Six Steps to Abolishing Primary School Fees

Operational Guide

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THE WORLD BANK
Washington, DC

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ADEA

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

International Institute
for Educational Planning

Education For All
Fast Track Initiative

Cover images
Front cover: © UNICEF/NYHQ2004-0338/Furrer; Ruthimitu Primary School, Nairobi, Kenya. In a special class to review survey results, two girls complete a survey form from an interview with a child who does not attend school. The school is participating in the "Let's Go to School" campaign.
Back cover: © UNICEF/NYHQ2004-0357/Furrer; Ruthimitu Primary School, Nairobi, Kenya. During morning assembly, schoolgirls laugh as a comedian performs a popular skit about a person being bitten by an ant and who is forced to undress to find it. Itinerant comedians often visit schools to entertain the children. The school is participating in the "Let's Go to School" campaign.

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Preface

This *Operational Guide* is the product of several consultations with education partners and experts and two major meetings, held in Kenya in April 2006 and in Mali in June 2007, which gathered ministers of education; ministry of education technical officials; and personnel from multilateral and bilateral agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and research institutions.

The first version of the guide was written by Marie Dorléans, education specialist and consultant. A second version was drafted by Dina Craissati, senior education adviser at the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); Birger Fredriksen, consultant on education development and former senior adviser at the World Bank; and Robert Prouty, acting head of the Education for All/Fast Track Initiative (EFA/FTI). This version was enriched and finalized by Dean Nielsen, consultant and former senior evaluation officer in the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group. Alexia Lewnes, writer and editor, provided editorial assistance.

Comments were provided by Felipe Barrera (World Bank), Mark Bray (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO]/International Institute for Educational Planning [IIEP]), Tracy Brunette (American Institutes for Research), Francoise Caillods (UNESCO/IIEP), Joanne Carter (Results), Theophania Chavatzia (UNESCO), Patrick Collins (United States Agency for International Development

Abbreviations

$	All dollar amounts are U.S. dollars unless otherwise indicated.
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
EFA	Education for All
FPE	Free Primary Education
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NGO	nongovernmental organization
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PTA	parent-teacher association
SFAI	School Fee Abolition Initiative
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Introduction

This *Operational Guide* is one of the main outputs of the School Fee Abolition Initiative (SFAI). SFAI is designed to significantly advance efforts to ensure access to quality basic education by supporting policies that remove the education cost barriers to parents and households. Launched by UNICEF and the World Bank in 2005, the Initiative has grown into a broad partnership that involves other key development partners and constituencies as well as research and academic institutions.

SFAI was initiated within a growing worldwide movement to accelerate progress toward achieving the education Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of 100 percent completion of primary education by 2015 and the Education for All (EFA) goal of ensuring access to and completion of free and compulsory primary education of good quality by that year. The bold strategy of SFAI is to provide practical and financial support to countries that have decided to eliminate school fees or provide targeted fee exemptions, subsidies, and incentives for the poor. Donors have provided strong support to this movement and to related strategies, such as conditional cash transfers. Global leaders have also placed the issue high on their political agendas. In 2006, for example, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer (later Prime Minister) Gordon Brown highlighted the need for free primary education at the Education Roundtable chaired

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> I want to particularly draw attention to the need for free primary education. It must be universal, but it must be free. I was in Kenya more than a year ago and I found that in the week that Kenya had made primary education free for its children, 1 million children who had not had schooling turned up to be registered for school, just one signal of the demand for education when it is available free of charge. And from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Zambia, we know that more than 1 million children in each of these countries were added to the education roles when education was made free. So part of our commitment to funding is to make it possible for primary education to be both universal and free. And I hope that we can move this forward quickly in the next few months.
>
> Gordon Brown, Singapore,
> September 2006

by Paul Wolfowitz, President of the World Bank at the time, and African Development Bank President Donald Kaberuka, during the annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Singapore (box). The discussions during the Roundtable focused on the findings of the Development Committee Report on the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) and the need to bolster funding through the FTI to help achieve EFA. The United Kingdom committed $15 billion over the next 10 years to help ensure that this goal is achieved.[1]

Why the Focus on Removing Financial Barriers to Schooling?

Efforts to remove financial barriers to school are gaining momentum for several reasons:

- *Progress on the education MDGs and the EFA goals needs to be sustained and reinforced*. Countries are making encouraging progress toward reducing the number of out-of-school children. Some 72 million children were not enrolled in school in 2005 (57 percent of them girls), down from 96 million in 1999 (59 percent girls) (UNESCO 2007).

Nevertheless, projections on the average annual rate of increase in enrollment suggest that most low-income countries will need almost three times the current growth rate to achieve the 2015 goals. Moreover, increased enrollment does not always translate into similar gains in attendance and completion, as witnessed by the fact that more than 90 million children did not attend school in 2005 (UNICEF 2007). In addition, in many countries the overage student population is growing at alarming rates and more than half of primary school graduates fail to master basic skills. These conditions call for bold measures.

