ADEA Newsletter
Association for the Development of Education in Africa

The Quest For Quality

ADEA Biennial Meetings are high points for education policy dialogue in Africa. They do not simply follow each other, but mark successive stages in the process of collegial deliberation and collective learning that ADEA supports in order to promote the reforms needed to transform African education systems and achieve their development objectives. From the implementation of education programs and projects (1993) to scaling up reform (2001), and from policy formulation (1995) to partnerships (1997) to successful experiences in education (1999), the themes and the approach of the Biennial Meetings have gone steadily further in applying one main guideline: emulating good practice so as to change educational development policy and strategies. The issue is always the same: to seek to bring about the conditions needed for education for all in Africa. And this is precisely the connection to the theme of quality chosen by the ADEA Steering Committee, ministries and agencies alike, because in making

this choice, the Committee emphasized its wish to actually incorporate quality into the EFA process, resulting in an education of quality for all.

From the reality to the aspiration, there is no lack of challenges: disparities in educational opportunities, economic and social inequality, and discrimination on various grounds, such as gender and socio-cultural background... In African contexts these challenges are exacerbated by poverty, civil conflicts and pandemics such as HIV/AIDS... In fact, they are just so many reasons for mobilizing all stakeholders and partners and inducing them to work with all their might to promote education of quality, since such quality is a vital tool for meeting these challenges. Hence, the program of the Biennial Meeting will cover the theory and practice of improving the quality of basic education. The discussions will mainly be based on reflections and experiences relating to African contexts, as in the case studies presented by a number of countries. However, the effective practices drawn from African soil through the "praxis" approach will be put into perspective by consideration of international research studies, particularly those concerned with the experiences of other developing regions (See article by A. Verspoor, pg4).

The proceedings of the Biennale will be arranged according to the challenges facing the quest for quality. And one of the first challenges is the very concept of quality (See article by M. J. Pigozzi, pg3). How should the quality of education be defined, in view of the diversity of perceptions of quality and the change in the way it is conceived of over time? Differing views on this subject can be found not only from one country to the next, but within a single country, and especially between the principal protagonists: managers, principals, teachers, parents, learners. It may also be observed that at one period, quality criteria were largely determined on the basis of proficiency in reading, writing and arithmetic, while at another period, communication skills, critical thinking and the ability to adapt to new situations became the crucial skills. This conceptual analysis is linked to the questions of how to measure quality and identify the essential factors that contribute to it. Experiences of regional assessments will be touched on, not merely to assess educational
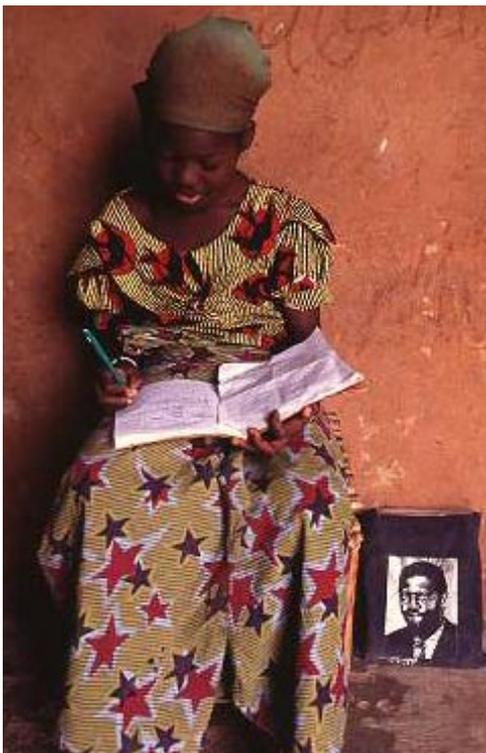

Photo: UNESCO

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quality in Africa but also, and more importantly, to analyze the data, which can guide policy choices and strategies that are quality-oriented while also giving consideration to equity and particularly to gender issues. With respect to the last question, the contributions of FAWE and the EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2003 will undoubtedly provide some precious insights. Good policy requires adequate funding, since improving quality has a cost. In a context of scarce resources, the main question is still how to obtain better learning outcomes with the least possible amount of resources. Analysis of cost-effectiveness makes it possible to begin discussion of the most productive investment options, based on identification of which inputs are essential to quality.

In practice, how are national policies reflected in actual learning situations? How are inputs used by educators in schools to transform them into learning outcomes?

This raises the question of teaching and learning processes, as well as organizational procedures. To what extent and under what conditions are teachers well prepared to incorporate reforms into their teaching practices? The concept of professional development is worth going into here, in order to define and implement effective strategies for initial and further training, for supervision and support, for motivation and mobilization, so as to produce teachers who are both competent and committed to the upgrading of teaching methods. The issues here turn on the promotion of active, participatory and learner-oriented teaching methods in African schools and classrooms.

In this respect, it is essential to adapt curricula to ensure continuity between learners' upbringing and experiences in their families and communities, on the one hand, and their experiences in school on the other. But how can education be given local significance and use local media and at the same time be open to global requirements in terms of knowledge and values? How can schools assert a specific cultural identity while remaining open to the dialogue of cultures? How can people be trained through integration into the society and labor force of their own country and still develop the ability to withstand competition in a context of globalization?

