



**Post-Basic Education and Training for Growth and Poverty Reduction.
Towards a History of Policy in Kenya 1963-2005**

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CONTENTS

CONTENTS.....	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
Introduction.....	7
1. KENYA’S POLICIES ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN RELATION TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT, 1963-2002.....	8
Kenya’s First Education Commission (1964).....	9
Education, Training, Employment and the Informal Economy, 1966 to 1986.....	10
Free Primary Education first time around – impact on the children of the poor	17
Education, Training and Employment at the Beginning of the 1990s.....	18
From ‘Education, Employment and Rural Development’ to ‘Training for Industrial Transformation’ in 30 years.....	20
A Master Plan with a Changing Discourse on the Enabling Environment.....	22
From the Master Plan (1998) to the <i>Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya (1999)</i>	23
The arrival of the poverty perspective, 1996	25
Concluding remarks on the 40 years of policy history, 1963-2002.....	27
2. EDUCATION, TRAINING AND WORK IN THE NEW POLITICAL CONTEXT.....	31
A new series of education policy papers.....	34
Synthesising the Government’s Vision: Quality, Quantity, Outcomes	41
Concluding Comments on the Education & Training Policy Process	45
Inter-sectoral Implications of Education, Skills and Work.....	45
The International Dimension of Kenya’s Education and Training Reform.....	47
Education, Training and their Enabling, and Surrounding Environments.....	47
New Approaches and their Impact on Outcomes and Learning Achievement.....	51
The Realities of Post-basic Education and Training in Kenya – for Wealth and Employment Creation	54
Concluding remarks on basic and post-basic education, poverty and development.....	57
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	61

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This analysis of Kenya takes as its starting point an assumption about the transformative potential of education on the economy, but also the very lively concern that this relationship has been flawed in practice. Ruth Kagia, from Kenya and the World Bank, has expressed this succinctly: ‘The spectacular expansion of education in Kenya in the 70s and 80s has clearly not led to the economic and social gains generally associated with education’.

The paper covers 40 years of policy history, examining to what extent some of the following major themes were to be found in the education commissions, working parties, and sessional papers that were related to education, employment and the wider economy:

Policy views about the link between education & skills development and economic growth;

Policy perceptions of the connections between education & skills development and poverty reduction;

Concerns about the quality and learning outcomes of education and training systems;

Concerns about the relationships between the education sector and other sectoral developments;

Aspirations to provide universal primary education and increasing amounts of secondary education to all young people;

Interaction of external aid agencies with Kenya in support of education and skills development.

This present review of the history of policy, including of very recent policy developments both within Kenya and in the international community, has underlined the inescapable complexity of any answer to Kagia’s question above. It has, hopefully, clarified the need to examine education in its two-way interactions with many other sectors in the wider environment, and not as a stand-alone sector that can, in isolation, be examined for its direct influence on such crucial issues as productivity, fertility, poverty reduction and growth. It has also affirmed, within Kenya and more generally, the inseparability of the pursuit of basic education from post-basic education. The relationship between basic and post-basic has always been a dynamic one, and never more so than when there has been a political commitment to making primary education universal and free. The review has also noted a rising international concern to place poverty reduction at the centre of the world’s development agenda; this focus has been accommodated within Kenyan education policy, and the most recent thinking has laid down ambitious merit-based, pro-poor pathways right through the education and training system. In other words, Kenya has signalled forcefully that there is little point in making just one segment of education –

primary schooling – the focus of pro-poor policy. Another thread which has run through this account has been an awareness of the critical importance of quality and positive learning outcomes. Only too often, the references have been to deficits in quality and very uncertain outcomes. Finally, and intimately connected to quality and outcomes has been the linkage of education and training to the labour market, both formal and informal, rural and urban. This has been one of the most politically sensitive and frequent reference points throughout the 40 years since independence. It has inspired curricular reform within education and training, and it has also encouraged valuable rethinking of the nature of Kenya's economy, in farms, firms and factories.

The need to know more

This review has also underlined some important deficits in our knowledge base concerning the relations of post-basic education with poverty reduction and growth in Kenya. These are mentioned here in the hope that they may become part of further research on these relationships. 1. The interaction between the donor agenda – and more generally the international development agenda – and Kenya on particular education priorities is under-researched. 2. The history of the latest initiative in Free Primary Education, since January 2003, is potentially of great importance to our understanding of basic education and poverty reduction, as a substantial proportion of the 1.3 million new entrants to schooling will have come from families of the poor. 3. Secondary and Technical education policy will prove crucial to what happens in primary; and, given the prohibitive costs of moving towards free secondary schooling and technical training, careful evaluation of merit scholarships and pro-poor pathways will be critical to documenting whether bright children from poorer families will even be successfully held in primary schools, let alone be selected to post-basic education. 4. There are clearly major gaps, at every level, in our understanding of pupil and student achievement. 5. The utilisation, in work and employment, of knowledge and skills from schools, colleges and training centres is hugely under-researched. With the rethinking by the new government of the enterprise economy in rural and urban areas, it will be important to be able to chart the interaction between institutional knowledge and the dynamics of the enterprise. This will be especially important if the government is able to move expeditiously on the implementation of both its micro and small enterprise sessional paper and the sessional paper on education and training.

If Kenya's ambition to become a knowledge economy by 2020 is to be realised, it will need to know a great deal more than it currently does about its knowledge infrastructure, its systems for capturing and assimilating new knowledge, and its processes for utilising that knowledge in agriculture, industry and within the public sector. In all of these tasks, a fully integrated, high quality, basic and post-basic education and training system will be central.

**POST-BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR GROWTH AND POVERTY
REDUCTION.
TOWARDS A HISTORY OF POLICY IN KENYA, 1963-2005¹**

Introduction

This paper is one of few attempts to examine Kenya's education and training systems in their relations with the surrounding economic and social environment.² There is an urgent concern today in Kenya with the relationship between education and the economy; for example, there is an expectation that Kenya can become an industrialised nation by 2020, and there is an assumption that education and training should play a key role in achieving this objective. Yet there has been an underlying worry that the expansion of education and skills development systems – over the more than 40 years of independence – has not translated into the economic and social gains widely associated with such investment. While there continues to be a strong belief that investment in human capital has been recognised as a major factor of economic growth and hence poverty reduction', there is an acknowledgement that the cycle of human capital development is also largely dependent on a country's potential to grow at a rate that can sustain a population growth and structure, and generate enough resources for education and training. In other words, education and the economy are in an intimate, interactive relationship, and thus the persistent poor performance of the economy in the last two decades has raised poverty levels and discouraged household investment in education. The recent declaration of free primary education, in 2003, was an attempt to reverse the negative trends in education, but its sustainability will be inseparable from the accelerated growth in the economy, as will the goal of poverty reduction by 50% by the year 2015.

This analysis of Kenya takes as a starting point an assumption about the transformative potential of education on the economy, but also the very lively concern that this relationship has been flawed in practice. Ruth Kagia has expressed this succinctly: 'The spectacular expansion of education in Kenya in the 70s and 80s has clearly not led to the economic and social gains generally associated with education' (Kagia, 13 December 2004, personal communication). This optimism and widespread conviction about the 'productive' role of education, and the disappointment about the outcomes of the investment are at the core of the paper.

Before examining in detail the contemporary situation, it is valuable to explore how some of the key concepts with which we are concerned in this Kenya country paper have been treated in the 40 odd years since Independence. These critical issues include the following:

¹ This paper is part of a six country study of the relations between post-basic education and training and poverty reduction, funded by the British Department for International Development. Other studies cover Ghana, India, Rwanda, South Africa and Tanzania. The views in this paper are those of the author.

² For a much earlier initiative, see Court and Ghai (eds) 1974.

Policy views about the link between education & skills development and economic growth;

Policy perceptions of the connections between education & skills development and poverty reduction;

Concerns about the quality and learning outcomes of education and training systems;

Concerns about the relationships between the education sector and other sectoral developments;

Aspirations to provide universal primary education and increasing amounts of secondary education to all young people;

Interaction of external aid agencies with Kenya in support of education and skills development.

A first section will review the period of the first two presidencies (Kenyatta and Moi), and will particularly examine in what ways policies and planning of education and training have theorised the relationship with the surrounding social and economic environment. A second section will look particularly at the more recent period of the Kibaki presidency, from December 2002 to the present, but will still focus on the manner in which education interplays with the economy. In these three different periods, the policy history will be analysed as the principal source of the above themes. Frequently, local researchers are a key element in the policy process, playing a lead role in the large number of education commissions. Self-standing academic research has a much less direct relationship to policy, and frequently no relationship at all. Much of the research on education in Kenya that is best known within the international academic community has been externally funded, but has had little connection with local policy formation (Nkinyangi 1983; Court 1983).³ A great deal of the educational research in Kenya in the last twenty and more years has been commissioned and carried out by donor agencies in the consultancy mode.⁴

1. KENYA'S POLICIES ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN RELATION TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT, 1963-2002

³ For a discussion of the local education research environment, see Court and Nkinyangi in Nkinyangi and Shaeffer (1981); also Namuddu in Gmelin and King (1992).

⁴ The impact of the consultancy culture on research is discussed in King (2005a).

Kenya's First Education Commission (1964)

Of all these reflections, perhaps the most urgent in our minds was the need to see education in the context of our national economic development; for upon the adequate fulfilment of this objective, our ability to reach all other national goals, including those in education, depends....Thus, the closer the link between our efforts in education and the ends of national development, the better for both education and development; especially as we consider that development means eradicating poverty, ignorance and disease from Kenya. (Kenya Government 1964: 24)

The aspiration, taken from the first pages of Kenya's first Education Commission after Independence in 1963, to link education closely to economic development was common to many of the new nations of the 1960s. The Commission anticipated many of the issues which continue to be of concern to national policy makers and aid agencies today. Thus it is important to recognise, in this quotation, that Kenya's first national education policy statement also underlined the fact that development did not just mean economic growth but also poverty eradication. And it is important to note that the final chapter of the Education Commission Report was already concerned with a new phenomenon – the unemployment of primary school leavers – and how they could be accommodated in the 'modern' and 'traditional' sector.⁵ The Commission was also interested in the role of foreign aid, but it is a noteworthy anticipation of current aid priorities (and the rise of the Sector Wide Approach [SWAP] that, in the four short paragraphs allocated to this dimension of aid, the emphasis was very much on how crucially important it was that aid projects should fall within the overall, long-term educational development plan of Kenya. Otherwise, aid projects could prove a costly distortion to Kenya's own educational planning.

The Commission was equally thoughtful about the relations between the education sector and others sectors of the economy. This is refreshing in an Education Commission, since it is all too common for education commissions to give an impression that the impact of education is somehow independent of what is going on in the rest of the economy. The Ominde Commission – as the Education Commission was called after its Chairman – took a line that is not dissimilar to that being taken by the forthcoming World Bank policy paper on Education (World Bank 2005), as well as the Commission for Africa (2005) and the UN Millennium Project (2005).⁶ Education was very much a part of a multi-sectoral development initiative:

⁵ It is interesting to note that the Commission was concerned at the 50,000 young men who would leave primary school with no openings available in the modern economy. Though the term 'informal economy' would not be used in Kenya till almost 10 years later, the Commission was already noting that 'no completely hard and fast line separates the modern wage economy from the traditional sector' (Kenya Government 1964: 137).

⁶ For an account of the similarities in these three key documents of 2005, see King 2005b.

It is obvious, however, that the prospects of the school leaver, at this or any other level, are not soluble by educational means alone. The problem is fundamentally one of economic growth, to which education may make its appropriate contribution, but is, nevertheless, only one of the factors in growth. Other factors, such as the provision of social and development capital, organisation, the growth of markets, transport facilities and commercial institutions, are equally necessary to progress. Education and training interlock with all of these factors and, if neglected at the crucial time, can seriously impede the development of any one, and therefore of the whole. (Kenya Government 1964: 138-9)

The Commission also reflected seriously on the new Government's manifesto commitment to universal free primary education of 7 years. They considered that the tax base was not present to allow this objective to be realised. Indeed, it would be a full 40 years before another new Government in Kenya would make it a manifesto commitment, and actually implement it, in January 2003.⁷ A final issue which is also of concern to this present paper – standards and quality – was already firmly on the Commission's agenda, and not least the worry about the morale and professionalism of teachers (Kenya Government 1964: 56). Our interest in outcomes and in quality is directly connected to our wider concern with the transformational potential of education and training; if the educational achievement of graduates at different levels of the system is very meagre, there must surely be a question-mark about their impact on their work and employment environments.

Our principal concern with the impact of education and training on the working environment does not mean that we have a narrowly utilitarian view of education. Indeed we would assert that education also has an intrinsic value to individuals and to societies. The case for just such a 'liberal education' has been put very powerfully by the Task Force on Higher Education and Society (World Bank 2000).⁸ Arguably, however, the teaching and learning process needs to be of a certain quality even for this intrinsic effect of education to be assured.

Education, Training, Employment and the Informal Economy, 1966 to 1986

We could argue that shortly after the Ominde Commission, there was a very clear attempt by Kenya's education policy makers to examine education within the wider economic and social environment. The Kericho Conference which analysed *Education, employment and rural development* in 1966 was such an occasion. Its keynote address was made by

⁷ President Kenyatta declared free primary education for the first four standards in 1974, but this initiative, though hugely popular at the time, was not sustained, and did not cover the whole of the primary school cycle. There was a move in 1979 to extend UPE to the upper three primary standards. This, too, was not sustained.

⁸ 'A liberal education should leave students excited by the world of learning and prepared to continue their education, both in the short term – through in-depth study of a specialist discipline – and in the long term as they continually refresh their knowledge in formal and informal ways through the process of lifelong learning'

the then Minister of Economic Planning, Tom Mboya. And the very title of the Conference makes clear that its concern with education was inseparable from wider development strategies, and particularly those that impacted on the overwhelming majority of Kenyans who lived in the rural areas. The challenge was to bring an increasing proportion of the rural population into a modern productive economy. It approached this task within the constraints of a dual economy perspective, but it came close to abandoning this as it argued for the critical role of education in changing the surrounding rural productive environment:

One of the chief tools with which to achieve this rural transformation is education and training in their various forms – as much the education of the adult farmer in new techniques and attitudes – as much training in co-operation and the management of credit, as much the education of women as the education of children in formal schools and Universities.

But while the process of economic investment and education gathers momentum there arises an urgent and inescapable problem of finding productive employment (including self-employment) and an increasing income for huge numbers of Kenya citizens...

Here lies the most urgent problem of all. Already the process of economic and social change has thrown up a formidable number of landless and jobless unemployed and an even greater number of men and women with partial, unproductive or petty employment who demand a better life and opportunity with increasing urgency. Among those unemployed are included a high proportion of Kenya's primary school leavers, who should be among the most useful and productive of her citizens (Sheffield 1967: 3-5).

The logical consequence of this insight into popular aspirations and into the arithmetic of unemployment was that there needed to be large-scale investment in rural development. Anticipating by some 40 years, the vision and the urgency captured by the UN Millennium Report (2005) directed by Jeffrey Sachs, Frederick Harbison, of manpower planning renown, argued for the rural economic environment to be the target of huge investment:

The rural transformation calls for massive expenditure on such things as agricultural research, extension services, supervised credit facilities, fertiliser production and distribution, irrigation, road building, home construction as well as land reclamation, redistribution and resettlement (Harbison 1967: 186).

In an innovative switch of the manpower planning approach from the modern to the traditional sector, Harbison pressed the point that this rural modernisation would require tremendous inputs of trained manpower, far exceeding that needed in the so-called modern sector. He felt it would be much easier to modernise the rural traditional sector than the emerging 'low productivity or traditional sector' in the urban areas.

The conceptual distinction between modern and traditional sector would be swept away in 1971-1972, when the ILO employment mission was to visit Kenya, but for our purposes the Kericho Report remains important for underlining the need for multi-sectoral rural transformation, with a major role played by educative services.

Interestingly, in terms of research on pupils' aspirations that might be relevant to this kind of rural transformation, Kericho clarified that the farming was regarded as the 'best' job across all Kenya provinces, including urban areas. But when it came to identifying what job pupils would actually prefer for themselves, farming came a good deal lower. As to our concern with the relationship between education and poverty, a very significant proportion of children identified lack of education with negative mobility. Most succinctly, this was expressed as follows: 'A man without education is always poor, jobless and a thief.' (Koff 1967: 396).