- *School fee abolition is a bold and demonstrably effective initiative for accelerating the attainment of the EFA goals*. Experience in many countries shows that the household costs of schooling are a major barrier that prevent children from accessing and completing quality basic education. The private costs of education are especially burdensome in countries in which poverty and vulnerability impose tough choices on families and households about how many and which children to send to school and for how long. Countries that have taken the bold step to eliminate fees and other costs to parents, or introduced conditional cash transfer programs for poor families, have seen dramatic and sudden surges in enrollment: in Kenya, primary school enrollments increased from 5.9 million in 2002 to 7.12 million in 2004, and in Timor Leste, they increased by 9.5 percent between 1999 and 2001 (Bentaouet-Kattan 2006); in Uganda, primary school enrollment grew from 3.1 million in 1996 to 5.3 million in 1997 (World Bank and UNICEF 2009). To increase educational access, however, school fee abolition needs to be real, not mere political posturing. Of 93 countries surveyed by the World Bank in 2005, most of which had official provisions for free primary education, only 16 charged no fees at all. In addition, recidivism—the unofficial return of fees—is a growing phenomenon in countries that have officially and legally abolished fees (Bentaouet-Kattan 2006).

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- *School fee abolition has a direct impact on equity and inclusion, and it addresses the rights and needs of marginalized, excluded, and vulnerable children*. School fees are a form of regressive taxation, which imposes a disproportionate burden on the poor. The tremendous surge in enrollment after abolishing fees—particularly among poor, previously excluded, and vulnerable children (girls, children living in remote rural populations, child laborers, children with disabilities, and children affected by HIV/AIDS and social conflict)—reveals that the private costs of education to families are particularly burdensome to these groups. Enrollment of children from such groups is very sensitive to fees, even small fees.

- *When carefully planned, school fee abolition or similar programs can trigger sectorwide education reforms*. Well-planned school fee abolition is not an isolated policy measure but an initiative that will stimulate (or be embedded in) sectorwide educational planning and reform. Because it needs to be implemented within a sound policy framework, school fee abolition forces governments and development partners to collect information and cost/enrollment projections, scrutinize education plans and budgets, identify inefficiencies, and explore new avenues of reform. Major sector reform needs have been identified in a variety of areas, including the size of government budget allocations to and across the sector; the provision of basic education services (more student places, trained teachers, and learning materials); governance (greater decentralization and accountability at the local level); and transitioning to postprimary education. In some prominent cases, school fee abolition has triggered improvements in EFA strategizing within a long-term sector plan and has been prominent in government poverty reduction strategies.[2]

- *Well-managed school fee abolition prompts ministries of education to engage in policy dialogue and consensus building with other sectors and development partners*. Abolishing school fees forces governments

to simultaneously replace lost revenue and deal with a large surge in enrollment, creating financial burdens that will be hard to bear, at least in the short run. This has often become a rationale for increased financial and technical support from development partners (such as official debt relief and financial contributions from nongovernmental organizations [NGOs] and development agencies, a large proportion of which officially support school fee abolition). In addition, governments have come to recognize that school fee abolition alone is not enough to attract the poorest and most marginalized, given the multitude of other economic and social barriers to their participation in primary education, such as high opportunity and transportation costs, poor nutrition and health, untreated learning disabilities, and social dislocation from conflict or HIV/AIDS. The need to overcome such barriers has led some ministries of education into dialogue and cooperation with other parts of the government (such as social welfare, health and nutrition, and transportation ministries) and relevant NGOs. It has also motivated policy makers to develop complementary interventions, such as scholarships or conditional cash transfers, school feeding programs, social mobilization (such as promotion of girls' education by women's groups), and new ways of solving transportation problems (such as providing some students with bicycles).

- *The consequences of school fee abolition and related programs can focus greater attention on improved educational quality, especially accelerated approaches to providing quality inputs*. Both the loss of revenue to local schools under school fee abolition and the surge in enrollment pose threats to school quality. This problem could be serious, given that even before school fees were abolished quality was unsatisfactory in many settings. School fee abolition programs that end up reducing school quality—by, for example, overloading classrooms or failing to provide enough teachers or textbooks—are ultimately self-defeating, because parents who might have enrolled their children in school once fees were

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abolished may pull them out if learning opportunities, not just a place in an overcrowded school, are not provided. Many planners have seen school fee abolition policies as an opening to the rethinking of ways to provide quality inputs in a timely manner and to promote acceptable learning outcomes by, for example, adopting more cost-effective ways of expanding classroom space; using existing teachers more effectively and catering to teacher needs in remote areas; improving procurement and the timely distribution of learning materials through competitive tendering; using local languages in the early years; increasing instructional time; and granting funds directly to schools (to encourage community engagement and minimize misuse of funds).

Goals of the School Fee Abolition Initiative

Although quantum leaps have been made in improving access to basic education in individual countries that have removed financial barriers to schooling, analysis and experience reveal that some of the hard-earned gains are being eroded by poor school quality, fee creep, and other threats, signaling that many challenges, in both planning and implementation, need to be addressed. A school fee abolition policy requires sound planning as well as solid technical and financial support to ensure that resources are mobilized and channeled effectively toward the achievement of sustainable education outcomes. SFAI was launched to present a variety of policy options and technical/financial support possibilities, with the hope of promoting new cooperative agreements within governments and between them and development agency partners. In doing so, SFAI aims to achieve three interlinked goals:

- *Goal 1: Build a knowledge base and network on school fee abolition within which lessons learned can be exchanged and sound strategies*

and interventions supported. SFAI affirms the critical importance of using lessons from experience and credible evidence to inform new policy making and strategizing—including the use of project and planning documents, situation analyses, case studies, action-oriented research, program evaluations, and impact assessments—recognizing that strategies cannot be simplistically transplanted from one country to another but require both rational planning based on local research and complex political processes of consensus building. This *Operational Guide* is one of the main products of goal 1.