Discussions on these tensions may be extremely fecund, offering new directions for reforms focused on the redefinition of the purpose of education, the goals and content of training, the use of languages of instruction etc. In this respect, it will certainly be of great value to examine experiences of bilingual education based on the use of the language spoken by learners as the first medium of instruction before making the transition toward the official foreign language—just as experiences of decentralization promote autonomy and responsibility on the part of educators, community participation, partnerships with NGOs and the private sector, etc. In short, is it not advisable to make room for initiatives and contributions from all actors in the education sector so as to raise fresh resources for education, to diversify and enrich educational provision, and to enhance the quality and relevance of learning?

The Biennial Meeting will also explore the conditions and factors conducive to external partnerships that provide effective support for quality improvement, in both financial and technical terms, particularly through policy dialogue and the sharing of knowledge.

Although the focus is on basic education, the unity of the education system obliges us to take a look at quality issues in secondary and higher education, which also contribute to the quality of the academic education, and even the professional training, of primary school teachers. What insights can be transferred? What contributions can they make to improving the quality of basic education? These questions also apply to quality-raising experiments conducted in the health sector, which maintains close relations with the education sector. It is because of these linkages, in fact, that the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on educational quality will also be addressed in a round-table session.

Thinking about quality will certainly not stop when the Biennial Meeting is over. Our expectation is that it will run on into the national policy dialogues and, above all, that it will inspire new commitments, a new culture, ground-breaking policies and actions, and concepts and practices leading to alternative and better ways of teaching and learning.

Mamadou Ndoye
ADEA Executive Secretary

What is Quality Education?

Mary Joy Pigozzi, Director, Division for the Promotion of Quality Education, UNESCO

The very notion of "education quality" gives way to a wide array of concepts. In the past priority was given to cognitive understanding and development. Today the social and other dimensions of learning are equally important.

Attention to the concept of quality education has come to the fore as learners, parents and communities, educators, leaders, and nations acknowledge that what is learned and how learning occurs is as important as access to education. The age-old problems that have plagued educational quality remain, and are further complicated by new challenges such as the role of education in relation to other domains and issues such as sustainable development, peace and security, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

One difficulty is that while most people understand intuitively what they mean by "quality of education" there may not be a common understanding of the term. This is especially true now, at the beginning of the 21st Century, when education is increasingly understood to be more than "reading, writing, and arithmetic". There is a growing consensus on the importance of aspects such as relevance, universal values, peace and security, and informed decision-making, for example.

The understanding of what constitutes a quality education is evolving. The conventional definition remains important to understanding quality education. It includes literacy, numeracy, and life skills, and is linked directly to such critical components as teachers, content, methodologies, curriculum, examination systems, policy, planning, and management and administration. Basic academics remain essential.

There is a demand, however, for education to reflect upon its relevance to the modern world. While in the past much of the emphasis on education related to cognitive understanding and development, one must also address the social and other dimensions of learning. Education is expected to make a contribution to addressing sustainable human development, peace and security, and the quality of life at individual, family, societal, and global levels--to reflect a commitment to human rights.

At a practical level, one might consider six key dimensions of quality education from a rights perspective.

Seek out learners. 1. A quality education is one that seeks out learners and assists them to learn using a wide range of modalities, recognizing that learning is linked to experience, language and cultural practices, gifts, traits, the external environment, and interests. We learn in different ways, each emphasizing different senses and abilities. A quality education is one that welcomes the learner and can adapt to meet learning needs. It is inclusive. Thus, a quality education strives to ensure that all learners, regardless of sex, language, religion, and ethnicity, for example, are reached—that they have the possibility of participating in and learning from organized learning activities.

And, within the learning experience there are several components

Today, while most people understand intuitively what they mean by "quality of education" there may not be a common understanding of the term. This is especially true now, at the beginning of the 21st Century, when education is increasingly understood to be more than "reading, writing, and arithmetic". There is a growing consensus on the importance of aspects such as relevance, universal values, peace and security, and informed decision-making, for example.

that affect quality: the learner, content, processes, and environment[1].

What the learner brings. 2. What the learner brings to her or his own learning and to that of a group is extremely important. It can vary from work skills, to traumatic experiences, to excellent early childhood development opportunities, to illness or hunger, for example. These variations in student characteristics must be taken into account.

Content. 3. Educational content is well understood as a component of quality, but this needs to be re-examined in light of the changes that have occurred in the world, and information technologies and globalisation processes that have brought societies closer together in some ways.

Processes. 4. The processes of education are a frequently overlooked aspect of quality. How learners are enabled to frame and solve problems, how different learners in the same group are treated, how teachers and administrators are treated and behave, and how families and communities are engaged in education are all processes that affect the quality of education. Quality educational processes require well-trained teachers able to use learner-centred teaching and learning methods, and life skills approaches. But, the term "learner-centred" must be reconstructed to address issues of disparity and discrimination, and the different perspectives and experiences that learners bring to the learning environment.