Two years after the Kericho Report, in 1969, Kenya was the site of one of the first attempts to carry out a cost-benefit analysis of education. As so much importance would be attached later to the private and social "returns" to different levels of education, it is refreshing to read a document which is so open about the objections to and difficulties with the approach. The final results are so counter-intuitive and beset with qualifications as not to be worth rehearsing at any length, but as our present report is concerned with post-basic education and training, it may be worth noting the following: that incomplete primary and complete secondary education had the best private returns, while complete secondary education offered the best social return. The research also picked out very early that fertility seemed to decline with increased levels of education.

The resulting conclusions are surprisingly honest. 'We advance the tentative conclusion that an average Kenyan family⁹ may not be selecting the best investment when it sends its children to primary school' (World Bank 1969: 214). When we turn to the social returns, the honesty – and arguably the naivety – of the conclusion are worth noting:

Turning our attention from the private to the public investor in education, we are given to similar doubts. The rapid decrease in the social rates of return to investment in primary education from 1960-1966 suggests that the present volume of primary schooling – two thirds of which is financed by public authorities – cannot be justified on economic grounds alone unless delayed income effects (via reduced fertility or improved health standards, for example) or non-economic benefits, such as the promotion of national unity, are taken into account. (World Bank 1969: 215)

It would be hard to imagine that this particular World Bank report would have had much impact on education policy in Kenya. It came at a time when only half the primary school-age population were in school, and when enormous local energies were being dedicated to increasing educational opportunities – especially at the post-primary level,

⁹ Given that the sample used was of 4,742 urban males in the modern sectors of Nairobi, Nakuru and Mombasa, there are natural concerns about what can be really deduced from this for the 'average Kenyan family'.

through large numbers of self-help (*Harambee*) schools. But as we proceed through the range of reports that deal in different ways with education in relation to the wider economic and social environment, we are very conscious that this policy literature can take on a life of its own. In other words, the notion, for example, of skills development for massive rural transformation can have an impact both on the discourse of the international community and on national policy, or it can fail to do so. Influencing the discourse is very different from effecting change on the ground. This distinction is very clear when we turn to the ILO Employment Mission to Kenya, whose report *Employment, Incomes and Equality* was published in 1972.

Just three years after the World Bank's attempt at cost-benefit analysis, the ILO Mission really is credited with making a real difference to policy – most famously with the internationalisation of the notion of the informal sector. Here was an opportunity to rethink what had been termed the 'traditional' sector, both rural and urban. Its urban side had been very recently characterised by Harbison in the Kericho Report as including those 'unemployed or under-employed in petty trade, primitive crafts, begging and other low-productivity activities' (Harbison 1967: 191). Now, by contrast, the ILO was able to present informal activities in a very positive light for their accessibility, reliance on indigenous resources, labour intensity, competitiveness and much else. For the Mission, the informal sector was 'the source of a new strategy for development for Kenya' and 'a source of Kenya's future growth' (ILO 1972: 505).

What is important in view of our present analysis is that ILO's internationalisation of the informal sector through this Kenya Mission was much more influential abroad than in Kenya. Arguably, the notion of the informal sector would not get really serious attention within Kenya until 1986 (Kenya Government 1986 and King 1996). Secondly, the ILO's focus on the **urban** informal sector had a long-term negative impact on what we are concerned with here – the development of a national approach to education, training, employment and work. Apart from focusing principally on the urban informal economy, it only considered the rural informal sector to be those small-scale income generating activities which were **outside** farming. Why the occupational pluralism of the ordinary small-scale farmer was not considered a small-scale enterprise – but only the non-farm activities in rural areas – must remain for the moment a mystery. This conceptualisation is finally beginning to change, both within Kenya and internationally, but the difficulty of thinking of the informal sector as the ordinary economy across the whole country has made it difficult for education policy makers to link education and work for the majority of the population.¹⁰

Here too the Employment Mission was not helpful. It pioneered the internationalisation of the concept of the informal economy, but when it turned, in the very next chapter, to Education and Training, there was no mention of the informal economy at all. Possibly one reason why there was not an attempt to think through the relationship between education and the informal sector was because the authors of the chapter were very concerned about the dominance of formal education and the second-class status of non-formal education or informal education. Their preoccupation was with reforming

¹⁰ See King 2005b for the case for dropping the term 'informal sector'.

education, and particularly seeking to remove what they felt was the malign influence of examinations.¹¹ The result was that the theorising of education's relations with the social and economic environment was not undertaken because the then linkage of the formal education system with the formal sector of the economy was regarded as unfortunate and in need of reform. In its place, there was suggested a Nyerere-style vision of an education that would support the basic activities of life. 'Thus, the learning that takes place in the home, on the farm and at the workbench must be blended with, not set in opposition to, that which takes place in the school' (ILO 1972: 241). As a result, the Mission argued that in their proposed basic cycle of 8-9 years of education there should be first a modest and then a heavy bias toward pre-vocational subjects in the final years.

If the ILO Mission was overly concerned with the baleful effects of the 'Paper Qualifications Syndrome', and therefore insufficiently involved in mapping education's two-way influence on the economic environment, it did nevertheless know enough about the wide discrepancies in school quality to want to introduce quota systems that would make entry to secondary school more equitable. Again, the preoccupation with the reform of the examination system got in the way of understanding whether the primary schools which had no success at all in gaining entrance for their pupils to public secondary schools were ones where the children of poor children were dominant. Instead, an elaborate quota system was devised – though not implemented – which would have sought to iron out the already huge and growing disparities within the education system (ILO 1972: 248).

Reflecting on *Employment, Incomes and Equality* we could argue that it approached Kenya with a basic needs framework, but the resulting analysis and recommendations did not situate education and training within a surrounding environment, even though the 'discovery' of the informal sector could have encouraged a new way of thinking about the relationship between formal and non-formal education, and between the formal and informal economies.¹²

What was left undone by the ILO Mission was powerfully reinforced by an important *National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies* (NCEOP) just 4 years later (Kenya Government 1976). It too reached the conclusion that the unemployment of school leavers, both at primary and secondary levels, had become a major national problem, but it identified the challenge as being both school-based and economy-based. It sought to make educational recommendations that were very aware of the nature of the national economy, both formal (small) and informal (large), and it therefore, logically, argued for the necessary orientation to self-employment and small-scale enterprise of the schooling and training system. But at the same time it was sharply aware of the need for action in the non-education environment. Indeed, this was a Report which had a whole

¹¹ Ron Dore, of *The diploma disease* fame, was one of the principal authors of the Education chapter and was presumably responsible for the following: 'It is only after the root cause of the disease affecting the present functioning of the schools (i.e. the existing examination structure) has been eliminated that a change in the content of education begins to make sense' (ILO 1972: 244).

¹² One of the first attempts to analyse these relationships was King 1977.

separate chapter dedicated to the necessary actions by and coordination with all the other ministries, if the education recommendations were to be fulfilled (Kenya Govt. 1976: ch. 16). So there was a strong multi-sectoral thrust in the NCEOP, similar to the proposals in the new World Bank strategy paper.

But there was much in the NCEOP, also, that was reminiscent of Nyerere's *Education for self-reliance* which almost certainly had placed too much faith in the transformative potential of schools to change attitudes. The Committee pointed to the way that schooling had to expose young people to productive labour, and especially towards careers in agriculture, using appropriate technology and creative use of science. But it was clearly mindful of the research on the 'vocational school fallacy' as it did not make a general proposal to vocationalise or diversify all secondary schools (King and Martin 2002).

However, unlike World Bank research which would appear in a few years' time and would argue for the ways schools could, allegedly, influence economy and society without any explicit messages in the curriculum (King and Palmer 2006b), the NCEOP was sure that there was a potentially powerful 'school curriculum effect'. But the Committee was clear that the major expansion of education since Independence, while driven politically by the view that 'education was the most important element in economic development', had not delivered on a corresponding impact on the economy. Even if it was taken for granted that 'education certainly is important for all aspects of economic and social development' it was aware that there could be adverse impacts on agricultural development if the formal education system aimed only to meet the needs of the formal urban sector of the economy (Kenya Government 1976: 13).

Eight years later, in 1984, the recommendations of the NCEOP would in part be put into practice by a reform called the 8-4-4 system¹³ that introduced subjects into the primary and secondary curriculum that had a clear orientation to self-employment and the informal sector as well as to paid employment. What was unusual about these 8-4-4 initiatives was that they were explicitly linked to the employment and technology policies derived from the ILO Mission, and the NCEOP. The vision of the NCEOP was bold, and one that was ultimately concerned with pro-poor growth for the majority of young people in the country:

To make the education system seek to alter attitudes towards careers in agriculture and to reinforce changes in aspirations by income redistribution which encourages self-reliance, creativity, use of local resources, initiative and appropriate technology.

To make formal education induce the most appropriate and positive attitudes towards productive labour, with special reference to self-employment.

To restructure the pattern of incentives and rewards in favour of the poorer sections of the community, with particular reference to the rural farming and non-

¹³ 8 years of primary, 4 of secondary and 4 of tertiary.

farming activities, through an incomes policy covering wages, salaries, interest rates and profits. (Kenya Government 1976: 12)

Just two years later, in 1986, there was a further report of the Kenya Government, on *Economic Management for Renewed Growth*. The title is important; it was not on 'Economic management for poverty reduction' but *for Renewed Growth* (Kenya Government 1986). The Sessional Paper made it clear that the achievement of basic human needs – anticipating the UN Millennium Report of 2005 – would be dependent on growth. But that growth would be inseparable from a recognition of the role of 70% of the population who are in the informal economy. In this sense, growth and poverty reduction are brought together through a recognition, 15 years after the ILO Mission, that the informal economy was the majority economy:

Economic growth channelled in these directions will provide widespread benefits for Kenyans of all income levels, *improving the distribution of income*. Indeed, there is little conflict between growth and income distribution in Kenya, because growth can only be sustained by the rising productivity and incomes of farmers, herdsman, and workers in the informal sector-occupations that employ over 70% of the entire work force and include virtually all workers from low-income families.

Economic growth channelled in these directions is the only way to ensure *the provision of basic human needs* to all Kenyans. Needs provided largely by families themselves – food, shelter and clothing – depend on growing employment, productivity and incomes. Needs in which Government takes a role along with families - education, health and water – require a growing revenue base and thus growing national income. Without rapid economic growth, the provision of even the most basic human needs will be in jeopardy. (Kenya Government. 1986: 1-2. Emphasis in original)

The sheer size of the youth population and the cost and scarcity of modern sector jobs meant that the Sessional Paper identified a revolution in agricultural technology, marketing and commodity prices, along with related non-farm opportunities, as the way ahead. 'Unquestionably, the majority of future non-farm jobs opportunities will be in the informal sector – in small scale manufacturing, marketing, repairs and other service activities – located mostly in market centres and moderate-sized towns throughout Kenya' (Kenya Government 1986: 54). It was a job creation vision through a revolution in the informal sector to which the Government of Kibaki would return almost 20 years later, in 2003. In parallel with the emphasis on a revolution in the rural and urban small-scale sectors went a series of recommendations for the existing skills development institutions to be re-oriented. 'The principal goal must be to ensure that all institutes of technical secondary education offer relevant courses for the workers whose career will primarily be in the informal sector' (Kenya Government 1986: 57). There would still be pathways to higher education for those pursuing technical careers, but there would no

longer be a guarantee of employment in government for the graduates of university and other training programmes (Ibid. 107).

Here, then, was a major government policy arguing that skills development, a key sector of education and training, could be made directly relevant to the informal sector, and thus to both growth and poverty reduction. Thus in almost 15 years since the ILO Mission, the encouragement of the informal economy had become accepted as a key policy objective for Kenya, and through primary, secondary and technical and vocational education, the curricula had been changed in order re-orient young people to this work environment. The question would now be – what impact could this new orientation actually have on Kenya's young? And even more important – would the worry about the expansion of education not translating into positive economic and social outcomes now begin to be solved?? These years – really since Independence – had been driven by a concern with employment, and gradually from Kericho, to ILO, to NCEOP and finally to the 1986 Sessional paper, a mechanism had been put in place that linked the education and training system quite explicitly to the mass of jobs in the rural and urban informal sectors. In other words, a concern that the whole education system – both basic and post-basic – have a practical, vocational orientation had been achieved.

Free Primary Education first time around¹⁴ – impact on the children of the poor

During these key 15 years, other initiatives were taken that are important to bear in mind for estimating the impact of the above policies on all children, including those from the poorest households. First, free primary education for Standards I to IV was introduced in 1974, and then in 1980 to Standards V to VII, and to Standard VIII in 1985. The first removal of fees brought in almost an additional million children across the whole system; the introduction of free school milk brought in almost another 800,000 children in 1979, and in that same year, all other direct charges such as building funds etc were eliminated. But a closer examination of the numerical trends is more worrying. These are made explicit in the next *Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond* (Kenya Government 1988).

Although 600,000 new children came into Standard I in 1974, responding to free primary education, headmasters in many areas apparently raised their levies and charges for building funds (Somerset personal communication 18th February 2005). This naturally resulted in very poor retention. Indeed by the time the free primary cohort of 950,000 had reached Standard VII, its size was down to just 350,000, or 37% of those who had entered in 1974. The question must surely be whether this free primary episode merely encouraged the children of the poorer families to come into school with much fanfare, but paid little attention to their vanishing – almost entirely over the next 7 years.¹⁵

¹⁴ See Williams 2005 for UPE, the second time around.

¹⁵ See also Williams 2005 for the statistical make-up of UPE the first time around, including in Kenya.

There is a question about whether something similar may have happened with the introduction of free milk and the alleged transfer of all other schooling charges from parents to communities. Again, there was a huge increase in numbers, with Standard I shooting up from 599,000 to almost a million. However, by the end of 7 years, no less than half of the new children had vanished, with a retention ratio, again, of some 37%.

These episodes were important in view of the repeat of free primary education in 2003 to which we shall return. It is interesting to note that during the late 1970s and 1980s the policy discourse was not explicitly about reaching the children of the poor, and yet it must have been precisely those children who will have come into school, and almost certainly those same children that will have left, as charges were renewed, or as the quality of the schooling failed to hold them.

It is also noteworthy that there was no very detailed commentary in the *Presidential Working Party* about the quality and outcomes of education, and yet, beyond the crucial cost factor, one other explanation of the failure of the primary schools to retain such a high proportion of their entrants must surely be their quality in the eyes of parents and pupils (Kenya Government 1998: 22). We shall return to the questions of quality and the targeting of the children of the poor in a later section.

Instead the *Working Party* gave a relatively optimistic account of the relationship between education and economic development, without any specific analysis of how that relationship was actually being mediated. The impression is given that education is already having a powerful impact but that with more attention to quality and relevance, it will be even greater:

The Working Party considers that the policies of education should lay emphasis on priorities which will lead to even greater heights in social and economic development in order to enable Kenya to reap the benefits of science and technology and to industrialise her economy. Education and training should provide relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes for this development. (Kenya Government 1988: 13)

However, it should not go unremarked that this *Working Party* is the one that most strongly sanctioned and supported cost-sharing in the financing of education, a theme that would recur for the next 15 years as one of the principal reasons for the drop out and failure of the children of the poor (Kenya Government 1998: 117). It is perhaps not a coincidence that 1988 was the same year as the World Bank published its major report on *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*. This is widely seen as having affirmed cost-sharing in education (Elimu Yetu Coalition 2003: 23; World Bank 1988).

Education, Training and Employment at the Beginning of the 1990s

One of the key threads with which we are concerned in this country paper is **how** the extraordinary expansion of education and training in Kenya has actually impacted on the

country's social and economic environment. Thus far there have been a number of positive claims about this relationship in the different commissions, sessional papers and reports, as we have just seen, but these have been very general. Meanwhile, the predominant concern throughout the 1960s and until the early 1990s has been with only one element in the relationship between the school and economic development – that of pupil aspirations for work and the prevailing employment situation. We have argued that over this 30 year period, this concern with employment and specifically a growing policy awareness of the nature and potential of the rural and urban informal sector translated directly into a more practical and vocationalised curriculum at both primary and secondary levels. But this was only achieved, finally, in the 8-4-4 reforms of 1984. It would have been too soon in the next few years to have attempted any mature judgement about the impact on employment or on work of this major shift in the curriculum. In fact, we shall see later, there was never an attempt thoroughly to evaluate Kenya's single largest curriculum change since Independence for its social and economic impact.