- *Goal 2: Use this knowledge and experience to facilitate and provide guidance and support to countries in planning and implementing policies of school fee abolition*. SFAI recognizes a range of strategies to help remove barriers to schooling. Where governments have chosen to eliminate school fees, international partners are now engaged at different levels to help them determine the scope, phasing, requirements, and financing of school fee abolition, recognizing that in resource-constrained environments, prudent school fee abolition cannot happen everywhere at once. Engagement is taking the form of technical support and the facilitation of information exchange between countries. Consultations, training, and capacity development are also planned in conjunction with this *Operational Guide*.

- *Goal 3: Facilitate, promote, and advance the global policy dialogue on the financial barriers to educational access and acceptable learning outcomes and build partnerships that ensure an environment for success*. SFAI is building on existing partnerships in and beyond education (the EFA movement; HIV/AIDS, civil society, and human rights networks), and it is engaging a broad array of development partners at national, regional, and global levels (governments, civil society organizations, academic institutions, bilateral and multilateral agencies) to ensure a good understanding of the complexities involved in school fee abolition, facilitate the articulation of complementary roles,

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create the necessary technical and financial agreements, and sustain commitment and action. This *Operational Guide* will also serve as a tool for promoting dialogue and partnerships.

For more information on SFAI,
please click on the logo/link below
or go to www.schoolfeeabolition.org.

SF AI   **SCHOOL FEE ABOLITION INITIATIVE**

Background on the *Operational Guide*

A workshop, organized by UNICEF and the World Bank—"Building on What We Know and Defining Sustained Support"—was held in Nairobi April 5–7, 2006. It enabled participants to discuss experiences in planning and implementing school fee abolition policies and to consolidate partnerships for short- and medium-term support to governments. The workshop brought together ministry of education representatives from six countries whose governments had already abolished fees (Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, and Tanzania) and three in which planning was going forward (Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Haiti), as well as bilateral and multilateral agencies, major international NGOs, academic institutions, and other constituencies.

The Nairobi workshop helped deepen participants' understanding of how to make a policy on school fee abolition work without seriously undermining educational quality. Participants from a number of countries stated that the workshop gave them greater confidence to commit themselves to advance or reform their plans. Partners pledged to work

together to help government officials manage the school fee abolition processes more effectively. To keep the momentum going, workshop participants recommended the preparation of an operational guide.

A first draft of the SFAI *Operational Guide* was developed right after the meeting. It was reviewed twice by groups of experts from countries, development agencies, NGOs, and academic institutions, first at UNICEF (New York) in June and then at UNESCO/International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) (Paris) in July. In 2007 the draft was used as a resource at the international conference on school fee abolition convened in Bamako, Mali, by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), UNICEF, and the World Bank. There it was further strengthened, particularly with respect to perspectives on sustaining educational quality and financing (ADEA, UNICEF, and World Bank 2007).

This version of the *Operational Guide* is the product of this consultation process as well as various discussions and dialogues on school fees within the framework of EFA forums held during 2005, 2006, and 2007. It is by no means a final product. It will continue to improve with further consultations, training and capacity development, and country engagement.

Scope and Foundation of the *Operational Guide*

The main objectives of this *Operational Guide* are to generate knowledge, guide analytical and technical work, and facilitate policy dialogue and decision making. The document aims to serve policy makers, planning officers, and development partners. The way it is used will vary, depending on country contexts and choices. It can assist governments just embarking on school fee abolition in the planning process, and it can help those already under way review or refine policies and ongoing implementation processes.

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The *Operational Guide* highlights six steps to guide governments through sound school fee abolition processes. The steps, which are not necessarily sequenced, include the following:

1. Defining a leadership and management mechanism that is mandated at the highest level, supported by national consensus, and backed by the best technical expertise available
2. Creating a comprehensive situation analysis of school fees, related costs, school population and enrollment statistics, and existing resources
3. Setting priorities on the types of fees to eliminate first; the sequencing of school fee abolition according to geographic area, grade, age, and/or socioeconomic characteristics; and prioritizing children needing more than school fee abolition
4. Estimating costs related to the range of policy options and identifying sources of local, national, and international financing
5. Maintaining the focus on quality issues
6. Strengthening school governance and accountability.

For each step, the rationale; suggested actions or policy choices; and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) requirements, suggestions, and ideas are provided, along with country illustrations and examples and key references. An appendix provides additional guidance on combined strategies to reach the most vulnerable. The SFAI Web site (www.schoolfeeabolition. org) provides additional resources.

All six steps are based on the following premises:

- ***School fee abolition involves major challenges, which need to be addressed if the gains made are to be consolidated and sustained.*** School fee abolition does not stop at policy declarations; it needs to be translated into a set of sound, well-planned, widely negotiated, comprehensive, and sustainable policy and operational frameworks. The abolition of school fees can be feasible and realistic, but it is a complex

process that must take into account the formidable challenges related to management and governance, quality, equity, financing, and politics. School fee abolition is only one of a number of potential strategies to remove financial barriers to primary schooling: governments should be encouraged to thoughtfully consider a range of options. For governments that have decided that fee abolition is the appropriate strategy, the six steps of the *Operational Guide* address the complexity of school fee abolition processes, from securing political and technical backing (Steps 1 and 2) through enhancing the basis for making equitable and financially sound choices (Steps 3 and 4), maintaining the focus on quality (Step 5), and strengthening school governance and accountability (Step 6).