Learning environment. 5. Evidence is mounting that the learning environment must also be considered part of educational quality. There must be adequate hygiene and sanitation facilities, and, if possible, health and nutrition services in the vicinity. School policies and their implementation must promote physical and mental health, safety, and security. While the physical

The Challenge of Learning

Improving the Quality of Basic Education

Adriaan Verspoor, Lead consultant, Ad hoc Working Group on Education Quality

Over a year ago, ADEA launched a study entitled *The Challenge of Learning: Improving the Quality of Education in Sub-Saharan Africa.* The findings of the study are based on the analysis of 22 country case studies and over thirty supporting documents. Here is an overview of the study.

Three years ago, at the World Education Forum in Dakar, all countries of sub-Saharan Africa reaffirmed their commitment to the goals of learning and completion of basic education for all. Yet, most education systems in the region are far from reaching these goals and the challenge implicit this commitment is daunting. Less than one third of the children of school age acquire the knowledge and the skills specified in their national primary education curriculum. This jeopardizes the very objectives of economic development, social progress, peace and democracy that are at the core of the New Partnership for the Development. of Africa (NEPAD) Most critical is the challenge of quality.

To stimulate discussion and reflection, ADEA selected the issue of "quality in basic education" as the central theme for its biannual meeting in 2003 and established an ad-hoc group to investigate the question: How can the countries of sub-Saharan Africa improve, in a financially viable way, the quality of basic education and learning? The methodology was based on the praxis approach that was adopted for earlier work of ADEA, and characterized by "learning through action, learning from action to develop and improve action." The foundation of the analysis presented in this paper are the 22 case studies carried out by country teams, supplemented by more than 30 background papers. Key findings are summarized below.

Quality and equity: a concurrent challenge

The Dakar EFA goals call for the equal opportunity to learn for all. With the diverse patterns of living, gender imbalances and ranges of groups in difficult circumstances found in Africa, diverse patterns of educational provision will need to be the norm. This calls for a new demand focused paradigm: "getting education to reach the learners", instead of the usual supply driven policy of "getting learners to come to school". The demand focused approach entails looking at where the learners actually are, negotiating with them or their families what they consider worthwhile education, and arrange for it within the possibilities of the learners' environment. Diversity, flexibility and openness to new ways of teaching must be features of an education system that aims to reach all children. This is not an argument for alternatives to formal education but instead for alternatives within the formal education system. It means that each government—doubtless in cooperation with appropriate partners—will need to develop and support a range of programs to fit the needs of different communities and groups of learners.

A relevant curriculum that prepares for the future

A relevant curriculum is one that connects learning to the child's experience and environment, responds to parental expectations and demands and at the same time prepares students not for today's world but for society as it will develop in the next fifty years. In sub-Saharan Africa, connecting to the students' context means first and foremost moving to mother tongue instruction—at least in the early grades. It also means a content that builds on the local environment and culture. The experience of Zambia, Mali and Burkina Faso with the use of African languages as the medium of instruction demonstrates how these challenges can be tackled.

Schools and classroom focused on learning

Successful quality improvement is a whole school process most often led by the head teacher. But the classroom is where inputs are transformed into learning. Without a competent teacher no curriculum can be implemented effectively. But very significant changes are taking place in the way teachers are trained, hired, and remunerated. Some countries are recruiting teachers with more general education, shorter preservice preparation, and more classroom based teaching practice experience (for instance in Guinea). Increasingly new teachers, with or without pre-service preparation, are hired as contract teachers often by district authorities or communities. This places new demands on in-service training systems which must respond to the needs of an increasingly diverse teaching force. Uganda and Guinea have tackled this challenge with decentralized programs aiming at continuous improvement of teaching practice instead of the traditional centrally directed occasional in-service events.

In sub-Saharan Africa, improving teaching practice will require changes in the traditional rote learning methods that still dominate the vast majority of classrooms. Efforts to shift existing rote learning practices towards open-ended

ADEA Biennial Meetings

For the ADEA, policy dialogue is a central element in the process of supporting African countries engaged in reforming their education systems, and its Biennial Meetings are the high points in this dialogue. The foremost meeting on educational cooperation in Africa will be held this year in Grand Baie, Mauritius.

The ADEA Biennial Meeting is the largest gathering of the African educational cooperation community. At Grand Baie, where ADEA's 2003 Biennial Meeting will be held, some 350 participants are expected. They include a large number of African ministers of education and senior representatives of development agencies. Researchers and education specialists, NGOs and other regional and international organizations involved in the education field will also attend.

The Grand Baie meeting in 2003 is the sixth Biennial Meeting. The previous meetings were held in Angers (France, 1993), Tours (France, 1995), Dakar (Senegal, 1997), Johannesburg (South Africa, 1999) and Arusha (Tanzania, 2001).