Indeed the next Presidential Commission – despite being on *Development and Employment in Kenya: A strategy for the Transformation of the Economy* (Kenya Government 1991) – paid surprisingly little attention to reflecting on the potential of this nation-wide orientation towards self-employment and integration into the informal economy. Instead, it worried about the cost and complexity of implementing the 8-4-4 initiative. When it came to research, there seemed little interest in investigating what might have been the impact of the first 7 years of the 8-4-4. Rather, the Commission turned to World Bank and other organisations' research for evidence that rates of return to expenditures on education and training were very high. Intriguingly, they continued: 'Studies specific to Kenya show that farmers and informal sector workers with primary education are one-third more productive than workers who have not had this basic education (Kenya Government 1991: 161).¹⁶ The Commission report also mentioned the research which claimed that educating women made a difference to population growth, but restricted itself to asserting that 'Education transforms people by making them more receptive to the practical uses of science and technology in agriculture, industry and services'. It said it would confine itself to examining 'those aspects of education which have a direct bearing on the process of economic transformation that is necessary to generate sufficient employment for all who need it'.

In point of fact, the Commission did not really take the opportunity to explore the impact of education on economic transformation at all. Possibly because of the Jomtien conference of one year earlier in 1990 on Education for All which President Moi had attended, there was suddenly more interest in Universal Primary Education than in the further vocationalising of primary and secondary. Quite suddenly it was UPE that the Commission felt should be pursued – while the 8-4-4 and its technical and vocation ambitions should be carefully reviewed and actually reassessed:

¹⁶ It may be assumed that the reference to 'studies specific to Kenya' is to Lockheed, Jamison and Lau's (1980) influential work in which there were just 2 Kenya studies included – neither of which was positive in terms of this relationship between school and agricultural productivity (see King and Palmer 2006b).

The pay-off to universal primary education is likely to be very high. There is a fear that the greatly increased expenditure needed to implement the proposals for technical education would jeopardise the objective of UPE within the next ten years. *The Committee therefore recommends that the plans for expanding the technical component of the school curricula be reassessed, in view of the serious resource constraint facing the country.* For the next 10-20 years the pay-off to a fairly rapid move toward UPE is likely to be very much greater than to an immediate strengthening of technical education at all levels. (Kenya Government 1991: 167-168)

It could well be that the publication in 1991 of the World Bank's policy paper on *Vocational and Technical Education and Training* – which took a very critical line on school-based vocational education – might also have played a role in the decision to soft-peddle the full implementation of the 8-4-4 reforms. The Commission argued, following, quite possibly, the World Bank, that the financing of post-secondary technical training would be 'a more efficient way of attaining the objectives of the 8-4-4 reforms' (Kenya Government 1991: 168).

What was really surprising in the analysis of the Presidential Commission is that it was blithely talking about the planning of UPE – and the increased burden on parents - with no reference to the initiatives of 1974, and 1979 that sought to make Free Primary Education available to everyone in Kenya. Instead, it sought to buttress the case for UPE by talking about the massive drop out of pupils in primary. It pointed to the fact that 60% of pupils drop out between Standard 1 and Standard 8, and that in 1990 alone almost half a million children will have dropped out – a larger number than the 380,000 who would graduate at Standard 8. It added that 'this was a great waste, and that a continuation of this trend would not augur well for the success of the country's employment policies' (Kenya Government 1991: 163). What was not discussed was the lively possibility that one reason for the huge drop-out may well have been the dramatically reduced quality of schooling, and the re-instatement of cost-sharing (fee-paying) during the 1980s after the earlier introduction of free primary education (see also Williams 2005).

From 'Education, Employment and Rural Development' to 'Training for Industrial Transformation' in 30 years

Almost exactly 30 years after Kericho had celebrated the priority of rural development in 1967, there was a further Sessional Paper, this time looking to *Industrial Transformation to the Year 2020* (Kenya Government 1996). Readers of Kenya's policy history might be forgiven for wondering if this was a complete reversal, not only of the Kericho priorities, but also of the ILO Report, and the 1986 Sessional Paper on *Economic Management for Renewed Growth*. This latter had made it abundantly clear that agriculture must remain the leading sector in stimulating economic growth and job creation; and that 'the great majority of new jobs will be created not in cities or in large industry, but on farms and in small scale industries and services, both rural and urban' (Kenya Government 1986: 2).

Quite suddenly, there was a new Sessional Paper proposing enhanced industrialisation and a growth rate of 15% by 2020. This Paper looked eastwards to the newly industrialising countries (NICs) of Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia – which at one point in the 1970s had had a growth rate in GDP not very different from Kenya – and sought to learn from them. Interestingly, though there is a claim that the availability of a well educated and trained workforce is critical to the success of Kenya’s industrialisation strategy, and though it is admitted that education and training have received ‘high priority’ since independence, and that ‘very considerable resources’ have been devoted to expanding education at all levels, there is no detailed commentary at all on the quality of this huge investment in human resources over the past 40 years. One of the only two comments on training potential relates to the Youth Polytechnics which are identified as a vital bridge for the majority of Kenya’s poor to become involved in economic activities and gain the employment needed for participation in the labour force (Kenya Government 1996: 31). The other comment on skill potential relates to the informal sector, and it is claimed that the development of technical and managerial skills is essential if there is to be a transition to more formal enterprises. ‘The role of technical training institutions is central’ to achieving these training goals (ibid. 53). Apart from these, there is little explicit analysis of the relationship between the existing cognitive outcomes of schools, colleges and universities and the ambition to become an industrialised nation. There is however an admission that the planned development of a ‘national skills training strategy’ would be of great significance for the country’s industrialisation (ibid. 30).

What is astonishing in a plan for the industrialisation of the country is that it should have been so lacking in an institutional memory of the 30 years of thinking specifically about rural and urban employment, skills development and human resources in Kenya. After lamenting that the majority of the youth lack technical and vocational skills and that these skills are needed in the labour market, there was no discussion of the current status of the 8-4-4 – beyond saying that the 8-4-4 curriculum will be reviewed to be more focused on the national strategy for achieving the status of a newly industrialised country (ibid. 30).

The mere 5 pages accorded to human resources in this ambitious assault on NIC status cannot be regarded as taking seriously the role of education and training in economic development. There was no analysis of the effectiveness of the existing system – about which we have seen earlier Commissions and Sessional Papers being concerned. In other words, there was a distinct lack of interest in how the present system was functioning and what might be required if there was to be progress towards an industrial ‘developmental state’.

There was somewhat more attention given to the informal economy or what was now called Small-Scale and Jua Kali Enterprises,¹⁷ but even here there was little evaluation of what had actually been achieved since the informal economy finally got its own Sessional Paper in 1992 (Kenya Government 1992). Instead, a whole series of promises were made about credit, land, training and technology, and the section concluded with the claim – along with no evidence - that the Small-Scale and Jua Kali Enterprise sector has the

¹⁷ The name *Jua Kali*, meaning ‘hot sun’ in Swahili, signified that a great deal of informal sector activity took place with no shelter, out in the open (See King 1996)

potential to form one of the main pillars of industrialisation in Kenya and be a major source of employment opportunities.

A Master Plan with a Changing Discourse on the Enabling Environment

The reader will by now have gathered that the policy discourse on education and training in relation to the larger macro-economic environment in Kenya has not been a linear one. There has been little policy continuity. Certain grand themes have been developed, such as the role of education and employment, or the need for education to anticipate the needs of the rural environment, or the link between education and self-employment in the wider informal economy. Often there is a very indistinct relationship between the main themes of the Commissions and Sessional Papers and practice in the field; there is even, sometimes, a lack of continuity amongst the different Reports, as we saw with the industrialisation paper.

With the *Master Plan on Education and Training 1997-2010* (Kenya Government 1998), we enter a different universe again. Here was a major report, strongly supported by Kenya's aid partners, such as DFID and the World Bank, and yet its final status is distinctly uncertain. Perhaps because of its close connections with the donor community, it seems to signal another break with the 30 years of a discourse that was driven by concerns with education in relation to employment. This had led to a particular way of thinking about educational reform, and especially to trying to anticipate in schools the needs of the formal and informal economies.¹⁸ By contrast, the *Master Plan* is more concerned with efficiency and effectiveness, and for this reason much of its value is in the information it provides on the quality of the different sub-sectors of education.

As important as anything, the *Master Plan* signals a shift from a preoccupation with employment to the beginnings of a poverty discourse applied to education and training. The characterisation of 46% of Kenya households as being beneath the poverty line is used as a way of explaining wastage and drop-out, because of the problems of cost-sharing (or fee-paying). This focus would soon intensify with the rise of poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs), but it had already been encouraged by the World Bank-supported poverty assessments (e.g. Narayan and Nyamwaya 1996). Undeniably, the poverty focus brought a new understanding into the analysis of the declines in quality, but the shift away from the concerns with employment and informal sector was paralleled by a preference for general education and life skills rather than work-related skills in school.

Again, with the possible influence of the World Bank and DFID, the *Master Plan* is clear that primary education offers a 'better return on investment' than post primary sub-sectors. The claims, well-known since the Bank's research of 1980 (Lockheed et al.),

¹⁸ The Industrialisation Sessional Paper had also broken with that particular linkage of education and employment.

were repeated, without the need to make any of the necessary qualifications about their generalisability, or the importance of context and environment:¹⁹

Primary schooling (i) improves economic productivity in the formal and informal sector both in rural and urban areas, and (ii) has many salutary social outcomes including reduction in fertility and infant mortality, improvements to family health and nutrition, and increased awareness of and participation in civic affairs. (Kenya Government 1998: 55)

Somewhat surprisingly, this research-influenced priority for primary education did not translate into a policy of minimal support for secondary education. Rather, the *Master Plan* made up for the gaps in the *Industrialisation Sessional Paper* and, on the basis of comparative evidence from Korea, Malaysia and Mauritius, argued for raising the secondary transition rate, for primary school leavers, to 70% by 2010 and to 100% by 2020 – the projected date for Kenya to gain NIC status.

Nor did this mean a downplaying of technical and vocation education and training – except in general secondary schools. Indeed, the *Master Plan* took the ambition to become an industrialised country by 2020 very seriously, and examined – to a much greater extent than the *Sessional Paper* on industrialisation – the needs for non-university trained personnel.

What the *Master Plan* did better than many other Reports was give some sense of the challenges to quality and effectiveness in the education and training systems, but where it was lacking, as much as were many of the other Reports and Commissions, was in answering the critical question – How did education and training actually translate into greater rural and urban productivity, if it were to do so in Kenya? All it had here were the generalisations to which we have already alluded from the World Bank’s research portfolio.

From the Master Plan (1998) to the Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya (1999)

Readers will be excused for thinking that the making of sessional papers and the launching of presidential commissions are national past-times in Kenya. But sure enough within less than a year of the *Master Plan* being completed, there was the *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya: Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training (TIQET)*. This is an extraordinary document. It is concerned with the management and legal frameworks for support of education and training at all levels. Yet it has also got a very specific focus of attention on the issue of ‘Education for technological and industrial development’, given the national declarations about industrialisation by 2020. This particular chapter has some valuable insights into a whole range of ways in which formal education can interplay with the skills of creativity

¹⁹ See King, Palmer and Hayman 2005.

and enterprise which are so necessary in technological development. There are recommendations about the role of tertiary level research in industrialisation – a topic completely missed by the Industrialisation *Sessional Paper*, and concerns about enterprise culture, work ethic and sufficient skills at all levels. It was a report that had read all the others reports and commissions since independence, including their comments on the need for technical manpower for achieving industrialisation. But the Commission's considered but critical view was that the 'processes and mechanisms of achieving the stated objectives are never spelt out' (Kenya Government 1999b: 41).

It was the same story with many of its own specific recommendations – for more science, arts and crafts, and creativity. The Commission concluded that there was insufficient being done to make enough difference if the goal was really industrialisation. Similarly with the small enterprise and *jua kali* industries, there was not enough linkage with formal technical training and research for the *jua kali* products to acquire industrial quality. As far as rural development and industrialisation were concerned, again, the Commission knew of the earlier recommendations for what should be done with schools as well as with farmer training – but unusually for a Commission that spent most of its time on suggestions linked exclusively to the education and training system, it here recognised that it was the wider enabling environment that would be crucial to what was done in schools i.e. action in rural electrification, rural access roads, water resources and alternative energy resources (Kenya Government 1999b: 49).²⁰

Thus, there is the same problem with this Commission as with many of the others: that there is a set of recommendations about the goals, and the ultimate objectives, whether industrialisation or rural development. But there is little sense of how the actions within the education 'silo' may be made to fit into the specifics of a rural or national framework. Nor is there any sense of how the availability of trained manpower actually translates into economic and industrial development. This lack of particular processes and mechanisms for moving towards utilisation is something that the Commission, as we have seen, was aware of; but it is typical of this kind of legalistic approach that the Commission judges Kenya to have quite the wrong ratio of professionals to technicians to artisans, without explaining what kind of difference, in practice, an improved ratio would make.

We end up, from this Commission, with an enormous set of recommendations for the education and training system in its complex policy and legal framework, but with only a very hazy insight into how a different framework would impact on the great themes of the past 30 and more years – employment and rural development.

As to the outputs of the system, the quality of the graduates, and their capacities, there is almost no commentary at all. There is plenty about the current and proposed content of the curriculum at all the different levels, and even some comment on whether there are actually teaching materials to be found in schools. But data on pupil achievement is

²⁰ We shall see later – in examining the *UN Millennium Project Report* and the *Commission for Africa* of 2005 – that it is precisely their concern with embedding educational recommendations in a wider set of economic and infrastructural changes that sets them apart from so much of the literature on reaching the millennium goals.

almost invisible. There is, admittedly, some clear awareness of the particular challenge faced by girl students both at home and in the schools themselves. But apart from a fleeting reference to primary school teachers being recruited with inadequate grades (Kenya Government 1999b: 90), there is little sense of the outcomes, in terms of skills, knowledge and attitudes, of this expanding education and training system. How was the system actually performing? The section on ‘quality’ and ‘relevance’ contains no answers.

We shall return to the lack of information about outcomes and quality, both at the point of graduation and also in terms of utilisation of school leavers and other graduates in the workplace; but for the moment, it needs to be emphasised that for all the talk about the role of manpower in preparation for industrialisation, one of the largest drawbacks, despite all these reports and commissions, is that the country had not elaborated a systematic and coordinated science and technology policy (King and McGrath 2002: 57).

The arrival of the poverty perspective, 1996

The discourse about human development over the 30 and more years since Independence had moved from high level manpower to basic needs, but very frequently there had been a strong two-way concern about the link between education and employment. In addition, all the reports and commissions over those decades had been concerned with the whole of the education and training system, and not just with a single sub-sector. This last point is worth underlining, because since the rise of the World Conference, and particularly the World Conference on Education for All (1990) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), there had been increasing pressure to prioritise primary education. This had not impacted very noticeably on the *Master Plan on Education and Training* (1998) nor on the *Commission of Inquiry* of the following year. They continued to concern themselves with all levels of education and training from early childhood to tertiary.

But with the arrival of the *National Poverty Eradication Plan, 1999-2015*,²¹ we enter a world where the agenda and conceptualisation are, arguably, much more externally driven than in many of these earlier reports and commissions which we have reviewed. This is not to say that the Plan is not persuasive. The argument for ‘human and social capital accumulation by low income groups’ as ‘an essential twin to broad-based economic growth’ is well-made. But the focus of education in the document is exclusively concerned with primary education. Along with basic health, water and sanitation, these become ‘essential social services for low income groups’ (Kenya Government 1999a: 39).