- *The focus on equity and quality should be maintained if school fee abolition is to be successful*. In many countries children from excluded, marginalized, and vulnerable groups may still not be able to attend school, despite fee abolition. These children may need additional, targeted financial and nonfinancial support to ensure that they benefit from this policy. Step 3 provides guidance on these accompanying measures and targeted exemptions, subsidies, and incentives (see also the appendix, which presents combined strategies for reaching the most vulnerable). SFAI emphasizes that access to education can be increased only by enhancing education quality and should by no means be furthered at its expense, especially with regard to the mobilization of resources. A key SFAI message is that no child should be excluded from quality schooling. Step 5 positions school fee abolition not as a threat to quality but as an opportunity to plan for and enhance it.

- *School fee abolition helps lighten the financial burdens on the poor and marginalized*. School fee abolition is not just about tuition fees (which do not necessarily constitute the bulk of fees). It must take into consideration the wide range of household costs of schooling, including the costs of textbooks and supplies, uniforms, and parent-teacher

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association (PTA) contributions; costs related to sports and other school activities and those related to transportation; and contributions to teachers' salaries. In some cases, it may even take into account the opportunity cost of the child's contribution to family income, which may need to be met with complementary actions of social welfare agencies (such as cash transfers to a student's family). Governments need to undertake rigorous context-specific cost–benefit and social analysis on the policy options that are feasible and that yield the best results. The minimum objective is to ensure that no child is excluded from schooling because of inability to pay or other financial reasons. Steps 2 and 3 provide guidance on assessing the different types of costs and putting in place various fee abolition and other financial support measures for the poor and marginalized.

- *School fee abolition policies should encourage the engagement of parents, teachers, and communities in and around schools; it should not compromise the initiative and creativity of communities.* Communities can play crucial roles in furthering and sustaining effective and quality schools. Abolishing school fees must thus not reduce community support to schools. On the contrary, school fee abolition should expand and strengthen community engagement. School grants and other kinds of transfers can be used to ensure that all schools have at least the minimum resources needed for quality education at no financial expense to parents. Communities should not be prevented from providing additional resources (including in-kind contributions) at their own initiative, as long as they do not entail mandatory contributions by low-income families. Step 1 underlines the need for community participation in school planning and management. Step 4 highlights policy options with regard to financing community schools. Step 6 provides guidance on strengthening community engagement.
- *Where school fee abolition is the government's preferred strategy, it should be embedded—as a scaling-up and EFA acceleration strategy— in national education and EFA plans, sectorwide programming,*

existing M&E mechanisms, and financing instruments and macroeconomic frameworks. School fee abolition is not just about emergency responses of replacing fees and managing the ensuing surge in enrollment. If school fee abolition is to be sustainable, it should be anchored in long-term education plans and budgets. The process should also be placed high on the agenda of annual education sector and other reviews. Commitment to school fee abolition is meaningful only where there is a commitment to good-quality EFA. In some countries it will need to be embedded in programs to rebuild education systems. Abolishing school fees also means commitment to promoting complementary interventions in related social sectors (social welfare, health and nutrition, and transportation) and putting forward this constellation of interventions within poverty reduction strategies and national budget processes. Step 1 shows how school fee abolition can be placed high on the agenda of decision makers and integrated into broader EFA and development strategies. The other five steps link school fee abolition to situation analysis, financing considerations and mechanisms, quality improvement, and good governance and accountability.

- *Where school fee abolition policies are envisaged, they need to be integrated with EFA/FTI processes in countries that have established them*. The EFA/FTI can provide added value to school fee abolition processes on several levels. The FTI endorsement process supports countries in crafting sound national education plans and budgets with greater and long-term commitment of political and financial resources. The FTI Indicative Framework includes key benchmarks supportive of successful school fee abolition, such as the target for nonsalary quality inputs, which can be useful in determining the level of school grants. The FTI is well placed to help donors develop proactive strategies with regard to school fees. FTI local donor coordination groups, annual review missions, and the Education Program Development Fund (EPDF) represent key channels for helping countries undertake

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data collection and analysis regarding school fees, determine the resources needed, monitor implementation, and mobilize capacities and expertise. The FTI Catalytic Fund can help countries meet the additional financial burden created by fee abolition. School fee abolition movements in certain countries can also contribute significantly to the FTI, especially on ways to encourage rapid expansion, improve equity, strengthen governance and accountability, and enhance problem solving. Ultimately, school fee abolition experiences and policy debates can contribute to the evolution of the FTI Framework. Step 4 discusses resource mobilization and integration with the FTI.