At Grand Baie, the major theme that will be discussed will be "The Quest for Quality: Learning from African Experiences". This theme was selected by the ADEA Steering Committee, which consists of ten African ministers of education and representatives of 21 cooperation and development organizations. It has mobilized African countries, development agencies, the ADEA Working Groups, regional networks and civil society organizations, all of whom have contributed to the study "The Challenge of Learning: Improving the Quality of Education in Sub-Saharan Africa" initiated more than a year ago by the ADEA. Over 20 ministries of education worked to identify and analyze promising experiences of quality improvement in their countries. The African research networks ERNWACA (Education Research Network for West and Central Africa) and ERNESA (Education Research Network for East and Southern Africa) undertook a review of the literature on the subject of quality. The ADEA Working Groups, bilateral and multilateral agencies and education specialists also contributed to the exercise.

The 2003 Biennial Meeting will also provide an opportunity for open-minded, critical and informal discussions among peers on all of the parameters that will determine the future of educational quality in Africa: technical and scientific aspects, political and social considerations, costs and funding problems, engineering and implementation methods.

The Biennial Meeting will also draw the attention of and guide the efforts of African countries and their partners to the challenges involved in improving the quality of education – an indispensable condition for achieving the goals set in Dakar in the context of Education for All.

In addition, owing to the magnitude of the AIDS pandemic in Africa and its disastrous impact on education systems, a round-table will be devoted to the strategies adopted to combat the spread of the disease.

The 2003 Biennial Meeting will also be marked by the celebration of the 15th anniversary of the Association's founding and the official launch of the third Africa Education Journalism Award competition, sponsored by the ADEA to recognize the best articles on education published in the African press. ❯

approaches, such as child-centered, activity-oriented teaching, have been difficult to implement throughout the world. Given the reality of the African classroom with often very large student numbers or multi-grading, a shift towards instructional methods that are more direct and explicitly focused on learning appears as a more realistic starting point. Promising instructional strategies for these situations do exist – they include the use of highly structured self-learning materials accompanied by explicit teaching of new content, as in Escuela Nueva (Colombia) and BRAC (Bangladesh).

Quality improvement also places new demands on the head teacher that go beyond the traditional roles of administrator and the new demands of instructional leadership. Particularly important, is the emerging transformational role where the head teacher leads and coordinates the efforts of teachers and community stakeholders to improve teaching and learning processes, and develops the capacity of the school community to implement change and enhance the school's effectiveness.

Restructuring education sector management

There is an unmistakable trend towards school-based management where schools are being giving more leeway

to make decisions about curriculum, budgets and resource allocation and staff and students is critically important. Within nationally defined standards and operational parameters schools have increasing autonomy and flexibility to adapt school organization and instructional practice to local conditions. Teachers are being encouraged to adapt reforms and innovations to local conditions and student learning needs. The resource transfer takes place as conditional block grants (Uganda and Tanzania), as support for school projects developed at the school level (Guinea, Madagascar, Senegal) or through subsidies to community owned and operated schools (Chad). There is a large variation in the way these processes are being implemented, and progress is almost always uneven and slower than expected. Government financial procedures are often poorly adapted to the demands of decentralized financial management. However, most important is the lack of experience and capacity constraints at the school level and in the school management committees that has often constrained progress. At the same time there are several promising experiences (Uganda, Tanzania, Guinea) which suggest that a persistent effort at building capacity for planning and experimentation at the school level can help to create an environment highly conducive to quality improvement

Monitoring learning, assessing progress

Effective management of quality improvement in a system that is increasingly decentralized, involves multiple providers to deliver programs adapted to a wide range of local conditions, and relies on multiple sources of financing cannot be done without reliable information to guide resource allocation and action. Assessments of student learning and statistics on key system performance indicators such as coverage, internal effi-

> There are promising experiences that offer lessons on the way forward. These experiences can be summarized in terms of seven principal pillars of quality improvement: create the opportunity to learn, improve instructional practice, manage the challenge of equity, increase school autonomy and flexibility, nurture community support, ensure a realistic financial framework, and respond to HIV/AIDS and conflict situations. Building a national strategic framework on these seven pillars is critical to improving quality.

ciency, teacher deployment and material input availability are the essential management information instruments in such a system. The CONFEMEN's Program for the analysis of education systems (PASEC), the Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SAQMEQ) and the Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA) program are leading the way in these efforts.

Financing quality

Financing quality education will require efforts to mobilize additional internal and external resources for basic education and use these resources efficiently. Recent estimates (Bruns et al 2003) call for substantial but gradual increases in external support. But improving quality cannot be postponed and significant investments in quality beyond those projected will be required. A package of essential learning and operating inputs estimated to require an additional of $10-12 per child per year is urgently needed and would require an additional $700 million a year over the $2.3 billion total estimated recurrent primary education expenditures for 2000.

> The assumption that change is an orderly, rational and linear process that provides centrally defined fixes to the quality problems of schools is one that has been found to be false in almost every instance. In fact, there is an emerging consensus that change is essentially a local process with the school as the unit of change; that local learning and adaptation is key; and that developing local capacity—at the school, the community and the district level—is a condition sine qua non for success.