The poverty perspective was crucial in giving one possible explanation for the declining enrolments which continued to be very substantial. Despite the earlier attempts to make

²¹ The Plan had been preceded by *Learning from the Poor: a Participatory Poverty Assessment in Kenya* (Narayan and Nyamwaya 1996). This was valuable for pointing to cost-sharing as a key element in dropping out by poorer families.

primary education free, charges had been re-applied under the banner of cost sharing, and it is likely that a significant number of the approximately 60% who had been dropping out after enrolment and thus failing to complete Standard VIII would have been the children of the poorer families. The combination of fees, levies and the absence of publicly provided materials and textbooks in school meant that the burdens for families came to more than the fees alone. Something like a third of the total cost of primary education was coming from parents. The report was able to argue convincingly that publicly subsidised (i.e. free primary education) was likely to be the only way to deal with the loss and non-attendance of such large numbers of children. But politically it was not able to argue for free primary education but only for teacher redeployment and increased local governance of schools. Nor was there any consideration at all of whether the low quality of the teaching and learning process might be a factor in declining enrolments.

The poverty perspective was also able to show that the government only picked up something like 1/3 of the cost of secondary education; which meant that a much greater burden fell on the parents, and hence made it less likely that children from poor families would be able to continue from primary to secondary. Interestingly, there was no discussion of the existing scholarships and pro-poor pathways from primary to secondary education. But the *Participatory Poverty Assessment* had already pointed out that 'Because many bursaries are designated for secondary schools students – and most poor children do not attend secondary school – they automatically fall to children in better-off homes (Narayan and Nyamwaya 1996: 40).

Like the concerns of the Kericho and ILO reports, the poverty perspective brought work and employment back into the calculations, along with a recognition of the key role of encouraging the micro-enterprises in the informal rural and urban economies.

Within two years, in September 2001, Kenya had produced its *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for the Period 2001-2004 (PRSP)* [Kenya Government 2001]. This powerfully reinforced the perspective of the earlier poverty plan, as it was now able to claim that there was a 52% incidence of absolute poverty nationwide. To a much greater extent than the other reports we have examined, the PRSP was externally conditioned, and it explicitly used the International Development Targets and the Millennium Development Goals as its own targets and frame of reference. Nevertheless, its impact on positioning human development, and especially, education within a wider economic context is worth analysing.

As is the practice with the PRSP process, almost half of the PRSP volume was taken up with the translation of objectives and strategies into particular time-bound and costed targets, at the national, sectoral and district level.²² The actual analysis of education in the report as a whole was just over a page, and thus not amenable to more than a summary approach. Despite a recognition that the continued non-attendance, drop-out and non-completion were related to user charges, the report made no commitment to Free Primary Education except as something it would seek to move towards (Kenya

²² For a critique of this detailed targeting in the PRSP, see King 2005c.

Government 2001: 45). Instead, there was a whole series of measures to reduce the burden of user charges on parents, as well as expanding provision of bursaries, subsidies and school feeding programmes. While all of these are an important indication of what might be required, the long-running Moi Government was now just a year away from falling, and there were doubtless other political preoccupations than making the case for free primary education.

One of the few things that was rushed through in 2001 with little attempt at evaluation was the removal of several subjects from the primary and secondary school curricula and from formal national examination. These were exactly some of those practical activities which had been proposed by several earlier commissions and reports, and had then been brought in by the 8-4-4 reforms of the mid-1980s. They had proved demanding on curriculum time and on teaching, but it is symptomatic of a lack of concern with the measurement of outcomes and quality that these elements were summarily removed.²³

The PRSP covered very sketchily all the different sectors of the economy, but there was no scope for inter-sectoral coordination, much less for any exploration of how a particular sector such as education had an interactive relationship with other sectors. There were few qualitative judgements about the performance of the education system as a whole. There was only an occasional reference to poor governance and corruption as a possible cause of low performance (Kenya Government 2001: 61).

Concluding remarks on the 40 years of policy history, 1963-2002

We have reviewed selectively almost 40 years of policy history, through the medium of the most significant markers of that history. We have focused particularly on the relationships between education and the surrounding social and economic environment, and have noted that the employment and self-employment priorities of commissions did eventually translate back into curricular changes in both primary and secondary schools from 1984. These changes paralleled the vocational orientation of secondary schools in Ghana in 1986, and came almost 10 years later than the orientation of Tanzanian schools to self-reliance, and practical work. This vocational orientation of Kenya's schools would have fitted in well with the World Bank's initial lending priorities which were solidly behind the 'diversification' of secondary schools between 1963 and 1980 (King 2003). But from the early 1980s, after some 80 projects supporting diversification, the priorities changed in the Bank:

²³ Mwiria, an educational consultant, was to find himself as assistant minister for education in the new Kenya government in December 2002, just a few months after he had concluded, that 'the wholesale withdrawal of industrial education courses, typewriting with office practice and computer studies from even those schools that are well equipped to teach them is a somewhat unfortunate development' (Mwiria 2002: 47). It is perhaps because of this that the intention was signalled in late 2005 to reintroduce some of the subjects that had been scrapped. See also the very positive remarks about technical and vocational education and training by the Minister of Education, Prof. George Saitoti in August 2005 (Saitoti 2005).

There has been no consistent empirical indication of changes in the attitude of students towards labour; in the majority of projects, students still preferred academic fields to vocational training...Because the amount of specialised work included in the curriculum may be insufficient for the formation of skills, the diversified secondary school is a questionable method for training large numbers in specific vocational skills. (World Bank 1980: 45)

As a consequence, Kenya's 8-4-4 scheme was introduced without very much at all in the way of external support, and some 15 years later, in 2001, was watered down substantially, and before any thorough-going empirical analysis of impact, either on outcomes and quality at the point of exit from schools, or within the work-force.²⁴

By an extraordinary coincidence of timing, there were much more detailed evaluations of Kenya's 15 technical secondary schools and its 35 Industrial Arts secondary schools completed in 1985, the very year after Kenya had decided to introduce practical subjects into primary and secondary. These evaluations were in fact very positive about the pedagogic impact of the practical subjects; but they were conscious that these expensive, externally-supported initiatives could not possibly suggest many relevant lessons for Kenya's determination to make the whole of its upper primary system and its secondary system more practical (Lauglo 1985a; 1985b).

The above example is symptomatic of a common challenge of research in the face of policy – that the research is all too often derived from small-scale donor projects – and is therefore of limited applicability to policy-makers concerned with a nation-wide concerns such as the 8-4-4.

There is, however, some research that looks at the relationships between education and its enabling environment. Much of this starts with the school or the college and asks questions about the attitudes or orientations to work, and traces young people into their first employment. Other research, such as Hazlewood et al. (1989), surveys urban employees and looks back at the role of their education and training on their pay and productivity. Other research again, such as King (1996), looks over time at the micro and small enterprise (*Jua Kali*) sector, and pays attention to the role of education and training in enterprise development. What is less easily detected is how the education and training system as a whole is performing. We may know about the wages and the previous educational experiences of employees or even of self-employed entrepreneurs, but that is not the same as some measure of the impact – or lack of impact - of the education system on the surrounding economy. Rado commented on this some 30 years ago:

It is surprising, therefore, how little evidence of the right kind we possess. Few writers on the economics of education have even formulated – let alone tested – theories specifying the probably impact which different kinds of education might have on economic growth. Most have been content to skip the first part of the

²⁴ One of the only reports to examine the 8-4-4 system was Nishimura and Orodho 1999. They found that the great bulk of primary and secondary students in their sample thought technical and vocational subjects were 'necessary and important' (Ibid. 49).

hypothesis (how education changes behaviour) and to concentrate on showing that more education leads, on the average, to higher personal income. (Rado 1974: 35)

Thus we leave this first period of the Kenyatta and Moi presidencies with our initial question still unanswered – Why has the expansion of education and skills development systems – over the 40 years of independence – not translated into the economic and social gains widely associated with such investment? But we need to admit that this is not even a question that is being asked explicitly, or at least not within the national policy literature. In much of this literature, we have noted that the relationship is merely assumed.

There is certainly a sense of malaise, not just with the tension picked up in the poverty eradication report between cost sharing policies and the access of poor children. Unacceptably high proportions of primary school pupils continued to drop out of school during the 1990s as we had noted for the 1980s. But in all this policy literature, there was a remarkable absence of data on the outcomes of the education and training system, let alone of the reception of these graduates in different kinds of work settings. This is all the more surprising because there had been in Kenya, thanks to some 20 years of solid Rockefeller support to applied examinations' research, a statistical reporting about the performance of particular schools and the system at large which was readily available to parents and teachers across the country.

Right towards the end of our period of 40 years, in 1998, the World Bank (1998) did draw out some of the implications of the data that was already available in Kenya, in a report entitled *Primary and Secondary Education in Kenya: a Sector Review*. For example, it was clearly surprised that despite the very large investments in education (40% of the recurrent budget going to the sector) the gross enrolment ratios in primary and secondary were much less than would have been expected. It commented, interestingly in terms of our concern with the wider economic environment, that 'A secondary enrolment ratio of 25% is too low for the needs of a modern, skill-based economy' (World Bank 1998: 91). What was also alarming was that the completion rates had been slipping over time – from a high of 95% completion rate at primary level in the 1970s to some 64% in the 1990s. Perhaps most worrying of all was the evidence of deterioration in student performance at the secondary level:

Mean scores in the secondary-completion examination (KCSE), especially in mathematics and the sciences, have fallen over time. If one goes by the KCSE results, students are not even absorbing as much as 10-15% of the curriculum material in subjects, such as mathematics, that they are expected to know by the end of their secondary schooling. (World Bank 1998: 92)

What was also of growing concern was the much better performance of private over public primary and secondary schools in both urban and rural areas (*Elimu Yetu* 2003: 51). But what is particularly intriguing is that these very low scores in the national examinations are being reported from a country that had one of the lowest pupil-teacher ratios in the whole of Africa, as low as an average of 29:1 in primary school and 16:1 in

secondary school. It might be thought that these relatively small class sizes could result in high quality outcomes. But the problem is perhaps also that there has been relatively little qualitative work done on the morale, commitment and performance of teachers.²⁵ As early as the Ominde Commission there was a passing reference to the problem of teacher morale and absenteeism; then in the 1988 Working Party there was a critical note struck about the practice of recruiting primary school teachers from unemployed school leavers and from serving untrained teachers (Kenya Government 1988: 61). The *Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA)* had also picked up on the indifference and demoralisation of teachers (Narayan and Nyamwaya 1996: 38). Again in the 1999 *Commission of Inquiry* there was another warning note struck:

The Commission was informed that many of these teachers, though trained, cannot cope with the 8-4-4 system as the majority of them had failed in Mathematics and Sciences, yet they are expected to teach the current curriculum which has a heavy component of practical subjects, mathematics and science. (Kenya Government 1999b: 161)

This is a pretty damning sentence, combining the notion that teachers had been allegedly trained but that the majority had actually failed in maths and science.²⁶

It would be useful to know more about teachers and their qualifications during the Kibaki presidency, to which we turn in a moment, but it will also be important to examine whether teacher quality and commitment, which have scarcely been mentioned in all these reports, may have contributed to the decline in outcomes. Aspects of this dimension might include issues of teacher morale, teacher absenteeism and involvement in second or third jobs. In neighbouring Tanzania, it is clear that these are major contributing factors to the poor quality of secondary schools (Kerr 2006).

The final data which this World Bank drew upon was that on income disparities and inequities in access to both primary and secondary schooling. Despite being officially free, for example, primary education required from parents significant charges, levies and fees. Secondary education was not free, but its cost was more than two times the per capita consumption expenditure for those in the poorest quintile of the population. It was also clear that the pathways to secondary education for the children of the poor were not working transparently (as has been noted in the PPA). A relatively small proportion of children in the lowest quintile of income got their fees covered at secondary, while a significant number of those in the two top quintiles did manage to get fee support.

²⁵ Sifuna (1980: 86-7) had commented as early as 1980 ‘Among the trained teachers there are those who habitually come to work, sometimes drunk, who misuse school funds and time for private gain, or even misbehave with girl pupils and yet continue to be prominent members of the profession.’

²⁶ There is evidence that this is by no means a Kenyan problem alone; the country paper on Tanzania by Wedgwood (2005) reports on the abysmally low entrants to teacher training colleges.

The recognised crisis in cost sharing, and the continuation of some 1.6 million children in the 6-13 age group not being in school at all made it not surprising that the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC), the party that would become new Kenya Government of December 2002, would put on its masthead genuinely free primary education. Nor was it a surprise, given 40 years of concerns about work and employment, that its election manifesto should also have undertaken to create 500,000 jobs a year for the first five years. Interestingly, the manifesto made the same assumption as many of the other previous reports - that universal primary education had been 'recognised as an important milestone to economic and social development' and that in particular through primary education for women, 'a society is able to hasten its development' (NARC 2002: 36).

But its judgement about the current state of education suggested that not much could be expected from these positive assumptions. Kenya had 'not achieved any of the education goals it committed itself to achieve'. The fact that only half of those entering standard one were completing standard eight, that there was a major drop out rate in secondary education also, that adult education had 'collapsed', that 'mismanagement' and corruption were rife in a system, and that 'learning conditions are deplorable' all underlined this lack of connection between education and economic development. The university level, too, was mentioned as being in a 'terrible state of disrepair', and, again with the critical link to the wider macro-economic environment, it was mentioned that the current curriculum was 'not relevant to changing economic and social circumstances'(NARC 2002: 36).

The promise was clear: apart from providing 'free and compulsory primary education to all children', there should also be designed a 'new system which guarantees all our children a right to education and a competitive edge in a global job market' (ibid. 37). There was a similar critique and commitment for the skills training arena: the failure in the skills development programme meant that parents sent their children abroad, with great loss of foreign exchange, when there was the chance to turn the 'large number of young Kenyans into a world-class human capital' (ibid. 36-37).

2. EDUCATION, TRAINING AND WORK IN THE NEW POLITICAL CONTEXT

There was, therefore, an enormous sense of optimism both within the country and internationally as the new government of Mwai Kibaki came into office. The notion that education was one of the vivid markers of this change was captured by the fact that Free Primary Education was one of the first announcements of the new government. It would come into effect on 6th January 2003. The new government used the occasion to illustrate its responsibility to its predecessor which had affirmed the Jomtien and Dakar international declarations, and to confirm that it was on track with the two education Millennium Development Goals. Again, the linkage to macro-economic development was mentioned, but only in the most general terms: 'The Government of Kenya considers the attainment of UPE as a development strategy. It is well understood that a literate

population is key to the overall development of the nation' (Kenya Government 2003a: 1).

As one of the key obstacles in the earlier attempts at providing 'free' primary education had been the quiet re-introduction of all kinds of levies, fees and expected contributions from parents and communities, it would prove to be important that there was clarity on what were now the elements that were free. This would be particularly important if the government was to break the cycle of the children of the poor dropping out. From January 2003, when no less than 1.3 new children turned up for school, the situation would be that 'fees and levies for tuition in primary education would be abolished', and to support the provision of textbooks and other learning materials, as well as support essential services in primary schools, an amount of 1,020 Kshs. per child would be transferred to each primary school. It is critical to underline the fact that the first readily accessible publication on Free Primary Education (FPE) made it clear that FPE means that parents and communities are not required to build new schools.²⁷ But it was encouraging the improving, refurbishing of existing schools. Similarly, it stated 'FPE does not stop community initiatives'. Where schools have 'certain facilities and services for pupils 'such as hot lunches, swimming lessons, computer lessons, bus and transport, boarding facilities' charging for these can be discussed and agreed with parents, and with the District Education Board (Kenya Government 2003a: 4). Parents would continue to be responsible for examination fees, school uniforms, schools meals, transport, boarding, and health care.

The reason for underlining the actual terms of the agreement about 'free' primary education is that the issue of what 'free' meant would shortly return to haunt government. More importantly, misunderstandings about who may contribute what could disadvantage the very schools where it was critical to retain the children of the poorer families.

As with earlier policy papers, our principal concern is with how education investment is perceived in relation to the surrounding economic and social environment. With the new government, one of the key policy texts was *Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS) for Wealth and Employment Creation 2003-2007*. There was apparently strong donor pressure to have this called 'for poverty reduction' as opposed to 'wealth and employment creation'.²⁸ But this was firmly resisted, as it was argued that 'Rapid economic growth or the baking of a bigger national cake, is (sic) the only assured way of reducing poverty and enhancing gainful employment opportunities in the long run' (Kenya Government 2003b: 31). By contrast with 'poverty reduction', the ERS wanted to put an earlier vision centre stage - that of industrial catch-up: 'Kenya can get no better deal than recapture the initiative we had at independence with the aim of climbing to greater heights in development with the view of becoming part of the First World in the next twenty five years' (Kenya Government 2003b: v). However, it was persuasively

²⁷ Despite this pledge about not building schools, a later item on the role of parents explicitly states that they should 'build and maintain learning facilities' Kenya Government 2003a: 4, 12).