- *In the long run, school fee abolition requires sustainable financing from government sources; in the short and intermediate terms, it may require external financial assistance*. Promoting and maintaining school quality despite the loss of fee revenue and the surge in enrollment will require increased domestic (government and NGO) funding for basic education. Keeping the momentum going beyond the initial policy blitz will require sustainable funding. This often implies raising the percentage of GDP allocated to education, increasing the share of the education budget going to basic education, or both. Even with such measures, however, government plans to abolish school fees will often leave financing gaps, which will require external financial assistance. External financing for education has increased in recent years, as countries stretch to reach the EFA goals and MDGs. Experience has shown that such support is most effective when external financing partners join in the planning of school fee abolition programs. Financial support provided through the EFA/FTI, for example, is based on partner-reviewed national education plans and budgets (into which school fee abolition would need to fit); it is contingent on meeting agreed-upon benchmarks on financing (for example, the share allocated to primary education) and educational quality (a target for nonsalary quality inputs). Whether it comes through the FTI (using pooled

donor resources or the FTI Catalytic Fund) or some other channel, external financing can help countries meet the additional financial burden created by school fee abolition in the short or intermediate term. Global policy dialogue can contribute to the work and effectiveness of external financing partners. Step 4 of the *Operational Guide* focuses on the mobilization of domestic and external agency resources.

(Chapter continues on the following page.)

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Summary of the Six Steps for Abolishing Primary School Fees

Step	Background/rationale	Taking action
1. Ensuring leadership and participation from the start	The decision to abolish school fees is often politically driven. Country experience demonstrates that if the initiative is to succeed, it must have the support of well-informed, visionary leaders who enlist the participation of a wide range of technical experts and stakeholders to build a national consensus on policy and strategy. The objective of this step is to define a leadership and management mechanism that is mandated at the highest level, supported by national consensus, and backed by the best technical expertise available.	1. Establishing a high-level steering group 2. Mobilizing technical teams 3. Establishing a participatory mechanism for consensus building
2. Assessing the situation	Understanding the real impact of school fees and related costs and how they prevent access to learning is essential for identifying evidence-based options and feasible solutions. Likewise, understanding the school-eligible population is crucial for effective planning, especially when it comes to estimating the size of the surge. The objective of this step is to comprehensively assess school fees, student population and participation data, and related costs and existing resources.	1. Defining and assessing the current status of school fees 2. Understanding the school-eligible population 3. Identifying existing resources
3. Establishing priorities	When school fees are eliminated, revenue at the school level can fall dramatically, while demand for education is very likely to surge. This may seriously overload already stressed educational systems. To cope, educational planners will need to seek alternative sources of revenue and adopt innovative, more cost-effective ways of providing educational services. Where school fees represent a significant portion of education sector funding, it may not be possible to abolish all fees everywhere at once. This suggests the need for a staged approach to school fee abolition. The objective of this step is to set priorities on the types of fees to eliminate first; sequence school fee abolition by geographic area, grade/age level, or socioeconomic characteristics; and target groups needing more than school fee abolition.	1. Setting priorities for types of fees 2. Setting priorities for sequencing school fee abolition 3. Targeting groups requiring more than school fee abolition

(*continued*)

Step	Background/rationale	Taking action
4. Estimating costs and identifying financing	Fee abolition unleashes successive "waves" of costs. Not only is there major budget pressure to replace fee revenues, funds are also needed to address significant enrollment surges. Financing is necessary to reach marginalized children and bring the whole system up to minimum standards ("catching up"). Careful estimates are crucial to determine sustainability and affordability, make more efficient use of existing resources, and revise budget strategies. The objective of this step is to estimate costs related to the range of policy options and to identify sources of national and international financing.	1. Estimating costs 2. Mobilizing domestic resources 3. Seeking external financing to fill the gap
5. Planning for quality	When school systems are flooded with new students and the resources provided by fees are no longer available to schools, the results can be catastrophic. Most countries abolishing fees in recent years have focused much of their attention on reducing these risks and limiting the damage to the overall quality of education. The objective of this step is to identify opportunities for improving quality and maintaining the focus on quality issues.	1. Providing the needed supply of capable teachers 2. Constructing and renovating schools and classrooms 3. Ensuring adequate supplies of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials
6. Strengthening school governance and accountability	Fees formerly used at the school level to cover operating costs usually need to be replaced by resource transfers from the central (or some other level of) government. The way in which these resources are transferred is critical. School governance will need to be improved, and teachers and principals will need to acquire new coping skills to deal with crowded classrooms and the demands of new school improvement plans. The objective of this step is to support effective and transparent mechanisms to allocate and manage the resources designed to replace fees while strengthening community ownership and support for schools and improving school instructional management and supervision.	1. Creating transparent, decentralized resource allocation systems 2. Creating transparent governance systems at the school and community levels 3. Maintaining community engagement 4. Strengthening instructional management

Step 1:
Ensuring Leadership and
Participation from the Start

Background/Rationale

The decision to abolish school fees is often politically driven. Country experience indicates that if the initiative is to succeed, it must have the support of well-informed, visionary leaders who enlist the participation of a wide range of technical experts and stakeholders to build a national consensus on policy and strategy. A strong group of committed leaders has the power to influence the complex processes needed to bring about reform, mobilize resources, and maintain the momentum needed to keep the school fee abolition process high on the political agenda. A technical team produces the analytical work that informs trade-offs during the policy dialogue and keeps the process moving forward in a sound and informed way.

The most successful initiatives also enlist the active participation of parents, teachers, NGOs, the private sector, donor and development agencies, the media, teachers unions, and cultural and religious leaders in policy discussions and decision making. This is essential for ensuring ownership and sustaining support for the elimination of school fees over the long term.

The objective of this step is to define a leadership and management mechanism that is mandated at the highest level, supported by national consensus, and backed by the best technical expertise available.

