were therefore wary of using local systems to deliver and track aid. The following, from one of the major bilateral agencies, was typical:

‘Most donors want reporting by the Government to be done in their way. Release of funds should follow (*Kenyan*) government procedures, but in fact the requirements of donors differ’(Interview 1);

From the government’s perspective, the gaps between donor requirements and Kenyan procedures slowed down the process of disbursing aid funds, with consequent implementation delays and costs:

‘Sometimes, the Ministry of Education may produce a satisfactory report but the World Bank takes too long to sign off on it. Combined with the time it takes to produce a full report, it sometimes results in the delay of funds. The FMR (*financial monitoring report*) requires a lot of detailed information on every program which may not always be readily available.’ (Interview 19, Government official)

Reluctance to contribute to the pool by some agencies was seen by the government to derive partly from the difficulty of monitoring the uses to which their aid funds are put in KESSP – an

interpretation agreed by a number of agency representatives. In addition, however, the lack of trust in the integrity of government procedures, which still existed amongst the agencies, was seen to cause deviations from Paris and Accra principles, and to undermine the likelihood of funding being provided in the form of budget support. Aid to Kenya has been primarily in the form of project funding with its use often being tied to particular expenditures and sources. In explaining this, Treasury officials indicated that:

‘The Rome, Paris and Accra declarations are seen by the ministry as setting out ways and means of getting donors to use national (Kenyan) systems’

Nevertheless, their perception was that progress in this direction had been modest. Explaining why it was that most agencies did not provide Kenya with budget support, they observed: ‘Kenya has not made headway in convincing donors that there are credible systems of accountability and transparency that would safeguard their resources even if channelled in the form of budget support,’ and that, ‘as regards harmonisation, each donor comes with its own system of procurement and there has been little change in this practice’ (Interviews 9 and 15). Despite the successful implementation of the SWAp, a key challenge for the Kenyan government has been to convince donors of the efficiency of using local systems to deliver and track aid resources – a challenge made more difficult by its particular history of procedures and fund disbursement.

### ***Co-ordination and sharing of information – avoiding duplication***

The fact that meetings between education donors and Kenyan officials were institutionalised and were held on a regular basis from 2003 onwards meant that, in a formal sense, communication and coordination improved, in comparison with earlier years. Members of the aid agencies generally believed that the Paris Declaration had helped this process. The local donor group has operated at a senior level and was very vocal, with the HAC being seen (*eg by CIDA*) as an important influence<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> One of the main products of the HAC was the development of a ‘Kenya Joint Assistance Strategy for 2007-2012’ (McCormick et.al 2007, 32). The relevant documentation indicates that the HAC aimed to rationalize

The following comment from a multilateral agency about the way the dialogue has developed was not uncommon in its enthusiasm:

‘...the government opens up and is very frank about what is happening. The meeting is very friendly, and the government asks for the support it wants’ (Interview 2, Multilateral agency).

On the other hand the consultative machinery does not always work smoothly and is sometimes believed to add to the administrative burden. An official from one of the smaller multilaterals raised this concern, commenting that, ‘Partnership principles are rather demanding in terms of time. Though the numerous meetings are a good avenue for getting into the dialogue with the government, they can sometimes be too many and actually increase the transaction costs in the SWAp’ (Interview 18, Multilateral agency).

Both donor and government interviewees perceived the delays in the receipt of funds by KESSP investment programmes to be frequent and damaging. By consequence, the government holds donors responsible for the resulting delays in the execution of programmes and, in some cases, ‘views insistence on FMRs as a new conditionality’ (Interview 11, Bilateral agency). As Ministry officials commented, ‘There is a feeling in government that once the financial monitoring report is prepared, there are new conditionalities brought in by donors that result in the delays’ (Interview 19, Government official). For their part, donors maintain that delays also stem from bureaucratic delays in the Treasury and from capacity failures:

‘Donors complain about a lack of adequate management and capacity (*in government*), which lead to failure to meet deadlines. There are problems on the donor side mainly caused by their failure to release agreed levels of funding. But the donors claim that

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development partner engagement in Kenya, one of its main tools being the Joint Assistance Strategy (KJAS 2008). Available at:  
[http://www.aideffectivenesskenya.org/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=cat\\_view&gid=924](http://www.aideffectivenesskenya.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=924)

this is because the government is slow to meet reporting requirements.’ (Interview 8, Bilateral agency)

Thus, there are implementation difficulties with the partnership contract from both government and donor sides. Somewhat surprisingly, there were obvious ways in which the education donor coordination group (EDCG) could have improved their own practices. As one of the major bilaterals reported:

‘There is no lead donor in Kenya and no secretariat for EDCG. Each agency does its own work, but there is no central means of raising issues with the Ministry.’ (Interview 3, Bilateral agency)

Under these circumstances the main business of communicating with the government has to await the formal meetings, and there is great opportunity for funding to be held up whilst authorization from particular individual agencies is awaited.

On the other hand there is wide agreement that the dialogue between donors and government has improved greatly as a consequence of the arrangements put in place for KESSP. That between the agencies themselves has also improved by consequence of the introduction of monthly meetings and mutual provision of information. Nevertheless one bilateral participant observed that ‘there are many hidden agendas and politics is a powerful influence, so things are not as transparent as they seem.’ (Interview 21, Bilateral agency)

It is clear that the efficiency of outcomes from the aid process (most notably the speed and effectiveness with which funding is requested by, and subsequently made available to the government for agreed programmes) is negatively affected by difficulties of coordination and information sharing. Agencies are not yet speaking with one voice – partly because they are not yet fully coordinating and sharing information amongst themselves in the ways promised by the Paris Declaration.