²⁸ The Ministry of Economic Planning felt the term poverty reduction suggested the poor would always be with us; we needed just to reduce it somewhat (personal communication December 2004).

argued that to improve rapidly the situation for poor and marginalised families, it would be appropriate to invest in these particular segments even before the economy substantially improves. Thus, despite the title, the ERS was also very concerned with greater equity for poor, marginalised and vulnerable groups.

To what extent did the ERS conceptualise education as having an intimate and interactive engagement with the surrounding environment and with other sectors? There were a number of education-specific recommendations, concerned with access, quality and disparities. Apart from providing FPE which was expected to take care of access, further disparities would be tackled by ensuring the bursary programme covered 10% of enrolled students, and by rolling out textbook provision. The issue of quality is more problematic. Would that really be tackled by increasing the very low pupil teacher ratios from around 30:1 to 40:1, by conducting annual in-service programmes for teachers, and by reviewing the curriculum? It is worth noting that there is a continuing tendency to think of how education can relate to the economy rather than the other way round; thus the ERS suggests that the curriculum be reviewed 'to make it relevant to the changing socio-economic environment so that the students can more easily fit in the labour market' (Kenya Government 2003b: 32).

It was necessary for the ERS to prioritise FPE, but it was also essential to focus on the manifesto pledge of 500,000 new jobs per annum for five years. It is intriguing, however, that despite the 40 years of policy exploring the interactivity of education, skills and employment, not much is made of that key relationship. Thus there is almost no single comment on the education-work relationship, but the ERS did rely on the concept of informal sector to help deliver on the jobs pledge, and in the process it transformed it, as we shall see below. Like 'poverty reduction', the Ministry did not find the term 'informal sector' helpful, and much preferred 'small business enterprise'. And in the notion of 'small business enterprise', it saw no reason not to include the family farm.

This ERS interest in rethinking the informal economy was given some further support – from a very different angle – by the various drafts of the *Sessional Paper No. 2 on the Development of micro and small enterprises for wealth creation and employment generation* (Kenya Government 2003c; 2004b; 2005b).²⁹ Though it had been traditional to talk of the informal sector as non-farm or off-farm, the *Sessional Paper* argues strongly that 'small farms are also small businesses' (Kenya Government 2003c: 2). In an important break with tradition, the latest draft of the *Sessional Paper* boldly redefines the sector in order finally to cut across the farm/non-farm divide: 'The definition of the MSE³⁰ sector is therefore expanded in the Paper to include all enterprises, both farm and non-farm, employing less than 50 persons' (Kenya, 2004, p. 2). As the bulk of all work

²⁹ The first draft of the paper was available in mid-2003; a second draft went to Cabinet in late 2004, and was to be published and discussed in Parliament early in 2005. The final, published version used almost the same title as the ERS, emphasising wealth and employment creation, but then adding 'for Poverty Reduction' (Kenya Government 2005b).

³⁰ MSE – micro and small enterprise. By the time of the 2004 and 2005 versions, the concept of the informal micro-enterprise sector covering the family farm had been reduced somewhat to what was called commercial small-scale agriculture.

and employment in Kenya is in the rural areas, this redefinition of the *jua kali* sector massively increases the size of Kenya's MSE sector to 'over 74.2% of the total number of persons engaged in the country' (Kenya Government 2004b: 6; see also King 2005b).

This reconceptualisation of the informal sector might appear like a sleight of hand in dealing with the election pledge of half a million jobs annually for 5 years, in a situation where there was no hope of the formal private or public sector producing 2.5 million jobs. But there was more to it than that. By revitalising agriculture and by putting a very strong emphasis on rebuilding the infrastructure in all its aspects from transport, to energy to communications, the ERS saw that the hundreds of thousands of small rural farms with their multiple occupations could indeed become more commercially profitable enterprises:

The false dichotomy between the formal and informal sectors in our economy has only been meaningful in as far as the small enterprises remain small, are denied needed services, and infrastructure, and do not pay taxes. This strategy for economic recovery progressively seeks to eliminate this dichotomy by providing infrastructure and services, particularly financial, to small and medium enterprises and by ensuring that they pay taxes. (Kenya Government 2003b: 7)

It may be surprising that there was not an explicit discussion of the approximately 500,000 young people leaving the education and training system each year (and rising with FPE) and the jobs' pledge, but there was some conceptual architecture in the ERS which linked the two. The reforms in education and health were seen as 'social infrastructure' and the revitalisation of all the aspects mentioned above were seen as 'physical infrastructure'. Their redevelopment and integration in turn would produce the environment for wealth and job creation:

Although we realised at independence that both **physical and social infrastructure** are extremely vital for the creation of wealth and development in general, and that they are the arteries of our economy, we have, over the years, ignored or run down both. (Kenya Government 2003b: vi emphasis in the original)

Given that at the macro-economic level, there was a close, conceptual policy linkage between the social and physical infrastructure, which had direct implications for job creation, it will be valuable to examine whether the strain of educational policy-making in the few years of the new government had begun to elaborate something similar.

A new series of education policy papers

Whatever its difference in orientation and politics, the new government followed its predecessors in the sheer amount of education policy analysis that was commissioned within its first three years. In that short period, it had launched Free Primary Education, developed a National Action Plan, carried out and published a *Sector Review*, organised

the largest ever National Conference on Education and Training in Kenya, and finalised a *Sessional Paper on Education, Training and Research*, as well as developing a *Sector Support Strategy*. We shall interrogate this policy material from the viewpoint of our overarching theme of education's two-way relation with the economy and with other sectors. It should be acknowledged that with the return of a new democratically elected and popular government, there was a strong expectation that there would be a return of international cooperation in education and training – much of which had lapsed during Moi's autocratic and increasingly corrupt regime. Making the Government's first flagship project Free Primary Education was strong evidence that the new policies intended to follow the world's pro-poor agenda of the Millennium Development Goals. In President Mwai Kibaki's speech at his first opening of Parliament, in the spring of 2003, FPE was flagged up along with zero tolerance of corruption, security and economic development as key elements in the long awaited 'second liberation' of the country (Kibaki 2003:1). Kibaki's speech underlined heavily the conviction that good governance provided the crucial 'enabling environment' for unlocking the latent potential of Kenya's people. Would there be evidence also in the more detailed analysis of education and training, in the technical reports, of this intended critical interaction between education and the economy?

In the *Report of the Sector Review and Development Direction* (Kenya Government 2003d) there seemed evidence, even in the title, that this would be the case. There was a clear recognition of the role of the education sector in contributing to projected GDP growth, with particular emphasis on technical and vocational training, the teaching of sciences and information technology in producing appropriate skills and promoting productivity in the economy. In relation to the key role of the informal sector, now recognised as so central to job creation with its coverage of 73% of total employment, it was plain that there was a need for 'higher skills and modern technology'. This would call on the education system 'to produce a calibre of human resource that is highly skilled for survival', but with strong links to specific occupational skills in engineering and scientific disciplines (Kenya Government 2003d: 12).

In the treatment of each of the main sub-sectors of education, there was an acute awareness of school-leavers being 'equipped with the requisite knowledge and skills for the place of work' (Ibid. 39). The technical and vocational education and training (TVET) segment was especially targeted, given the need to create 4.5 million new jobs by 2010. TVET was identified as being central to the country's industrialisation ambition by 2020. Potential investors would require abundant and qualified labour, including a large pool equipped with entrepreneurial skills and culture. Yet the TVET system seemed to be out of line, with graduates aspiring for formal sector jobs for which their skills did not fit, and with little attention to entrepreneurship which was 'necessary for the generation of economic opportunities and self-employment'.

This of course was an old theme, going back to the NCEOP of 1976 which had been the starting point for the practical and self-employment orientation of basic schooling and TVET in the country. To deal with the 500,000 young people entering the labour market each year, there needed to be much more targeted and expanded skills development,

including in the youth polytechnics. But entrepreneurship development was to be the byword from that level right through to higher technical and university courses.

The primary school system, with its very low internal efficiency [50% of pupils failing to complete], was also, again in 2003 as in the 1970s, being characterised as producing leavers with little knowledge relevant to the economy; hence there was created a cycle of low productivity and high under-employment in agriculture. At the secondary level, too, there was a problem of relevance; and thus the result was very little absorption into the modern sector – which was saturated and shedding workers anyway – or under-employment in the rural and urban informal sector, with large numbers – almost a million – marking time and looking for work. Again, the critique of secondary education was similar to primary – too general an education, with insufficient specialised skills. The mismatch metaphor was used also at the tertiary level.

As with so much earlier analysis, it was certain that job creation in the formal sector could not be a realistic solution; thus there should be more support to agriculture and small enterprise – as well as to TVET institutions. It was a harsh message that there needed to be yet another review of the curriculum, with this in mind; the last almost 30 years had been marked by just such a concern, and, arguably, had laboriously tried to built up an infrastructure which was now being progressively undermined.³¹ It was not just school-based TVET which was in crisis; it was equally clear that the institutions linked to the Ministry of Labour were far from meeting the needs of industry, due to obsolete machinery, lack of investment and minimal linkage with employers. The situation identified in the *Sector Review* was clear to any visiting analyst. Thus, the World Bank's influential study of *Skills Development in Sub-Saharan Africa* drew on an official Kenyan document from the Ministry of Labour criticising TVET to claim that this could be a summary of the situation in the continent as a whole (World Bank 2004a: 72 and Box 3.1). King (2002) reached a similar conclusion in respect of enterprise-based training and its connections with the government's TVET system – that the latter had atrophied and was not regarded as a serious source of capacity building by the private sector.

The new government has at least two major challenges in addressing this very disturbing relationship – at all levels of schooling – between education and work. First, if improved internal efficiency in primary and secondary education accompanies measures dramatically to improve access – through FPE - and retention (from a situation where, for example, primary schools have been losing 50% of their cohort), then the sheer numbers leaving schools could rise exponentially, from their current totals of around 500,000 to almost twice that figure. This, as we shall see, would massively renew the pressures for secondary expansion that we had noted in the *Master Plan*.

³¹ It should not be suggested that the undermining of the practical subjects in the 8-4-4 all took place with the 'rationalisation' at the end of the 1990s; in 1993 after 10 years of the system, only 3% of secondary examination candidates had registered for industrial education subjects (Kenya Government 2003d: 69).

Second, the application of a poverty perspective throughout the *Sector Review* reinforced what the PRSP, World Bank and NGO analysts had clearly detailed from the mid to late 1990s – that Kenya’s education and training system had been becoming increasingly inaccessible to children of poor families. ‘It is obvious that the cost of sending a child to secondary school is clearly out of reach for the majority of Kenyans’ (Kenya Government 2003d: xxii). In this regard, there is a critical need to examine the operation of the bursaries and scholarships mentioned earlier, which had been aimed at the bright poor but which would appear to have been also utilised by richer families. Not unconnected with the operation of pro-poor pathways had been Kenya’s status as allegedly one of the most corrupt nations in the world (UNDP 2003: 17). Good governance is an obvious element in the enabling environment of human development strategies, even if the relationship between human development and corruption is not undisputed.

The *Sector Review* had imagined that evidence from rates of return might be a useful guide to these dilemmas about investment at different levels. But the data seemed as contradictory in 2003 as when Thias and Carnoy had done their study in 1969 (World Bank 1969). The evidence from Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2002 quoted in Kenya Government 2003d:133) pointed to the dramatic advantage of primary education investment in SSA as compared to tertiary, while the data from Kenya and the World Bank Kenya 1998 study would appear to show exactly the opposite – that the returns to university level education were dramatically higher than primary.³² Rather bravely, the Review judged that the results showed that primary education has the highest social return, and that the policy focus of the government on FPE was therefore confirmed (Ibid. 134).

The *Sector Review* fed directly into the *Education Sector Strategic Plan, 2003-2007*. The *Plan* took the main items of the *Review* and developed them into a framework which aimed for a great deal more than Free Primary Education. Indeed, three of the main goals were concerned with post-basic education and training, and, of these, two were explicitly concerned with the link to the wider economic environment: achieving 70% transition from primary to secondary by 2007; quality university education ‘accessible and relevant to national development needs’; and TVET skills ‘necessary for self-employment and national development’ (Kenya Government 2003e: ix). There are several aspects of the *Plan* that are worthy of further emphasis.

There is, firstly, a powerful sense that education plans cannot be implemented at all successfully by a single Ministry (MOEST). At least 8 other Ministries will be crucial to the operationalisation of the plans. This is reminiscent of the NCEOP which dedicated a whole chapter to the implications of its education proposals for other ministries.³³ Second, the Plan is in line with the ERS in recognising that good education ‘can contribute significantly to economic growth, improved employment prospects, and

³² Illustrating the contradictions in the “returns” literature, ‘Educational expansion and economic decline: returns to education in Kenya, 1978-1995’, Appleton, Bigsten and Manda (1999: 16) argue that the returns to secondary education actually fell dramatically in the 1990s.

³³ See also Murphy (2005) for the key role of ministries other than Education in determining what happens in Education.

income-generating opportunities'. Through these, it will contribute directly to poverty reduction (Ibid. 5). Third, the massive and long-standing failures in primary school access, retention and completion are judged to be soluble through the ending of fees and the provision of textbooks and materials. There is little or no concern with other dimensions of quality such as teacher morale and commitment. Fourth, the huge problems of the inaccessibility of secondary schooling for the poor are to be dealt with by targeted bursary schemes, but there is no comment on the appalling quality and outcomes of the existing secondary system apart from a promise of more texts, especially in science. For TVET, despite all the problems discussed in the *Sector Review*, there are no tangible targets for reform, beyond an aspiration to involve the private sector more. Finally, for tertiary education, there is a desire to make it affordable to all deserving Kenyans.

Over all the levels and sub-sectors, the emphasis is on expansion and completion. In quantitative terms, the growth of primary and secondary will be enormous; in TVET some 10% annually, and for tertiary, an open-ended commitment. The most glaring omissions would appear to be dealing with the low quality of the outcomes, and with the two-way labour market and work-force interaction of the whole series of initiatives. Despite the mention of other ministries, the overall concern is with one ministry, Education.

Perhaps understandably, as the *Plan* was to be followed by a major national consultative forum in December 2003, there was scope for some of the detail on these and many other matters to be discussed with stake-holders, and then built into the *Sessional Paper* and the forthcoming Sector-wide education programme.

The *Report of the National Conference on Education and Training* (Kenya Government 2003g) did not operate like the conferences at Jomtien or Dakar, where a carefully developed framework and declaration were brought for finessing and confirmation. Rather, it was a celebration of the fact that the sector was the site of much excitement and many initiatives. Many different bodies were present, representing their special interests and professional areas. So, this was a meeting that was long on recommendations and short on empirical data. It was a genuine consultation, nevertheless, and hence the lengthy report captured lists upon lists of recommendations. The final report was as much a commentary on the rapporteurs as on the quality of the sessions.

But like all major national conventions, the event was used to ensure that other relevant documentation was in place, as we have seen with the *Sector Review* and the *Strategic Plan*. It took place just under a year after the new government had come to power. It had been a heady 12 months, implementing Free Primary Education, re-engaging with development partners, carrying out reviews. It should not perhaps be surprising that a great deal of empirical data had not been synthesised. Arguably, the *Sector Review* had given a fairly stern message about quality, outcomes and the inaccessibility of much of the post-basic education and training system to the children of the poor. But there was one sector, TVET, where a rapid appraisal had been carried out by MOEST with assistance from German Technical Cooperation (GTZ).

The Report on the *Rapid Appraisal on the Status of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Kenya* (Kenya Government 2003f) was a quite devastating commentary. Its 28 major findings were all extremely critical. Despite a whole series of strategic recommendations stretching back for decades, and through eminent reports, there had been little done. A ministry with special responsibility for this crucial area had been established and then disestablished. In the area of curriculum at basic education level, head teachers had not been consulted when practical subjects were suddenly phased out, as discussed above; the Report observed that the decision was ill-conceived. More generally, there was agreement that the quality of TVET graduates was fast declining at all levels due to outmoded equipment, poor instruction, lack of work experience and meaningful supervision. As to the idea of industrialisation by the year 2020, the current TVET curriculum was so weak ‘in various aspects of technology development and transfer of skills that Kenya cannot achieve meaningful progress towards industrialisation no matter what the deadline’ (Kenya Government 2003f: vii). From industry’s perspective, the TVET system was not demand-driven; attachments and linkages to industry were fragile, poorly planned and inadequately supervised. As to the financing of TVET institutions, they were grossly under-funded, and as most students were now self-sponsored, the TVET system discriminated against children from poorer families. There were no bursary or loan schemes available to help poor students in the TVET system.