Should the required external or internal resources not be available at the level needed countries may want to consider (i) postponing some desirable but less cost effective policy measures such as reduction of the pupil-teacher ratio to 40 until the later years; (ii) increasing the share of basic education in the education budget; (iii) pursuing whenever possible low cost community based solutions (iv) encouraging community and parental contributions to education development—provided policies are in place to ensure that no child will be unable to attend school because of inability to pay.

Increased cost effectiveness will first require reducing the variation in the level of allocation of resources between schools. Second it will require enhancing the efficiency by spending resources on those inputs and processes that are known to be strongly supportive of student learning—the promising avenues (see box on page 7).

The road towards quality: a strategic framework

As in the industrialized world the path of quality improvement in sub-Saharan Africa has often been rocky and strewn with obstacles. There are experiences that provide warnings and lessons about the obstacles to avoid. But also, and perhaps most importantly, there are promising experiences that offer lessons on the way forward. These experiences can be summarized in terms of seven principal pillars of quality improvement: create the opportunity to learn, improve instructional practice, manage the challenge of equity, increase school autonomy and flexibility, nurture community support, ensure a realistic financial framework, and respond to HIV/AIDS and conflict situations.

Building a national strategic framework on these seven pillars is critical to improving quality. Equally important but much less well understood is the development of a culture that explicitly aims to promote quality and learning. Such a culture of quality is driven and sustained by a set of values and beliefs on the process of teaching and learning—a theory and practice of education and a vision of educational practice—that is widely shared.

Inputs and procedures: Promising Avenues and Blind Alleys

Variable	Promising Avenue	Blind Alley
Curriculum	Bilingual programs using African languages as medium of instruction in early grades Content organized in a limited number of subjects Direct instruction with supporting structured materials	"Colonial" languages throughout the cycle Discovery learning and open ended instruction
Learning materials	A textbook in core subjects for every child Notebook and other supplies Sundry classroom supplies Teacher guides Classroom library	Computers in classrooms
Time	1000 hours of instruction Regular teacher presence Arrangements for substitute teaching	Double shift use of teachers
Infrastructure	Community managed classroom construction Double shift use of classrooms	National competitive bidding
Teachers and schools	Continuous in service training and support Distance education for teachers Female teachers School based management Training head teachers as instructional and transformational leaders Support by pedagogical counselors	Lengthy pre-service training Centralized management Traditional Inspections Subject matter teachers

Effective quality improvement also requires a theory of action and a strategy for implementation. Implementation has long been the Achilles heel of education policy reform, especially reforms that aim at large scale changes in the process of teaching and learning. The assumption that change is an orderly, rational and linear process that provides centrally defined fixes to the quality problems of schools is one that has been found to be false in almost every instance. In fact, there is an emerging consensus that (i) change is essentially a local process with the school as the unit of change; (ii) local learning and adaptation is key; (iii) developing local capacity—at the school, the community and the district level—is a condition sine qua non for success; and (iv) progress is incremental and uneven.

Evidence gathered for the study suggests five important conditions that will guide and underpin effective action on quality improvement:

▶ national commitment to a vision of quality education for all, that is shared with all stakeholders and used as a beacon for action.

▶ readiness to select and sequence priorities for action in a way that reflects the ability of the education system to change while keeping a perspective on large scale improvement.

▶ determination to both utilize existing capacity and develop new capacity at all levels of the education system.

▶ resolve to establish strong local and international partnerships.

▶ recognition that unless processes for continuous learning from practice are in place quality improvement and enhanced learning achievement will remain an elusive goal for many countries and much of the efforts to ensure commitment, strengthen partnerships and mobilize resources will have been in vain. ◗

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environment is better understood, the psycho-social one, which is at least as important, deserves serious attention so that practices such as gender discrimination, bullying, corporal punishment, and forced work are eliminated.

Enabling environment. 6. Is the importance of an enabling environment that is rights-based. A quality education must be offered within a managerial and administrative system that also supports effective learning. This presupposes a system that is well managed, with transparent processes guided by the implementation of good policies and an appropriate legislative framework. It also requires sufficient resources, recognizing the full range that can be brought to bear in support of education.

A quality education understands the past, is relevant to the present, and has a view to the future. Quality education relates to knowledge building and the skillful application of all forms of knowledge by unique individuals that function both independently and in relation to others. A quality education reflects the dynamic nature of culture and languages, the value of the individual in relation to the larger context, and the importance of living in a way that promotes equality in the present and fosters a sustainable future.◗

1 See UNICEF working paper on quality education

Program of the Biennial Meeting

Grand Baie, Mauritius, December 3-6, 2003

The theme of the Biennial Meeting will be "The Quest for Quality: Learning from the African Experience". Panels, round tables and workshops will be organized around this vast theme. Here are highlights of the program of the meeting and of the topics that will be discussed.

The plenary sessions

After the opening session there will be ten plenary sessions. Each session will focus on a specific topic and will be animated by a panel of experts. Of the ten plenary sessions, five will consist of presentations followed by panel discussions. The other five sessions will be round table discussions, with no formal presentations.