### ***Mutual Accountability for results***

The nature of the aid process, in most countries, has meant that accountability for results has fallen mainly on the recipient government. Indeed, the whole notion of conditionality presupposes that direction of responsibility. However, it was an objective of the Paris and Accra accords to shift this balance more towards the aid agencies. If partnerships are to be equal, donors too need to shoulder responsibility for ensuring that their part of the contract is delivered well and in a timely fashion.

Although some ministry officials argued that monitoring of the KESSP was done jointly, most interviewees from both donor and government sides took the view that the monitoring and quality control of KESSP had been poor. One particularly critical bilateral voice commented:

‘There is an Annual Review of KESSP which is supposed to review progress, but it has been very weak’.. It has not had the information about ‘where we were, what we have done, and how much more there is to do. There have been no benchmarks, no targets, and unreliable data.... For three years we have been talking about activities, with no indication of results’. There are Joint Reviews, and an Aide Memoire is issued, but ‘nothing then happens – the results are buried’.’ (Interview 3, Bilateral agency)

The presumption throughout the interviews was that the balance of responsibility for reporting and accounting for progress should continue to lie with the Kenyan government. The quarterly review meetings were occasions when progress by all parties was reviewed, but there was no formal process whereby the agencies were obliged to report on and to explain the efficiency with which funding was being disbursed. In that sense, although both parties were in default of the Paris and Accra accords, the formal expectations of the aid partnership process in Kenya continued to place most or the responsibility for accountability upon the government rather than the agency side, and the desirability of changing that balance remained unaddressed.

## Conclusions

KESSP has been a highly innovative programme, targeted particularly at the achievement of UPE in Kenya by 2015, attaining transition rates of 70% from primary to secondary schools with a particular focus on girls' opportunities for progression, and on improving school infrastructure in arid and semi-arid areas (MOEST 2005:iii). Fee-free primary schooling was maintained, with donor support. One consequence was that, by 2005, primary enrolment rates remained some 20 percent higher than their levels in the years preceding 2003 and they continued to rise through 2008 (Table 1).

This paper has shown that the design and monitoring of KESSP has been a cooperative endeavour between the MoE and its donor partners, and that the programme is believed (by both the GoK and aid agencies) to have increased the efficiency both of the education sector as a whole, and of the coordination and transparency of its financing and implementation. Nevertheless the aid process falls short of the ideals of Paris and Accra in a number of important respects.

As regards alignment, the major objectives of donors were generally externally formulated, and programme financing in education proved possible because the NARC government's avowed objective of achieving FPE was consistent with MDG priorities. However, in designing the KESSP investment programme for education, donor preferences for the primary sector influenced Kenyan objectives and were instrumental in other parts of the education sector receiving less attention than they deserved.<sup>15</sup>

Conditionality, too, was initially externally driven, although over time Kenyan officials increasingly accepted that the basic structure of the financial monitoring reports provided sensible monitoring information and good practice for transparent implementation.

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<sup>15</sup> For example, the development of both TVET and tertiary education were included amongst the priorities of KESSP, but planning for them was weak, and they did not find favour with donors who contributed to the pool.

Local systems have increasingly been used to deliver aid resources, and the pooled funds within KESSP provided a strong endorsement (on the part of a sub-set of donor agencies) that financial transparency and accountability was working tolerably well. However success here has been partial. A good number of donors remained outside the pool, and their wish to identify the outcomes flowing from their particular aid contributions provided an irritant to the smooth application of programme monies. Many of them also continued to be sceptical that corruption had been adequately reduced<sup>16</sup>, and believed that continued risks to the proper allocation of financial resources undermined the possibility of a stronger shift towards the provision of budget support.

The most commonly cited problem with the SWAp was the frequent delays which occurred in making funds available. The Kenyan government usually blamed this upon inefficiencies within donor administrative systems, whereas the agencies cited similar failings in the Treasury, expressing continued concerns about the transparency of resource-use. There were, for example, interruptions caused to the flow of donor funding both in 2006, following concerns over corruption (MoE 2008), and again after post-election violence in 2008. These pauses in the aid programme were detrimental both for government/donor relations and for programme implementation. Such tensions were eased by the existence of the Joint Financing Agreement which required regular meetings between the major donors and the MoE. Nevertheless, difficulties with prompt and transparent communication both within the donor group and between it and the government were important parts of the cause.

Finally, there was little shift in the balance of mutual accountability for results since the inception of the KESSP. The government was formally required to report on progress with implementation - albeit the quality of such reporting was often not high. The donors, on the other hand, have had little formal obligation to account for their own performance. They admitted that their procedures for the speedy delivery of funds were weak, but the reasons for this, and for the communications difficulties which have underlain it, were not addressed in a transparent fashion.

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<sup>16</sup> In 2008, Kenya was ranked 147<sup>th</sup> of 180 countries on the Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (Available from: [http://www.transparency.org/policy\\_research/surveys\\_indices/cpi/2008/cpi\\_2008\\_table](http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2008/cpi_2008_table)).

We can conclude, then, that the Paris and Accra agreements have had some impact on the practice of aid ‘partnership’ in Kenyan education. However, much greater flexibility has been required on the part of the Kenyan authorities as regards prioritising policy objectives, sharing information and providing accountability for results, than has occurred on the aid agency side. Success in moving towards a genuinely equal partnership over the decade to 2010 was limited. The donors continued to call most of the shots, and the testing of earlier aid promises and commitments, delivered by post-2008 international economic circumstances, is unlikely soon to undermine the continued relevance of these findings.

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