The Report made grim reading, not least because it raised a major question-mark around the government mantra on the critical role of TVET in Kenya’s reaching the status of an industrialised country. It would appear that the TVET system had become separated both from the formal sector of the economy with parts of which it once been strongly connected, and yet there was no working connection with the massive informal and micro-enterprise sector. The Report lifted the curtain just briefly on one of the threads – quality and outcomes - which we have been pursuing throughout this review of the policy literature. But it made one wonder if here there were the beginnings of an answer to Ruth Kagia’s initial question about the failure of education and training to impact on development and economic transformation. What if similar criticisms could be levelled at the quality and outcomes of other levels of education? For instance, after one whole year of FPE, little had been heard about what had been going on in schools. Had they managed to hold on to the new 1.3 million pupils, who in most cases were from poorer families? There was, however, a provisional answer the next year, 2004, as Kenya began with its development partners to put together a sector-wide approach (SWAP) to education.

The *Kenya Joint Review Mission (JRM) of Kenya Free Primary Education Achievements and Kenya Education Sector Support Programme* visited all the 8 provinces with some stakeholders, including from NGOs and development partners, for two weeks in September 2004. It reported on the stark fact that more than one million new children had come into schools in January 2003, but mentioned in passing that there were no less than a million children in private primary schools, many of these very low cost.³⁴ The

³⁴ There was no mention that the low cost nonformal primary schools in the urban slums, run by NGOs, were not covered by the FPE.

Mission came across some public schools with 120 pupils to one teacher in the city slums; others had one toilet to 100 children. They also came across the widespread impact on school provision of parental interpretations of ‘free’ education. For instance, parents were moving their children from Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres where fees were generally paid, into free primary schools, or were demanding that ECE should also be free. Many parents had interpreted FPE to mean that no contribution of any kind to the maintenance of schools need any longer be made. This was very widespread, and had led the JRM to argue that the government should actually ‘remove the word “free” which has contributed to expectations among parents and communities that other education subsectors (ECD, secondary, TIVET³⁵, and tertiary) will eventually be free’ (Kenya Government 2004a: 9).³⁶

Little was actually said about teaching quality and morale but it was noted that primary schools had been banned by government from offering private tutoring – a lucrative source of additional teacher income – in order to concentrate on the large numbers of new children. The impact on teacher commitment of the attempt to ban this source of second income can be imagined. Nor was anything said about the statistics on the new hundreds of thousands, though the following should be noted. One element in the new numbers may have derived from children quitting fee-paying ECE centres to get free primary education; another element was certainly that in urban slums many children temporarily left the low-cost nonformal education centres of NGOs to get free primary schooling, and parents then demanded that these slum schools be free also – as they had been in Uganda’s FPE.

The statistical challenges of working out just what the new numbers (1.3 million) actually meant, and whether two years after the launch, these children were still in school, were enormous. There were similar wide-ranging concerns in the TIVET, even though TIVET and tertiary were not the principal areas for the JRM. The listing of what had been seen in the TIVET institutions which were visited confirmed the more detailed critique above. All the proposals which were mentioned held substantial cost implications, and not least the pro-poor decision that loans should be available for poor children in this sector. It was also anticipated that the massive expansion of primary education would unleash new demands for access to low cost skill provision for those not successful in reaching secondary education.

The tertiary sector was outside the mandate of the JRM, as we have said, but there too there were some very serious concerns with quality, as well as with equity, including gender disparities. The detailed sources of these worries were in the report on *Public University Reform in Kenya: Mapping the Key Changes of the Last Decade* (Mwiria and Ng’ethe 2003). Here it was clear that one of the more visible reforms across the public university sector in East Africa, the huge parallel degree programmes largely attended by employees after work, had possibly intensified inequality ‘as the ability to pay for

³⁵ During late 2003, TVET was changed to TIVET – Technical, Industrial, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training (TIVET).

³⁶ For a longer discussion on the politics of free primary in the context of low cost nonformal education centre and low cost private primaries, see King 2005d.

university education becomes the main criteria for access'. It was also obvious that the Higher Education Loan Board lacked a capacity to identify the truly deserving bright poor students. Equally, to the reviewers, the dilution of quality was evident 'even though no one will openly say so' (Mwiria and Ng'ethe 2003: xiv). Gender disparities remained glaring as women made up only 30% of the total public sector enrolment, in vivid contrast to all accredited private universities where female students comprised 54.5% in 1999/2000.

The very valuable qualitative detail on teaching and learning styles, and reduced time on task,³⁷ in *Public University Reform* had not been captured in many of the earlier reports and commissions. The Report had rather less to say about our other major theme of the match between higher education and the economy. But it did confirm, from a different angle, the strong criticism from the Rapid Appraisal of TVET, that Kenya's trajectory towards industrialisation could not be managed if only 5.2% of the men and 0.8% of the women were enrolled in university engineering and architecture over a 5 year period. 'This figure is too low to effectively promote the country's industrial take-off' they commented. The origin of this deficit lay earlier in the schools, as we had noted. Only 3% of all students registered for the vocational and technical subjects in their secondary leaving examinations (Mwiria and Ng'ethe 2003: 66). The authors noted also that despite this mismatch, the degree choices of the very large numbers of self-sponsored were highly employment- or self-employment-related, in fields such as business, pharmacy, law, marketing and accountancy (ibid. 10).

The last word on this continuing concern with mismatch comes from George Saitoti, the Minister of Education. On the industrialisation challenge, the lessons from East Asia are clear – heavy investment in science and technology education, but also powerful encouragement of foreign direct investment. With reference to these, Saitoti makes the important point that these fields are not just critical to industrialisation but also to the conquest of disease and poverty. And the other lessons from East Asia underline our theme through this paper - that relevant education has to be embedded in an enabling economic environment. His list of interventions from Asia include:

Global integration, flexibility, sound macroeconomic policy regimes, good corporate and public governance, sound legal and regulatory framework to contain and regulate competition and ward off monopolies, corruption/unethical practices, and attracting investors. (Saitoti 2003: 14)

Synthesising the Government's Vision: Quality, Quantity, Outcomes

After all this frenetic activity, in just two short years, the Government was preparing to capture what it thought it had conceptualised and learnt. Hence work began in mid- to

³⁷ Unlike the JRM comment on primary school teachers being banned from private tuition to allow them to focus on their main obligation, there was no such action by government in respect of the many university staff who teach for extra cash outside their own universities, or who secure a second salary through the parallel classes (Mwiria and Ng'ethe 2003: 18)

late 2004 on what would become a new *Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 on a Policy Framework for Education, Training and Research* (Kenya Government 2004c; 2005c). Its authors drew on some of the lessons from East Asia, as the Minister had done, to make the case ‘that human capital is a key determinant of economic growth’, as well as to argue that for sustainable development there needed to be ‘a critical mass of skilled people’ (Kenya Government 2005c: 19). Drawing on the expressed concerns with TIVET and the deficits in science and technology, it claimed that these had to be priority needs. But since it was also possible to claim that education could reduce social and economic inequality, there was a danger in the *Sessional Paper* of presenting education as a win-win sector for investment:

Achievements will, therefore, reduce poverty, achieve the desired economic growth, create more employment, and guarantee sustainable development for the Kenyan people now and in future (Kenya Government 2005c: 20)

Of course it was difficult, with the identification of technical skills as central to industrialisation, not to conceive of giving prominence to the very theme of skills development which we have charted over the 40 years, and which, we noted, was substantially watered down, without serious review, at the very end of Moi’s rule. The conclusion about the role of skills and technology, for all levels of education, is important enough to be quoted in full; it suggests a rethinking of the recent policy shift on technical subjects:

A breakthrough in industrialisation can only be achieved through technology. It will, therefore, be [important] to give prominence to technical education at all sub-sectors. While noting that not all students leaving secondary schools will move on to middle level colleges or universities, it is important to ensure that students will be equipped with some technical skills. This will enable them to contribute effectively towards industrialisation. The country needs a critical mass of Kenyans with some technical skills for technological take off and sustainability. In this respect, therefore, it is important to offer some important technical subjects at secondary school level. In view of the high cost of offering some of the technical subjects, it will be done in a controlled manner in order to make it both cost effective and affordable. (Kenya Government 2005c: 27)

It will be important to map what happens to this particular technical skills thread, with its link to work and employment, as we examine below the last of the Kenya documents, the *Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP) 2005-2010* (Kenya Government 2005a). But the *Sessional Paper* was only too conscious of the cost of the planned expansion of all levels of post-primary education, and was anxious to combine ways of drawing more private sector financing of education with pro-poor policies for very deserving young people from poor households.

KESSP, which was launched in July 2005, is clearly going to prove to be an extremely detailed blue-print for a whole series of education investment programmes from early childhood to university. It is conceived as supporting the *Economic Recovery Plan*, and

the *Sessional Paper* on Education. We shall only comment on those aspects that link it to the several threads we have followed through this paper.

Nor surprisingly, it confirms the *Sessional Paper's* view on human capital as a major factor in economic growth and hence poverty reduction, but adds the crucial corollary: 'In addition, it is based on the belief that quality education and traininglead to the expansion of employment opportunities for all' (Kenya Government 2005: ix). Balancing the enormous demands to improve access, equity, quality and relevance, while paying particular attention to those under-served and excluded elements of the population would be crucially important. Basic education would be the prime focus, but it was already obvious that secondary education would in the long-term need to be integrated into the meaning of basic education, with the primary – secondary transition rate rising to 70% by 2008. Unlike the very general terms of the *Sessional Paper*, *KESSP* was able to specify in considerable detail the currently poorest schools for classroom construction and school improvement, drawing on the *Geographic Dimension of Well-being in Kenya Report (2003)*. Reminiscent of Chile's 900 Schools Project, Kenya's *KESSP* aims to target no less than 4,000 primary schools for upgrading, and, in addition, 970 schools for classroom construction, toilets and water supplies (Ibid. 4). *KESSP* also proposes to expand bursaries at the secondary level. Overall, this would provide an increase in the percentage of disadvantaged young people accessing secondary education, 'including the poor, orphans, vulnerable children in urban slums and ASALs, especially the girl-child' (Ibid. 174).³⁸ It is worth noting that while there was an emphasis on the important of children with special talents and abilities, there was no attempt to link the bursaries to the bright poor or otherwise disadvantaged.

The same logic is pursued for the critically important role of science and maths in secondary schools, as well as the revitalisation of the TIVET system. The sheer cost of existing TIVET provision, despite generous government subsidies, means that the poor, as we have seen, have effectively been excluded. Again the targeting would address the needs of the poor in Kenyan communities, including those with special needs, the marginalised and those from ASAL districts. Unlike secondary school bursaries, it is explicitly stated that there would be 'scholarships and other merit awards' for both staff and students to encourage 'excellence in creativity and innovation in the field of science and technology', as well as loans and bursaries to enhance access to TIVET, especially for the marginalised. In all there would be 1000 needy students receiving bursaries each year for 5 years, as well as, over the same period, 250 female students, and 200 youth with special needs (ibid. 209).³⁹ As to the framing of the national TIVET system, *KESSP* would put in place the national skills training strategy – which had been recommended almost 10 years earlier, as well as establishing a National Training Authority. To remedy

³⁸ Intriguingly, the January draft of *KESSP* specified how large the bursaries would be -KShs. 15,000 a year to no less than 51,600 secondary school students across the country, with a particular focus on girls from Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs), urban slums as well as orphans. These target numbers were removed in the final version.

³⁹ The January draft had specified that there would be 7,600 bursaries every year for 5 years and for the same period 2000 targeted bursaries would be awarded to female students wishing to enter male-dominated careers (Ibid. 278).

the image and the many strictures on obsolescence that have been referred to, there would be put in place strategically located Centres of Excellence, and there would be industrial incubators and, linked to these, 100 merit awards and scholarships to top students in the five years (Ibid. 209).

For the tertiary education sector, it was clear that this was not going to be a Support Programme that would focus only on one or two sub-sectors of Education and Training. In itemising a very comprehensive list for the expansion and improvement of quality in the tertiary sector, *KESSP* concluded:

University education and training will, therefore, need to be demand-driven, of high quality, gender sensitive, technologically informed, research supported, democratically managed and globally marketable. (Kenya Government 2005: 225).

Unlike the secondary and TIVET sub-sectors where there were specific numbers of bursaries mentioned, no target numbers were given for higher education; nor was the focus explicitly on merit but rather on improving access for the poor and needy.

Concluding Comments on the Education & Training Policy Process

The *Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP)* brings to a close this selective review of the insights that can be gathered from Kenya's education policy literature for some of the themes with which this paper has been concerned. In many ways, it is an appropriate climax to this part of our analysis. Like the best of the earlier reports, *KESSP* has taken a wide lens on education and training, including all sub-sectors, and, within its TIVET perspective, the relevant institutions under other ministries. It has managed adroitly to balance the necessity dramatically to expand and revitalise the secondary, TIVET and even the public university system with the hugely important requirement to chart out generous yet transparent pro-poor pathways. It has been mindful of Kenya's continuing ambition to become a modern, industrialised nation, and has thought through creative ways massively to expand best practice in science and maths education at secondary level, as well as to re-burnish the image of the technical, the technological and the scientific. It has also been thoughtful about the best way to maintain selective community contributions to social services such as education even when targeting poorer communities.

We shall examine shortly how the position of Kenya in 2005 on education and training in relation to the wider economic environment relates to some of the international thinking – and especially of the World Bank – on these same themes and perspectives. But given the centrality of employment generation and enterprise in the history of policy in Kenya, we shall explore briefly how the parallel outcome of small enterprise development looks in 2004/5.

Inter-sectoral Implications of Education, Skills and Work

We have examined in a previous section how the concept of the informal sector came in from the cold – or rather from the heat⁴⁰ – since 1972: how it had been recognised as the major site for job creation – including by the *Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS)* – and how many education commissions and working parties had seen it as the destination of school-leavers. Nor was this perceived as a destination of last resort; it was recognised that what the ERS preferred to call Small Business Enterprises were the location of a great deal of agricultural and industrial creativity. Indeed in the revised ERS (Kenya Government 2004d: 48), the informal sector was placed solidly within the key 'productive sectors' of tourism, manufacturing and trade, and acknowledged to be the source of no less than 90% of Kenya's employment therein. But conceptually the sector had moved on radically since Kericho and since the 1972 World Employment Mission to Kenya – which had identified it as principally an urban phenomenon. With the new Kenya Government, there was renewed thinking on this huge informal economy, and this was captured in the various drafts of the *Sessional Paper No.2 of 2005 on Development of Micro and Small Enterprises for Wealth Creation and Employment Generation for Poverty Reduction* (Kenya Government 2004b; 2005b).

⁴⁰ It will be recalled that *jua kali* – the Swahili name for informal economy – means 'hot sun'.

The *Sessional Paper* finally cut through the farm/non-farm division - which for three decades had suggested that small farms were not really small enterprises – and integrated the micro and small enterprise (MSE) sector into the national economic grid: ‘The definition of the MSE sector is therefore expanded in the Paper to include all enterprises, both farm and non-farm, employing less than 50 persons’ (Kenya Government 2004b:2). But in terms of thinking through the relations between Education and Training and the MSE sector, it was valuable to note a corollary to the plans for TIVET in the *Sessional Paper* on Education, as well as in *KESSP*:

Not only would technology transfer be strengthened by deliberate links among MSEs, universities, technical institutions and research bodies, but there would be deliberate promotion of skills acquisition and skills upgrading by making the MSE destination one that should be on the agenda of all TIVET bodies:

In addition, measures will be put in place to enhance the capacity of Technical Training Institutions, MSE Training and Demonstration Centres, Youth Polytechnics and National Youth Service skills development centres to offer appropriate skills to MSEs. (Kenya Government 2005b: 31)

The Entrepreneurship element within the new acronym, TIVET, would also be strongly encouraged in universities, polytechnics, and technical institutions. There would also be an initiative to develop a ‘widespread enterprise culture’ in schools and other training institutions (ibid. 32). A final recognition that the informal economy had come of age in Kenya was the proposal to establish a National Council for Small Enterprises (NCSE) which would feed into the National Economic and Social Council (ibid.38). With the previous sessional paper on *jua kali* the problem had not been the character of the recommendations but rather the political will to implement them. It was thought that the NCSE would be important in this regard.