Panel 1: Educational quality in sub-Saharan Africa at issue

The first panel will be an introduction to the discussions on the quality of education. Its purpose is to clarify and to explain differences in understanding and their implications in terms of dialogue and negotiation. The session will view a film showing the variety of concepts as expressed by actors in education in Africa. The experience of a policy to improve quality in Mauritius will be presented and will provide a basis for presenting field-related challenges and strategies. Finally, the main background document for the meeting (discussion paper) will be presented, thus providing the opportunity to consider the main theoretical and practical issues on African and international experiences in quality improvement.

Panel 2: Assessing and taking stock of the quality of education in Africa

The panel will bring out the findings on learning achievements in Africa based on the assessments made through the Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SAQMEQ), the CONFEMEN's program for the analysis of education systems (PASEC) and the Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA) program. Issues related to the measurement and monitoring of quality through the use of education statistics and indicators will also be discussed as well as the conditions for using examinations and other types of assessment for monitoring performance.

Panel 3: Quality-related political and financial options

The panel will introduce the dimension of equity with specail emphasis on gender. The EFA 2003 report will assess the situation of girls in Africa and the FAWE study will present strategies to enhance the participation of girls. The panel will also bring up the issue of the financing of quality and the need to seek lowest costs (and highest impact) in a context of scarce resources. Essential inputs will be discussed and will invite participants to reflect on cost effectiveness and on cost/equity investment options.

Panel 4: Teacher development at the center of pedagogical renewal

The professional development of teachers is a key factor for triggering change in educational concepts and practices. The panel will explore effective strategies for developing and strengthening the professional skills of teachers while encouraging learner-oriented educational practices.

Panel 5: Ensuring the relevance and efficiency of learning

Increasing relevance is one way of improving the effectiveness of learning. The issue of relevance is considered in relation to the promotion of an African education model. Adapting the curricula to the "needs of social practice" of the learners and using their language as the first language of instruction improve educational processes and learners' performances.

Panel 6: Implementing reforms in schools and classrooms

It is in schools and in the classrooms that significant changes occur that will lead to improving the quality of education. A major challenge is the successful implementation of reforms at the level of the school and its translation into changed practices for teachers and learners.

Panel 7: How is quality ensured elsewhere?

This panel will examine experiences of quality improvement at levels other than basic education (secondary and higher education) and in other sectors (health, new technologies). Lessons will be drawn for the education sector.

Panel 8: Decentralization and diversification : the role of civil societies and communities

Quality education for all requires political commitment and mobilizing latent education resources in society. The round table will consider cases of decentralization, devolution and contracting which have made it possible to involve stakeholders and partners in quality policy formulation and implementation.

Panel 9: External partnerships: financing and knowledge sharing

The panel will explore strategies used by development agencies to contribute to quality improvement. Exchanges will address issues such as the sustainability of aid and the coordination of interventions, in particular in relation to sector-wide approaches.

Panel 10 : HIV/AIDS and education quality

The round-table will focus on the quality of education, in particular the relation between the education-learning process and the effect s of the pandemic on teachers and students. Other issues will be discussed including: education as a means of prevention, HIV/AIDS data collection and processing and the development of well-planned sectoral HIV/AIDS-control programs.

Breakaway Sessions

There will be three breakaway sessions that will explore in greater depth topics discussed in the plenary sessions. The breakaway sessions will address the following topics: policies for the improvement and financing of quality; strategies and reforms at the school and classroom levels; and, partnerships for quality.

The Caucus of Ministers

During its Biennial Meetings ADEA organizes a meeting of the Caucus of African Ministers of Education. This year, the Caucus of Ministers will address substantial issues in connection with strategies for implementing NEPAD in the education sector, sector; peer reviews such as those conducted by the OECD; and a project for handicapped children. Tha Caucus of Ministers will also nominate a new Bureau of Ministers. Members of the Bureau of Ministers sit on the ADEA Steering Committee.

ADEA will celebrate its15th anniversary (1988-2003) in Grand Baie, Mauritius

ADEA will celebrate its 15th anniversary in Grand Baie during the Biennial Meeting. Celebrations will take place in the presence of former Chairs, Alternate Chairs and Executive Secretaries. The commemoration will include statements on the activities and evolution of ADEA in relation to the association's overall objective to support the development of education in Africa.

ADEA was first established in 1988 under the name Donors to African Education (DAE). Its initial mandate was derived from the recommendations of the World Bank 1988 study entitled Education in sub-Saharan Africa: Policies for Adjustment, Revitalization and Expansion. The goal of DAE was to continue the policy dialogue initiated by that study and to act as a framework for improved coordination between development agencies. DAE was then managed by the Africa Region Human Development Department of the World Bank.

The association grew rapidly to include the participation of most multilateral, bilateral and private development organizations. However, soon after its creation it became evident that without the active involvement of African ministers of education, the effectiveness of this collaboration would be limited. Consequently, in 1992 five African ministers of education were asked to join the Steering Committee.

During the same year, a small independent secretariat was established in Paris and housed at the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) of UNESCO. The purpose of this move was to foster a broad sense of ownership among all members—African ministers and funding agencies alike.