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Taking Action

1. Establishing a high-level steering group

Governments that are serious about school fee abolition have generally established high-level working groups to drive their movements. Referred to as steering committees, task forces, or joint committees, such groups are generally commissioned by a national cabinet or legislature to translate a political mandate into realistic plans and vice versa. Consisting of recognized leaders from main stakeholders (relevant government ministries, NGOs, and academic institutions), such groups generally oversee policy planning, set up participatory mechanisms for consensus building, ensure that technical findings are incorporated into the public debate, secure needed financing for the movement, and advocate for school fee abolition among high-level political leaders. They may act to remove obstacles by shaping legal documents and streamlining procedures.

Examples of the use of such groups come from both sides of Africa. In Ghana, where a successful pilot of a school fee abolition program created public pressure for national expansion, the cabinet appointed a joint committee of senior officials from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Local Government to iron out institutional impediments to a national program of fee-free education. In Kenya a new government was immediately challenged by the overwhelming response to its Free Primary Education (FPE) program. It moved quickly to organize an FPE task force headed by a prominent national educator and drawn from civil society organizations and educational professionals, including officials from the Ministry of Education, people from the media, and development partners. Its charge was to develop appropriate strategies for implementing FPE and to identify concrete guidelines for smooth and effective implementation. Task force planning included participatory processes for incorporating innovations and solutions developed at the local level (World Bank and UNICEF 2009). Steering groups in countries such as

Kenya that anticipate a need for external financing have found it helpful to include external agency partners as observers or advisers.

Given its stature, the steering group is the ideal body to ensure that school fee abolition remains on the national agenda and is incorporated into EFA and sectorwide plans and into any poverty reduction strategies the government may develop (for example, through Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers [PRSPs]). School fee abolition and poverty relief strategy planning form a natural alliance, because both deal with the roots of poverty and use participatory mechanisms. The PRSP offers the significant advantage of high-level support and the existence of mechanisms for consulting populations and stakeholders and for reporting back to both the legislature and other stakeholders.

2. Mobilizing technical teams

Responsible management of school fee abolition requires the mobilization of technical teams that collect and analyze information and work out technical details. The composition and responsibilities of such teams will depend on the scope of the program and the nature of the policies and plans. Teams will be needed to undertake situation analyses (on current policies; fees collected and household financial burdens; current enrollment and graduation rates; facilities, instructional resources, management capacity, and community support currently available; and measured learning outcomes) and to make informed estimates of the needs and requirements associated with abolishing school fees and dealing with the accompanying enrollment surges (state financing, external financing, teachers and learning materials, management capacity, and community support). Step 2 provides a fuller listing of informational needs.

In most cases technical teams will consist of both ministry of education professionals and outside experts, such as those from research institutions or NGOs. Kenya mobilized a technical team in support of its FPE

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program consisting of researchers from the ministries of education and finance and the Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research and Analysis. One of its main tasks was to determine the appropriate size of the capitation grants to be provided to schools as one way of covering revenues foregone by fee abolition (World Bank and UNICEF 2009).

The technical teams may be sustained throughout the life of the school fee abolition process. Ghana has a process of continuous assessment that draws on the results of its annual education sector review to identify needed improvements (World Bank and UNICEF 2009). Continuous M&E should be an integral part of any school fee abolition program.

3. Establishing a participatory mechanism for consensus building

Eliminating school fees is a bold policy initiative and one of the most complex interventions a government can launch. It requires a range of decisions—concerning definitions, target groups, and intervention strategies—that are not easily made. The choices will have major impacts on government financing, labor markets, educational quality, and social equity. Therefore, information and communication, wide-ranging consultation and participation, consensus building, and grassroots support are keys to success.

School fee abolition cannot be achieved by mobilizing only the ministry of education. Parents, local authorities, donors, and representatives from other government ministries, teachers unions, NGOs, the private sector, and the media should all be involved in policy dialogue from the start, in order to ensure their sense of ownership and full participation throughout the process. Small-scale seminars for high-level government representatives and other stakeholders, large-scale public forums, and regional and local meetings can all be used to build a consensus (table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Consultation and communication strategies used in some African countries	
Country	*Strategy*
Ghana	Conference by minister of education; information dissemination including radio discussions; announcements at churches, mosques, and community gatherings.
Kenya	A National Conference on Education and Training was convened after the policy was announced, and a participatory task force was created that reported to the government.
Lesotho	Community consultations were held and mass media campaigns waged.
Malawi	A two-day national policy symposium was held, and mass media campaigns were waged.
Mozambique	National and regional radio channels and newspapers were used. Information and publicity spots were broadcast in Portuguese and 14 local languages.
Uganda	Mass media campaigns were waged.

Source: Avenstrup 2004; World Bank and UNICEF 2009.

Although the national debate will necessarily be country specific, some general questions should be considered in the policy dialogue:

- How can teachers, parents, representatives of NGOs, the private sector, and all other people affected by school fee abolition be assured participation in the ongoing national dialogue so that their voices are heard and their opinions taken into consideration?
- How can the country's technical expertise and community resources be best used to move this initiative forward?
- How can public schools maintain or improve educational outcomes while eliminating fee revenues and increasing enrollment?
- How can schools cope with the surge in enrollment that can be expected during the first few years after school fees are abolished?
- How can communities become or remain engaged with their local schools in the context of school fee abolition? How should communities contribute to school resources once school fees are abolished?
- Will school fee abolition be enough to bring the poorest, most marginalized social groups into the school system? If not, what else may be needed?