The realities for the millions of informal or micro-enterprises in Kenya are far removed from the talk of technology diffusion and representative Councils. They are often more to do with insecurity of tenure, licenses, harassment, and low-level corruption. But certainly the vision in the *Sessional Paper* sees the sector as playing a crucial role in industrialisation. ‘MSEs will, in this regard, play a more significant role in contributing to the national goal of wealth and employment creation, and the vision of making Kenya an industrialised society’ (Ibid. 4).

We shall revisit some of the realities of education and work in Kenya before the end of this paper. But the next section looks at the architecture of Kenya’s education and training system through the lens of the World Bank’s most recent Kenya paper, and, even more relevantly, the Bank’s own *Education Sector Strategy Update [ESSU]* (World Bank, 2005 forthcoming).

The International Dimension of Kenya's Education and Training Reform

We shall treat at least two dimensions of this – the international dimension within Kenya – paying particular attention to the World Bank – and the international thinking about problems which are common to many countries including Kenya – again drawing on the World Bank, but also the UN and the Commission for Africa.

As far as our continuing concern with the relationship of the education and training system to the larger macro-economic environment, the World Bank's latest report on Kenya has little to say, despite its title, *Kenya: Strengthening the Foundation of Education and Training in Kenya* (World Bank 2004b). In part, this is doubtless because there was to be a separate analysis of the Kenya labour market planned by the Bank and the Kenya Government. But it is also because the focus of the study is primarily on the internal efficiency of Kenya's education system. Surprisingly, there is not much that goes beyond the World Bank study of 1998, and although there is a good deal of data on the well-trodden issues of access, equity, drop-out, completion and transition, very little of it relates to the experience in Kenya since the introduction of FPE in January 2003. It would have been valuable, for example, even in a provisional fashion, to have heard what data there were on retaining the 1.3 million new children in the 2003 school year. Although there was a great deal on teachers - their salaries, pupil teacher ratios etc. - there was virtually nothing on the more qualitative concerns about commitment, morale, and the banning after FPE of their second jobs in private tuition. Nor was there any discussion of the debate about the continuing role for community support to schools even in a free primary education regime.

In respect of what we may term the revitalised agenda for skills development which was laid out in the *Rapid Appraisal* and confirmed by the National Convention in 2003, there was no recognition of the new thinking about technical skills and entrepreneurship. Instead, there was a summary judgement that 'the introduction of many practical subjects into the curriculum, while well-intentioned, is not effective' (World Bank 2004b: 87). Overall, as we have said, this particular World Bank report is concerned with in-school factors, and pays little attention to the impact of the world beyond the school gates. With the benefit of hindsight, it could be argued that it would have been beneficial if instead of the labour market study being carried out separately, it had been part of this education review. This is precisely the case that the latest World Bank update on education would be likely to make, as we shall see below.

Education, Training and their Enabling, and Surrounding Environments

Our assumption, throughout this review of Kenya's policy literature, has been either that there is, or that policy makers would like there to be, a close relationship between education and training, on the one hand, and national development, employment, industrialisation, or agricultural and entrepreneurship development, on the other. The majority, but by no means all, of the reports and commissions we have reviewed have taken this approach. It has been most evident in reports such as the Kericho Conference

on *Education, Employment and Rural Development*, or in the NCEOP, which argued passionately for an employment and self-employment orientation of schooling, and had a whole chapter on the implications of their recommendations for many other ministries. It has also been conspicuous in the currently parallel *Kenya Sessional Papers* on Education and on the Development of Micro and Small Enterprises. But it has been very much less visible in reports such as the World Bank's 2004 review, which we have just discussed, or in the 'Education' chapter of the World Employment Mission to Kenya in 1972. There is sometimes a temptation to examine education as it was a self-contained silo, with its five or six predictable storeys from early childhood to tertiary education.

By contrast, it can be argued that many of the seemingly 'educational' problems are not narrowly educational at all, and therefore cannot be solved within the education silo alone.⁴¹ Thus, the dramatically different attendance at schools by many pastoral communities in the ASALs is not by any means only an educational problem, nor is the low take-up of practical subjects in secondary schools, nor the low ratio of science to arts in universities. These kinds of 'educational' challenges can only be explained by reference to wider socio-economic and cultural factors. Equally, the widespread pursuit of a second income by primary school teachers through private tuition, or by public university teachers through consultancy or teaching in a private university is not only an educational issue; it is inseparable from the larger question of the remuneration of the civil service, and what has been happening to public sector salaries.

What is, coincidentally, very appealing, therefore, about the near-to-final draft of the forthcoming *Education Sector Strategy Update* of the World Bank (2005) or the published UN Millennium Project Report, *Investing in Development* (2005a) is that they both take a holistic and integrative approach towards education. Thus, although *Investing in Development's* subtitle is *A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*, the Report makes it plain that it will prove impossible to reach the Millennium Goal of UPE by 2015 by focusing on UPE alone:

Investment in primary education should be balanced with selective support to postprimary...Indeed, planning for the expansion of postprimary level should be done in parallel with planning for achievement of universal primary education. Primary school investments can help create the pipeline for postprimary education, just as opportunities to enter into postprimary education are required to reinforce demand at the primary level (UN 2005a: 66).

Similarly, though it might seem that Education is only directly relevant to two of the MDGs, it would be possible to argue, with the World Bank, that Education will also prove to be a crucial factor in the move towards the other MDGs such as those related to health and the environment. Moreover, this wider vision actually precludes focusing on a single level of education as if that could be secured satisfactorily within the education silo:

⁴¹ Murphy (2005) argues that a very large number of 'education' decisions are actually dependent on ministries other than Education.

Rather than concentrate on a particular level of education, it emphasises a holistic approach that not only addresses needs at all levels, but, indeed, recognises that the challenges of access, equity, education quality, efficiency, financial sustainability, and governance and management are intra-sectoral issues that will never be adequately understood and addressed if they are considered from the perspective of education levels. (World Bank 2005: 20).

The Bank's draft paper also argues that the macro-economic and labour market context are central to mapping out a national education and training strategy. This could mean targeting both globalised skill markets as well as local markets both formal and informal. The Bank, like Kenya's *KESSP* and the UN Millennium Report, argues that the role of the private sector will be critical, especially at the post-basic level, as will teacher linkages with policies within the wider civil service. Again, like *KESSP*, the Bank argues that ICT is not an education issue but part of a national commitment. Similarly, both in the UN Report and the Bank, good governance or, more explicitly, absence of corruption are seen to be critical to the implementation of bursaries, merit scholarships, or what we have termed pro-poor pathways in education as well as across the public service.⁴² With HIV/AIDS, again, completion of more than primary education is seen to be beneficial both by the Bank and by *KESSP*,⁴³ as a key modality for national AIDS awareness.

One of the largest commonalities between the UN Report and the Bank paper is their recognition that linkages with other social and economic sectors are critical to the delivery of the particular education objective. Just as the Bank sees interventions in school health and early childhood development as often inseparable from others in rural development, water and sanitation, energy and transport, so the UN Report talks of the 'interdependence of investment clusters' (UN 2005a: 93). This message is so crucially important to understanding some of the limits of self-contained education initiatives that it is worth repeating at some length:

Many interventions are expected to have benefits for several Goals [MDGs]. For example, reducing gender inequality is essential for reducing hunger, containing HIV/AIDS, promoting environmental sustainability, improving settlements, and reducing child and infant mortality. Environmental management and ready access to clear water are essential for ensuring that clinics and hospitals function, for reducing women's and girls' time burdens so that they can engage in productive economic activity and attend school, and so forth. And to achieve any development Goal, it is not enough to invest merely in one sector. (UN 2005a: 12)

But for the UN Report, it is not just inter-sectorality that is vital, but also the way that, within any particular sector, the wider institutional environment can be disabling. This

⁴² 'A governance issue that poses a fundamental threat to education outcomes is **corruption**' (World Bank 2005: 11. Emphasis in original).

⁴³ Although the Bank argues that HIV/AIDS is undermining education systems that can offer a 'social vaccine' against the disease, it does not pay attention to the role that teachers themselves are playing in some countries as active transmitters of HIV/AIDS to school children.

cannot be dealt with by the usual indicators of ‘internal educational efficiency’, as the Millennium Project Task Force on Education has argued:

Many countries with poorly performing educational systems suffer from institutional weaknesses, including low management capacity, nontransparent resource allocation and accounting practices, and substandard human resources policies and practices. Incentive structures that fail to reward good performance create and reinforce the most deleterious characteristics of weak institutions. (UN 2005b: 6)

Beyond this critical interactivity of many other sectors with education,⁴⁴ both the UN Report and the World Bank Report, along with Kenya’s *KESSP*, identified EFA as a crucial milestone, but one which needed progressively to be added to by what the Bank termed ‘education for dynamic economies’. This second strain drew on the Bank’s long-standing programme commitment to knowledge for development, or to knowledge as the main driver in growth, as illustrated in its higher education policy paper, *Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education* (World Bank 2002). Neither the Bank nor the UN Report, therefore, see the world as divided into what we may call ‘EFA societies’ and others which may be thought of as potentially ‘knowledge economies’. Just as the World Bank did not see participation in the knowledge economy ‘as a luxury restricted to the most advanced developing countries’ (World Bank 2005: 27), so the UN Report saw that ‘By building universities, technical institutes, and professional associations countries can establish some of the most critical resources for their economic transformation’ (UN 2005a: 66).

For the World Bank, science and technology were critical to many of the key public policy issues in low-income countries, for resolving many crucial economic and social problems, as well as being essential to reaching several of the MDGs – notably health, environment, food production, and poverty reduction more generally. For the UN Report, instead of so much of the minimalist planning of so many reports which seek to estimate whether particular countries are ‘on track’ to reach particular Goals, a maximalist approach is taken; and it is argued that ‘a global human resource training effort’ will need to be launched if the Goals are to be achieved. This then implies a great deal more, in human resource terms, than the calculations linked narrowly to the Goals would imply. Here are some of the personnel requirements for reaching the Goals; they go a long way beyond primary school teachers, primary health care workers, and other MDG-associated categories. They underline the role of post-basic education and training in producing the skilled professionals as well as community workers needed for the Goals:

Village specialists in health, soil nutrients, irrigation, land reclamation, drinking water, sanitation, electricity, vehicle repair, road maintenance, and forest management.

⁴⁴ In an insightful Table, entitled ‘Linking Education with Overall Development Efforts’ the Bank paper illustrates for 9 different sectors of the economy, how Education affects these sectors, but also how these sectors affect Education (World Bank 2005: 16).

Managers in investment planning, budgeting, computer-based information systems, poverty mapping, and sector needs assessments.

Teachers, doctors, and other skilled professionals to provide services in education and health.

Professionals for urban planning and urban infrastructure and services.... and community development agents to promote local participation, gender equality and minority rights. (UN 2005a: 235)

These kinds of approaches are paralleled by the very wide-ranging role seen by the Ministry of Education in Kenya in respect of TIVET (Saitoti 2005). But there is little doubt, in operational terms, that the new holistic, inter- and intra-sectoral perspectives will require much more capacity-building whether in the World Bank, the UN or the Kenya Government. Reaching the MDGs is a major development project for governments and for the international community. The sheer scale of the intra-sectoral challenge is hard to exaggerate, and its implications for capacity development are massive (King 2005)

New Approaches and their Impact on Outcomes and Learning Achievement

Another of the threads that we have pursued through this account of policy history has been a concern with the outcomes of Kenya's education and training systems. Behind this strand has been a worry that low or highly inappropriate outcomes may be one of the possible answers to Kagia's original question – why has the sustained expansion not had the expected transformatory impact on society and the economy? We have picked on just a few of the pointers to quality and outcome. The most robust of these have been examination scores at the end of secondary education, though the marks cannot be compared readily across years. In addition there have been many comments on quality declining at different levels from primary school to university, including TIVET, but few of these have been quantitatively or qualitatively robust. One of the most difficult areas to analyse has been the state of the teaching-learning interaction from the primary classroom, to the school laboratory, to the lecture hall. Again, the judgements we have alluded to have often been based on anecdote rather than careful qualitative or quantitative study. There have been several passing references to teacher absenteeism, low morale, poor commitment, and substantial involvement in second jobs; yet at the end of all these reports, we end up knowing a good deal about quantitative measures such as pupil-teacher ratios (comparatively very low for Kenya within Sub-Saharan Africa at 26:1 in both primary and secondary), but very little about what this means, in terms of quality, for teacher behaviour. Finally, we have shown that commissions and working parties have paid a relatively great deal of attention, over the years, to the vocationalisation of primary and secondary education, as well as technical post-secondary, but the actual numbers taking such practical, industrial arts options, for

example at the end of secondary, have been miniscule in many categories.⁴⁵ Overall, the judgement of the World Bank in its 2004 review of Education and Training in Kenya was that ‘There has not been much information so far in Kenya regarding the process though which education inputs produce learning outcomes’ (World Bank 2004b: 89).⁴⁶

Just as one of the key investment programmes proposed by *KESSP* is ‘Quality Assurance and Standards’, under a new Directorate of the same name (Kenya Government 2005: 187-203), so with the UN Report and World Bank’s *Education Sector Strategy Update*, the concern with outcomes is central. The UN Report recommends instituting systems to assess acquisition of skills and knowledge ‘to an international standard’, but paying attention to dissemination of the results at both local and national level. The Report is also aware that one of the main constraints in the world of improving outcomes or building on impact assessments is the challenge of going to scale:

The need to scale up arises from the limited impact of pilot projects, or ‘islands of excellence’ amidst a sea of inertia – small projects implemented at local or district levels without a measurable impact on national indicators. (UN 2005: 95)

The World Bank’s *Update* also judges a ‘results orientation’ to be central to its new approach. In a study of just 138 pages, there are no less than 108 mentions of the word ‘results’, 135 mentions of ‘quality’ and 151 of ‘outcomes’. The *Update* is refreshingly critical about much of the research that has traditionally linked schooling with positive economic and social outcomes; often such research has not been sufficiently explicit about what it may be about the relationship that is driving the numbers. The Bank could have added that, historically, much of its own in-house research on education can be criticised on precisely these grounds (King and Palmer 2006):⁴⁷

Most studies of the positive externalities associated with schooling are limited to analysis of years of schooling completed. Such studies can provide only a broad approximation of the increased earning potential, better livelihoods, and poverty reduction that are the result of the education enterprise. As such they provide insufficient guidance to countries and to donors alike as to the optimal use of resources. (World Bank 2005: 33)

However, in pursuit of what drives positive education outcomes, the Bank was not content to assume, as so much educational research has done, that educational outcomes are exclusively affected by what goes on in education and training systems. Mindful of its

⁴⁵ Of total candidates taking Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE), Computer Studies is 0.57%, Woodwork 0.67%, Metalwork 0.19%, Building Construction 0.45%, Electricity 0.17, Drawing and Design 0.96%. These can be compared with Christian Religious Instruction 36.9%, Social Ethics 25.46%. The only significant numbers for practical subjects are for Agriculture 50.30% and Commerce 48.49% (World Bank 2004b: 33).

⁴⁶ The Bank did point to the Aga Khan Foundation’s support for school quality improvement in East Africa as one source of valuable experience – see Anderson 2002.

⁴⁷ Some of the World Bank’s most well-known research is open to this criticism, including, most famously, ‘Four years of education make a difference to farmer productivity’, see King and Palmer 2005.

new emphasis on education as crucially an intra-sectoral activity, it was able to argue that 'a wide range of factors affect education outcomes, originating within the education sector and also related to the linkages of education with the macro-economic context as well as with other sectors' (World Bank 2005: 35). It is natural then to look at what are the education initiatives that are able to support non-education outcomes, especially, the outcomes associated with the other MDGs in health, HIV/AIDS, and labour market competitiveness. This is not to say that the Bank is not concerned to sharpen the understanding of the cost-effectiveness of educational interventions and innovations that offer to improve outcomes within schools and training centres, but there is also a strong emphasis on the need to look long and hard at the good practice efforts which have sought to strengthen the 'contribution of education to national economic competitiveness' or 'linkages with the macroeconomic and overall public policy context' (Ibid. 65; 8).