The conclusions of an evaluation conducted in 1994 led to an increase in the number of ministers represented on the Steering Committee to 10 members.

In 1995 the association's official title changed from "Donors to African Education" to "Association for the Development of Education in Africa"(ADEA) in order to better reflect the partnership between ministers and development agencies.

Briefs on Side Meetings

Several meetings will be organized in annex to the Biennale. ADEA working groups and other organizations will take advantage of the presence of ministers and development officials to present and discuss their activities.

WG Teaching Profession: Official Launching of the Merged WGTP

Following the meeting organized by the two sections of the WGTP (Anglophone and Francophone) on 11-13 May in Zanzibar where the two sections were merged and new structures and directions were drawn up, this meeting will officially launch the Merged WGTP in the presence of Sub-Saharan African ministers and other partners of the WG attending the Biennale.
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WG Finance and Education: Steering Committee meeting

The WG Finance and Education will convene its Steering Committee to revise its Work Plan and Budget for 2004
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Working Group on Early Childhood Development (WG) – Consultation meeting

The ADEA Working Group on Early Childhood Development organises its third consultative meeting on December 2 in Mauritius. Main focus of this meeting will be to strategise future interventions to advance early childhood in Africa. At the same time, the meeting will develop a message to the larger ADEA audience to be presented in one of panel sessions during the Biennale. Linked to this meeting, a two-day curtain raiser event on 30 November and 1 December, will be organised by the Collective of Trainers from the South. This event aims to enhance awareness for ECD and has organised a set of events involving children, parents and youth, allowing us to get a better sense of Mauritius approach to empower children and advance their rights.
Contact: **Jeannette Vogelaar**, WGECD Coordinator   Fax: +31 70/ 348 6436   email: jeannette.vogelaar@minbuza.nl

Working Group on Nonformal Education (WGNFE) – Consultation meeting and Steering Committee

On December 2nd, the WGNFE will hold a consultation meeting. Two main issues will be discussed: what remains to be done to ensure that nonformal education makes an effective contribution to reducing poverty and meeting the Dakar goals; and the strategies that need to be implemented to integrate nonformal education into the process of national development in light of the concrete situation today. The recommendations made by the meeting will help the WGNFE draw up its action plan for the coming two or three years. The WGNFE Steering Committee will meet on December 4th.
Contact: **Amina Osman**, WGNFE Coordinator. Fax +44 20 7/ 747 6287 - email: a.osman@commonwealth.int

AVU Conference

This is a consultative meeting with African ministers of higher education geared towards obtaining the both the political support needed for the expansion of the African Virtual University programs in the region. African distance education specialists and ministers will examine the current situation and development prospects of distance education in Africa; issues of accreditation of diplomas awarded by the AVU; selection of regional centers of excellence according to their educational specialties and the identification of the universities which could host AVU's national training centers. The meeting is organized` in collaboration with the Working Group on Higher Education (WGHE) and the Working Group on Distance Education and Open Learning (WGDE/OL).
Contact: **Magdallen Juma**, AVU   Fax: +254/ 2 71 20 71   email: mjuma@avu.org

Forum of African Women Educationalists (FAWE) Day

FAWE will organize a session during the ADEA Biennial in Mauritius to share its experiences with Ministers of Education, Donors to African Education, and other education policy makers and practitioners who will be attending the ADEA meeting. At this session, FAWE will share its experiences in improving quality. The presentations will highlight specific interventions in improving quality in terms of improving: teaching methodologies and approaches, teacher/student interaction, student's participation, empowerment for better learning, life skills for personal development of students, school management systems, community involvement in the school activities, linking infrastructure to performance requirements, access to learning/teaching materials and the participation in science, mathematics and ICTs. FAWE's interventions have focused on improving the quality

of education from the perspective of the participation of girls. Practical experience will be drawn from practioners from FAWE Centres of Excellence in 6 countries including Namibia, the Gambia, Senegal, Tanzania, Rwanda and Kenya. The main objective of the Centres of Excellence is to create a conducive environment for teaching and learning with the aim of eliminating gender constraints to access, retention and performance. The presentations will take the form of an assessment of how the schools are being transformed from an ordinary school into a Centre of Excellence, highlighting the processes, achievements and challenges emanating from a recent study of the schools involved. The presentation will also include a panel discussion of practitioners from the schools and officials from ministries of education, as well as videos and exhibitions highlighting experiences from the schools.

Contact: **Marema Dioum**   Fax: +254 2/ 57 41 50   email: mdioum@fawe.org / fawe@fawe.org

Working Group on Books and Learning Materials (WGBLM) – Lessons from a recent study on the privatisation of the publishing industry

Ten years ago many African States barely had an indigenous commercial book sector. More than half had no publishing or booksellers' association. On December 4, WGBLM will organize a breakfast meeting which will highlight the results of a study of changing public/private partnerships in book provision across sub-Saharan Africa. Dependence on centralised monopoly state provision has given way to the liberalisation of textbook authorship, as well as to a decisive trend away from single text to multi-textbook choice, decentralisation of procurement, and the emergence of indigenous commercial publishing and booksell- ing.   The major conclusion of the study is that: Public/private partnerships are objectively feasible only to the extent to which capacity exists in the private sector. Building capacity and technical competence requires concrete policies to create the right conditions. We shall discuss how achieving the correct balance can be the basis for a dynamic and worthwhile public/private partnership.