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- How will private provision of primary education be affected by the proposed school fee abolition policies and strategies?
- To what extent will external financing be needed? What are appropriate roles for development agencies?

Monitoring and Evaluation

High-level groups and technical teams will need to continually monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their leadership, technical support, and participatory strategies. Among the M&E questions they should track are the following:

- Are important actors and stakeholders in different parts of the country aware of the government's school fee abolition policy? How well do they understand the issues?
- Is there significant opposition to the policy? If so, what are the main points of opposition?
- Around which features of the school fee abolition policy is consensus forming, and around which is there controversy?
- Are all segments of the population getting a chance to voice their interests and concerns on school fee abolition policies?
- How complete and reliable are the data on the current situation (fees charged, financial burdens to parents, current and projected number of students, school quality, and learning outcomes) and estimates of future needs (finances and other resources)?
- What gaps are there in technical details, and how can they be filled?

Concerning the leadership or steering group itself, the cabinet or commissioning body could ask the following questions:

- Is the leadership sufficiently inclusive and credible?

- Does the steering group have the resources it needs to do its work? Does it have ready access to key decision makers?
- Are the steering group messages coming forth in a timely and convincing manner?
- Is the required momentum being maintained?
- Are steering group processes and decisions evidence based and sufficiently participatory?

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Step 2:
Assessing the Situation

Background/Rationale

Understanding the impact of school fees and related costs and how such costs prevent access to learning is essential for identifying evidence-based options and feasible solutions. Likewise, understanding the school-eligible population—both those already in school and those still out of school—is crucial for effective planning, especially when it comes to estimating the size of the surge and establishing baselines against which to track increases in enrollment and improvements in learning outcomes.

Generating benchmark data and indicators that are monitored periodically can help chart the path for implementation and maintain the momentum throughout the school fee abolition process. This preassessment process, often called a *situation analysis*, can also identify major inefficiencies within the whole education system and lead to other educational reforms that further improve both access and quality.

The objective of Step 2 is to define and assess school fees and related private costs, to develop an understanding of the school-eligible population, and to document existing resources for primary education.

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Taking Action

1. Defining and assessing the current status of school fees

It is often hard to define school fees precisely, because what constitutes them varies from place to place and time to time. In addition, there is frequently a difference between the official definition of school fees (what governments indicate should or can be collected) and what is actually collected.

Types of fees

In most locations school fees can be broken down into direct fees and other private expenses. Direct fees include fees paid directly to the school or school system (tuition, examination fees, activity or sports fees, building or building maintenance fees, school development fees, boarding fees). Other fees include those that involve payments to commercial entities for books, supplies, uniforms, transportation, and meals/snacks and "voluntary" contributions made to PTAs or similar organizations.

The types of fees charged vary across countries and regions (table 2.1). In some cases children pay schools directly for books or uniforms; in others, PTAs collect funds that cover basic school expenses, such as teacher salaries or parts thereof (box 2.1). Some schools or teachers may collect fees that are unauthorized or even illegal, such as fees for end-of-year parties, teachers' gardens, or extra tutoring or private lessons. The main point of SFAI is to free pupils and their families from all out-of-pocket expenses for primary education. Each country will have to define what this means, but it is essential that the definition be comprehensive.

Comprehensive assessment of fees and the burden on households

A comprehensive assessment should include not only school officials' statements of fees collected but also a listing of all fees paid by households. Even where fees have been formally abolished, the program may not have

Table 2.1 Percentage of households reporting expenditures on different categories of fees in primary education in selected countries				
	Country (year of survey)			
Expenditure	*Malawi (2002)*	*Nigeria (2004)*	*Uganda (2001)*	*Zambia (2002)*
Tuition	1	14	22	73
Books, supplies	83	99	97	98
Uniforms, clothing	69	88	78	81
PTA	—	70	18	67
Development fund	57	29	56	—
Exam fees	3	39	24	2
Transport	1	5	6	2
Food	34	62	24	24
Boarding fees	0.3	0.2	2	0.2
Private tutoring	4	23	6	12
School reports	15	—	—	—
Sports fund	—	—	—	24
Maintenance fees	—	18	—	10
Other	2	14	24	4

Source: Demographic and Household Survey (DHS) EdData Survey: Malawi 2002, Nigeria 2004, Uganda 2001, Zambia 2002.
Note: Data for each country are for the school year preceding the year of the survey (expenditures in Uganda, for example, are for the 2000/01 school year).
— Not available.

been implemented or fees may have reappeared. Special attention should be paid to evaluating disparities between regions and levels of household income. In Malawi in 2001, for example, the poorest 20 percent of the population paid more fees in absolute terms than all higher-income groups except the wealthiest 20 percent (World Bank 2004b).

Once school fees are enumerated, the next step is to determine the burden they place on households, broken down by region and household income. Analyses will often show relatively heavy burdens in low-income households, as they did in the Kyrgyz Republic, where the poorest households spent 17 percent of their household consumption on education, far more than the 13 percent consumed by nonpoor households (World Bank

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Box 2.1 Fee payment in Nigeria

Household survey data collected in 2003 indicate that only 14 percent of public primary school students from Nigeria paid tuition fees. Some 70 percent paid PTA fees, 99 percent paid for books and supplies, and 88 percent bought uniforms and clothing for school use, however.