Beyond these analyses that link education with non-education outcomes, the Bank is also interested in securing country commitment to the assessment of learning outcomes through a global multi-donor initiative. Although there are regional assessment systems, such as the Southern African Consortium for Measuring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), no low income countries participate in any of the various international assessments such as IEA and PISA. This would not be the first time that the Bank had suggested such a global initiative,⁴⁸ but this time, following close on the *Global Monitoring Report* on quality (UNESCO 2004), there was now a widespread concern that very low quality and outcomes might themselves threaten the many expected connections between education and social and economic improvement:

The quality of education has remained low in many countries, driving up repetition rates, leading to dropout, and raising the cost of providing education for all. The limited available evidence suggests weak learning achievement by primary school graduates, which limits the benefits of education that they can realise. Regional studies in Africa, for example, have found that as few as 10% of children master the intended curriculum. (World Bank 2005: 39)

This situation is confirmed in the *Global Monitoring Report (GMR)* on quality in 2004. In a study carried out by SACMEQ of seven countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, it was shown that in four of these, fewer than half of sixth-graders achieved the minimum level of reading, and in three of these, the percentages were as low as 25%. Although the study showed that in Kenya 65% of sixth-graders reached the minimum level required, only 23% of the Kenya cohort reached the 'desirable' level of reaching literacy (UNESCO 2004: 121-122). These figures do raise concerns about the effectiveness of the basic education system, and are attributable to a whole series of factors, which almost certainly differ from country to country. Clearly, teacher absenteeism is just one of several possible contributing issues, but it is noticeable that this affects countries in Sub-Saharan Africa particularly sharply (UNESCO 2004: 112). In this respect, it is worth noting that *KESSP* plans a major study of the different assessment initiatives, such as SACMEQ,

⁴⁸ See World Bank, 'Building educational research and assessment capacity. Initiating Memorandum' 1990. See also in relation to this, Gmelin and King 1992.

‘with the ultimate aim to provide input towards establishment and operationalisation of a National Assessment System (Kenya Government 2005d: 193).

Nor is this problem of quality something that is solved once pupils reach the much more selective secondary level in Sub-Saharan Africa. We have already referred to the fact that public secondary schools in Kenya, on average, do not manage to ensure that their pupils acquire more than 10-15% of the intended curriculum for that level. The detailed data is even more alarming; for instance, in the maths’ results at form four in a recent year, no less than 50,000 pupils out of almost 200,000 who sat the exam received no marks at all, after 12 years of schooling (personal communication Jo O’Connor, December 2004).

When systems are under-performing as seriously as these would appear to be, there must be worries about the widely-held expectations that basic education can play a key role in social, economic and health developments. In other words, the very low learning outcomes at the school level may not translate into the kinds of capacities that may be required in the changing economic environment. Nor will it necessarily be true that so many years of education translates into higher agricultural productivity, reduced fertility and the other well-known claims, if the actual outcomes of schooling are as fragile as they would seem to be.

The Realities of Post-basic Education and Training in Kenya – for Wealth and Employment Creation

We have covered a good slice of the education policy literature in Kenya, and related that to some of the most recent insights from the *UN Millennium Project Report*, as well as from the World Bank’s *Education Sector Strategy Update*. Both of these latter take a holistic approach towards education, seeing it as a key sector, but one that is embedded in, and influenced by, other sectors, as well as by cross-cutting issues in society. The same approach is taken by the *Commission for Africa* which reported in March 2005. It is convinced of the centrality of Education for All, for example, but this is seen to be inseparable from a massive, proposed commitment to revitalise higher education. It is on that sector that Africa will need to depend if it is to secure the professional skills and leadership that are so needed:

Qualified professional staff are essential to all forms of development. The delivery of health, education and other services depends on them. They are crucial for collecting and managing data, and debating and developing good policies based on the evidence of what works and what does not. They are essential to implementing those policies and to monitoring how they are put into effect. (Commission for Africa 2005: 137)

During the same year, therefore, several major analyses of Africa and of the developing world more generally have comprehensively rethought the synergies within the education sector, as well as the crucial interactions between the education sector and the wider

macro-economic environment.⁴⁹ They have argued that the achievement of the MDGs will be dependent on a much wider set of investments, in infrastructure, trade, agriculture, urban areas, as well as in good governance and capacity building. This will require substantially more aid from the developed economies towards the developing world. The *Commission for Africa* and the *UN Millennium Project*, as well as the more specialist GMRs, have estimated the global costs – not just of the MDGs but of the wider infrastructure without which the MDGs cannot be delivered or sustained.

In terms of our concern with employment, and with the crucial importance in Africa of the informal, small enterprise sector, it is interesting to note that the *Commission for Africa* identified the same position as Kenya's *Sessional Paper on the Development of Micro and Small Enterprises*, rethinking enterprise to include farming:

Poverty reduction through growth requires a focus on the indigenous private sector which in Sub-Saharan Africa is composed of a myriad of micro, small and medium enterprises, including – the most numerous – the family farm. And it depends on finding ways to help them thrive and grow. Together they are the primary source of jobs and economic opportunities' (*Commission for Africa* 2005: 239-240).

Equally, just as Kenya's *Sessional Paper on Education, Training and Research* had identified technical skills as being crucial, so the *Commission for Africa* argued that 'Improving employability includes critical income-earning skills such as vocational, entrepreneurial, agricultural and computer skills as well as creative and analytical skills to provide flexible competencies to match changing market demands' (*Commission for Africa* 2005: 187).

By contrast with these evidently ambitious policy documents on education, enterprise, and development, the reality for the 500,000 young people annually making the transition from school to work in Kenya is rather different. Depending on school type, we know a certain amount about their learning achievement in schools. We know very little about what proportion of those finally leaving primary or secondary schools are poor. Until now, the bursaries and scholarships for bright children from poor families have not worked particularly well. There is a powerful promise in *KESSP* that things will work much better and that there will be really significant numbers of poor children of ability getting into post-basic education. But at the moment, the transition from primary school to secondary, and post-secondary is highly problematic, especially for the poor. There is certainly bursary money at the constituency level but it is politically more attractive to offer a large number of families a small amount of money rather than give a small number of very bright children from poor families the chance to go on a full scholarship to secondary school or beyond.

The reality for the children of poorer families in Kenya is that many of them access some of the less well-endowed primary schools, and then with great financial difficulty only gain a few places in the less competitive, lower quality secondary schools; the knowledge

⁴⁹ For a more detailed account of these three development reports, see King 2005b.

they may later take with them from school to work may give them little comparative advantage in the competitive labour market. Furthermore, as far as access to scarce formal sector jobs is concerned, it is clear that meritocracy does not apply in all cases. Evidence is emerging in Kenya that young people, including those who do not come from influential families, may well need to pay up-front even to be considered for secure jobs in the public sector. Here, too, as we noted above, it is interesting to see that the *Update* of the World Bank has a parallel concern:

A governance issue that poses a fundamental threat to education outcomes is **corruption**. It is essential that sector assessments identify the problem - whether it occurs outside the education sector (buying and selling of civil-service jobs) or inside (buying and selling of grades or admission to preferred schools)—and remedial options. Education interventions can, moreover, contribute to higher standards of integrity. (World Bank 2005: 11)

It is important not to exaggerate the possibility that corruption may undermine the traditional connections between hard work, merit and success in national education and training systems. But if it becomes widely believed that access to scarce public sector jobs, after school, and to subsequent promotion depends not on open, meritocratic competition but on the ability to pay, or on networks of influence, then this too could directly affect the aspiration to improve quality, and could impact particularly severely on the new generations of poor children moving through the school system. Indeed, as we have argued earlier, pervasive corruption can well be another aspect of the enabling (or disabling) environment that determines whether education does or does not translate into those many economic and social gains generally associated with education. It is then a matter of concern to note that at the very time that the new plans for education and enterprise are being prepared through the Sessional Papers, there continues to be a very lively debate about the extent of corruption in Kenya, even since the new government came to power with its pledges of zero tolerance. Indeed, if corruption continues to be as widespread as is claimed by the representatives of several of Kenya's leading donor countries,⁵⁰ then it will prove a disabling environment for the operation of education-based merit systems, and all the bursary schemes proposed by *KESSP*:

The unpleasant reality is that corruption in most of its forms is currently rampant in Kenya. It distorts policy formulation, obstructs the delivery of proper services, puts or keeps wrong people in jobs for dubious reasons, diverts scarce resources and loots the public purse. *Sunday Standard* 21.11.04

Beyond this and many other accounts of corruption covered in the media, there are more sober academic analyses of corruption which come to a similar conclusion – that corruption leads to the creation of an alternative structure that affects very directly the economic, social and political environment (Mullei 2000: 5).

⁵⁰ In a highly unusual intervention, six ambassadors/high commissioners took a full page in the national press to raise concerns about corruption in Kenya (*Sunday Standard* November 21st, 2004, p.29)

Concluding remarks on basic and post-basic education, poverty and development

Kenya stands at something of a watershed today in its search to become a modern, middle-income country. As we have seen, it has developed the policy instruments for human development and economic recovery, and it has articulated plans for enterprise development and post-basic education and training that are explicitly pro-poor. By a happy coincidence, its own plans to reach the Millennium Goals, by going far beyond them, resonate with the latest thinking in the *UN Millennium Report* and the *Commission for Africa* that the Goals can only be secured as part of a wider productive development strategy. It is clear that such a national strategy from Kenya could well secure, in the year of the G8 and the Millennium Summit with their focus on Africa, substantial external funding for both physical and social infrastructure. But there will be no chance for Kenya to become an MDG Fast Track country, or profit from the doubling of aid to Africa promised in the G8 Summit in Gleneagles unless the re-emerging concerns with poor governance and corruption are tackled summarily, forcefully, and from the highest level.

These wider developmental possibilities, presented in these major documents of 2005, offer at least two potential scenarios for post-basic education and training in Kenya, in their relations with primary education, on the one hand, and with work and employment, on the other.

The first could be called ‘business as usual’ where the vast new numbers of children – most of them from poorer families - come into school but little else changes either in the schools or in the wider environment; and the second involves the beginnings of a substantial change in the enabling environments surrounding schooling, as well as in the relations between basic and post-basic education and training within the education system.

Scenario One

In this modality, very large numbers of children from, predominantly, poorer families enter primary school for the first time, as happened in Kenya in January 2003. They acquire schooling in hugely overcrowded classrooms, from thousands of ‘emergency’ teachers, and many progressively drop out and leave school over the next several years. This dropping out may intensify especially as the President has made it clear that parents do have fully to support the building and expansion of their local schools.⁵¹ A great deal will depend on whether the *KESSP* proposals for school improvement become evident in the poorer schools. The merit-based pathways for selecting and supporting bright children from poor families to enter post-basic education and training may take too long to put into place. There is little or no increase in the possibility of entering post-primary education, therefore, as the fee levels for post-primary education remain prohibitive. Thus, the bulk of the poorer children continue to quit school, during or at the end of the basic cycle. But they enter an economic environment in the rural and urban areas that is

⁵¹ The debate about the Government’s ‘about-turn on free schools’ was widely reported in December 2004 (e.g. *Daily Nation* December 9th 2004, p.1)

little changed from what they would have entered if they had not gone to school at all. Kenya's new small enterprise, rural development and infrastructural plans also take too long to put in place. The opportunities, therefore, remain mostly at a subsistence level, and there is saturation in many of the areas of trading and commerce. Illustrative of this approach are the UNDP country reports on progress towards the MDGs. These solely examine the country from the perspective of the MDGs and not the wider productive development strategies that are needed to support the MDGs.

This strategy is costly, as it depends initially on substantial external resources, to support the access of over a million children but as there is no complementary change and investment in the enabling urban and rural environments, the mere provision of universal primary education has no national mechanism of increased economic growth for sustaining access, retention and improved outcomes.

Scenario Two

Here, through a combination of national commitments derived from the *Economic Recovery Strategy* and really major new aid flows, associated with the recommendations from the *UN Millennium Report*, the *Commission for Africa* (March 2005) and the G8 summit (July 2005), there is the beginning of a revolution in the urban and rural environments which the new graduates enter. Instead of there being just an MDG project, in the sense of reaching the minimalist goals for education and health, there is a productive development strategy in which the MDGs are just an organising entry point for large scale organisational and institutional change. Primary school leavers then enter environments that are beginning to be reshaped by aid, trade and national commitment. At the same time the merit-based schemes connect substantial numbers of bright children from poorer families to post-basic education and training opportunities, as the whole secondary school system moves to accommodate 70% of primary school leavers; and the recommendations of the micro- and small enterprise sessional paper begin to alter the landscape for both farm and non-farm small entrepreneurs.

These are just two of many possible scenarios, and of course the reality of change will continue to be much more complex than any such scenario. But at the moment, 2005 does look to have been a promising year to revisit Ruth Kagia's question about the relationship between education and training investments and changes in the wider economic and social environments.

This present review of the history of policy, including of very recent policy developments both within Kenya and in the international community, has underlined the inescapable complexity of any answer to Kagia's question. It has, hopefully, clarified the need to examine education in its two-way interactions with many other sectors in the wider environment, and not as a stand-alone sector that can, in isolation, be examined for its direct influence on such crucial issues as productivity, fertility, poverty reduction and growth. It has also affirmed, within Kenya and more generally, the inseparability of the pursuit of basic education from post-basic education. The relationship between basic and post-basic has always been a dynamic one, and never more so than when there has been a political commitment to making primary education universal and free. The review has

also noted a rising international concern to place poverty reduction at the centre of the world's development agenda; this focus has been accommodated within Kenyan education policy, and the most recent thinking has laid down ambitious merit-based, pro-poor pathways right through the education and training system. In other words, Kenya has signalled forcefully that there is little point in making just one segment of education – primary schooling – the focus of pro-poor policy. Another thread which has run through this account has been an awareness of the critical importance of quality and positive learning outcomes. Only too often, the references have been to deficits in quality and very uncertain outcomes. But there are proposals on the table which could improve quality and standards. Finally, and intimately connected to quality and outcomes has been the linkage of education and training to the labour market, both formal and informal, rural and urban. This has been one of the most politically sensitive and frequent reference points throughout the more than 40 years since independence. It has inspired curricular reform within education and training, and it has also encouraged valuable rethinking of the nature of Kenya's economy, in farms, firms and factories.

The need to know more

This review has also underlined some important deficits in our knowledge base concerning the relations of post-basic education with poverty reduction and growth in Kenya. These are mentioned here, once more, in the hope that they may become part of further research on these relationships. 1. The interaction between the donor agenda – and more generally the international development agenda – and Kenya on particular education priorities is under-researched. 2. The history of the latest initiative in Free Primary Education, since January 2003, is potentially of great importance to our understanding of basic education and poverty reduction, as a substantial proportion of the 1.3 million new entrants to schooling will have come from families of the poor. 3. Secondary and TIVET education policy will prove crucial to what happens in primary; and, given the prohibitive costs of moving towards free secondary schooling and technical training, careful evaluation of merit scholarships and pro-poor pathways will be critical to documenting whether bright children from poorer families will even be successfully held in primary schools, let alone be selected to post-basic education. 4. There are clearly major gaps, at every level of education, in our understanding of pupil and student achievement. 5. The utilisation, in work and employment, of knowledge and skills from schools, colleges and training centres is hugely under-researched. With the rethinking by the new government of the enterprise economy in rural and urban areas, it will be important to be able to chart the interaction between the knowledge and skills gained through different skill development modalities and the dynamics of the enterprise.⁵² This will be especially important if the government is able to move expeditiously on the implementation of both its micro and small enterprise sessional paper and the sessional paper on education and training.

If Kenya's ambition to become a knowledge economy by 2020 is to be realised, it will need to know a great deal more than it currently does about its knowledge infrastructure, its systems for capturing and assimilating new knowledge, and its processes for utilising

⁵² See further King and Palmer (2005) 'Skills development and Poverty Reduction: the state of the art'.

that knowledge in agriculture, industry and within the public sector. In all of these tasks, a fully integrated, high quality, basic and post-basic education and training system will be central.

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