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Working Group on Education Sector Analysis (WGESA) – New perspectives in education sector analysis in Africa

On 4 December, the WGESA will hold a meeting on new perspectives in education sector analysis in Africa. A particular focus will be the challenges and opportunities that are arising as the WGESA develops stronger and stronger roots in Africa. Specific examples will be given of the process of analysing the sector in a given country. The new areas of research discussed during the last meeting of the WGESA Steering Committee will be discussed, as well as the most recent training seminars held in Africa and in Europe. Discussion will follow a panel presenta- tion by representatives of the education ministries, regional institutions based in Africa and international partners.

Contact: **Ibrahima Bah Lalya,** WGESA Coordinator   Fax: +33 1 40 72 83 66   email: I.bah-lalya@iiep.unesco.org

Africa Education Journalism Award

The third edition of the Akintola Fatoyinbo African Education Journalism Award will be launched on December 3, after the plenary session. The African Education Journalism Award recognises the best articles in education writ- ten by African journalists and published in the African press. The ADEA established this prize in order to highlight the importance of high-quality public information for the development of education in Africa. By means of this award, the ADEA is encouraging African media to take an interest in education and to stimulate public discussion about it.

Contact: **Thanh-Hoa Desruelles**, ADEA Secretariat   Fax: +33/ 145 03 39 65   email: th.desruelles@iiep.unesco.org

UNESCO Round table on Gender and Literacy

UNESCO will organize a round table on gender and literacy on December 2. The round table aims to develop an un- derstanding of how gender is articulated in literacy practices and to examine policy discourses and practices on gender as a basis for rethinking the notion of literacies. Conceptual frameworks and policies on gender and literacies will be discussed as well as good practices integrating gender and HIV preventive education and fighting poverty and violence against women.

Contact : **Armoogum Parsuramen**, Director, BREDA Fax: +221/ 823/8393/6175   email: a.parsuramen@unesco.org

Launching of the United Nations Literacy decade in Africa (UNLD)

The ceremony of the regional launch of the United Nations Literacy Decade in Africa will be organized by BREDA in cooperation with UNESCO headquarters, UNESCO Institute of Education and ADEA. The event aims to contribute to advocacy on literacy in Africa and to help generate support in the African coun- tries to accelerate their efforts towards achieving literacy for all in the framework of Education for All. The ceremony shall be followed by a reception offered by UNESCO and by the visit to the UNLD exhibition.

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Calendar

ADEA Activities

December 8-12, 2003
WG on Education Statistics
NESIS Training Workshop on Geographical Information Systems
Maputo, Mozambique

January, 2004
Working Group on the Teaching Profession
A meeting of this working group is planned, in view of continuing the merger process. Dates and venue to be confirmed.

February 2, 2004
Working Group on Education Statistics
Workshop on Educational Mapping and Geographical Information Systems. For the West Africa region
Niamey, Niger

April-May, 2004
Working Group on Education Statistics, in collaboration with the Working Group on Non Formal Education
Workshop on statistical information systems for Non formal education
Ouagadougou, Burkina faso;
(Dates and venue to be confirmed)

April, 2004
Meetings of the ADEA Steering Committee and meeting of the ADEA Working Groups leaders and coordinators.
Dates and venues to be determined

December 3-6, 2003
ADEA Biennale
Grand Baie, Mauritius

Biennial side events

Monday 01 December

WG on Finance and Education Meeting on the financing of higher education

WG on the Teaching Profession, Steering Committee Meeting

Tuesday 02 December

AVU-ADEA Conference on Distance higher education and Open Learning in Africa

WG Early Childhood Development – Consultative meeting

UNESCO – Round-table on Gender and Literacy

AVU-ADEA Conference on distance higher education

WG Early Childhood Development – Consultative meeting

FAWE – Gender and the Quality of Education

WG on Non-Formal Education – Nonformal Education and Quality of EFA within the Context of Diversified Learning Systems

Meeting with the chairpersons and panelists of different sessions of the Biennale

Thursday 04 December

WG Books and Learning Materials

Public/private sector partnerships

UN Literacy Decade Regional Launch in Africa.

WG Education Sector Analysis: Renewed Education Sector Analysis in Africa

WG Non-Formal Education: Steering Committee

Other activities

December 8-10, 2003
International seminar on "Protection and rights for street children: fighting HIV/AIDS and discrimination"
Organized by UNAIDS/UNESCO
Bamako, Mali.

December 10-12, 2003
World Summit on the Information society
Geneva, Switzerland

January 21-23, 2004
Working group for minimum standards for education in Emergencies, chronic crises and Early reconstruction. First regional consultation
Organised by the Interagency network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)
For more information http://ineesite.org

Dates and venues may change. For more information please consult the ADEA web site (www.adeanet.org)