Source: Demographic and Household Survey (DHS) EdData Survey: Nigeria 2004.

1999). Such analysis should also include a determination of how payment or nonpayment of fees affects enrollment (for example, whether inability to pay leads to expulsion of pupils, as it did in Kenya before school fees were abolished).

Use of school fees

It is also critical to determine where school fees go once they are collected. If most fees have remained at the school level to cover immediate needs, school fee abolition will inevitably affect school functioning. Under such circumstances schools could be overwhelmed by shortages of funds, especially where there are enrollment surges. Where effective strategies for covering forgone revenues are not in place, schools may be tempted to levy unofficial fees to cover their funding gaps. In contrast, if fees are mainly transferred to the bureaucracy, the need to replace them becomes less immediate.

Opportunity costs

What families give up by sending their children to school may also represent a barrier to schooling. Sometimes such opportunity costs are in the form of forgone income from lost wages (especially by older children); more often they are in the form of the loss of a child's informal contribution to household functioning (taking care of younger siblings, tending livestock, gathering firewood, hauling water, or performing other routine tasks) (box 2.2). Sending children to school also means spending money

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Box 2.2 What are the opportunity costs of education?

Two types of opportunity costs are associated with the costs of education: the loss of income from a child who stops working or reduces his or her hours to attend school and the loss of consumption of other goods caused by expenditure on education. The first type of opportunity cost results because the child cannot work while attending or traveling to and from school. The magnitude of this cost reflects not only the time spent in the classroom but also the labor market and the nature of home production. The value of labor generally increases as children get older. The second type of opportunity cost is a relative concept that reflects how a family values investment in human capital relative to investment in physical capital or consumption. Both types of opportunity costs may play important roles in households' decision to send their children to school.

Source: Bray, Ding, and Huang 2004.

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on education that would otherwise have gone to other goods. For families with very low household incomes, opportunity costs can be significant. These costs need to be estimated, especially for marginalized families. Where they are found to impede school attendance and completion, complementary supports—such as grants or scholarships—may need to be provided (see appendix).

2. Understanding the school-eligible population

Planners need to have a clear understanding of the school-eligible population, both to establish a baseline on educational outcomes (enrollment, completion, and achievement) and to help anticipate increases in enrollment and educational resource requirements. The school-eligible population includes anyone who has not yet completed the basic education cycle(s), as defined by a government. This population is generally made up of "school-age" children, but it can also include overage children and adults who have not yet completed school. This part of a situation analysis should cover both those already in school and those still out of school.

Those already enrolled in school

Planners need to compile government records on school enrollment and outcomes, both for public (state) and private schools. In the spirit of sectorwide planning, it is important to determine enrollment and outcomes data not only in primary education but also in secondary (lower and upper) and preschool (or early childhood) education, as there will inevitably be a pull from and push to those subsectors once school fees are abolished. All data taken from school system records should be double-checked for accuracy. Baseline data should be obtained on gross enrollment ratios, net enrollment ratios, first-grade (primary) enrollment rates, school dropout and repetition rates, graduation rates, continuation rates (from primary to lower-secondary and from lower-secondary to upper-secondary), and learning outcomes (on standardized tests).

Also crucial is breaking these data points down by social groups, particularly gender, household income level, region, rural-urban location, and vulnerable groups, such as speakers of nonmetropolitan languages (box 2.3), children affected by HIV/AIDS, refugees or others displaced by social conflict, children with disabilities, street children, working children, and nomads. Doing so allows planners to understand which groups fall below the norm in retention, completion, and learning outcomes and to establish a basis for tracking progress among those most likely to be mobilized by school fee abolition.

Box 2.3 Language barriers to enrollment in Mali

Most children in Mali are expected to learn in a language they do not speak at home, inhibiting enrollment and retention. A recent pilot study shows that changing the initial language of instruction to the mother tongue—although initially involving extra expenses for new materials and teacher training—is cost-effective, because children learn better and are less likely to drop out of school.

Source: World Bank IEG 2007a.

Data on learning outcomes will provide an opportunity to determine whether school fee abolition is having a negative impact on the quality of education. Other relevant analyses include study of the relation between participation in early childhood education and enrollment/progress in primary school, the relation between primary school graduation and continuation to secondary school, and the shares of students enrolled in different types of schools (public, private, religious, and community) (table 2.2) and whether enrollment in them represents a family preference or a necessity, given limited access to a public school of adequate quality.

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Those not enrolled in school

Of interest to planners are children of school age who have never enrolled in or dropped out of school and those above school age who have not completed primary education (box 2.4). In many cases governments will have collected such information in household surveys. Where such surveys have not been conducted, technical teams will need to collect baseline data from randomly sampled households in different regions of the country. As with in-school data, these data will need to be broken down by gender, family economic level, region, urban-rural location, social group, and age in order to reveal the location, size, and characteristics of new learners potentially motivated by school fee abolition.

Another factor in the size of the enrollment surge is demand for education among out-of-school children and youth. Assessment of a country's

Table 2.2 Shares of students in different types of schools in Mali, 2003	
Type of school	*Share of students (percent)*
Public	65
Private	8
Community	16
Madrassah	10

Source: Adapted from World Bank IEG 2007a.

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Box 2.4 Pent-up demand for education

When Kenya announced its free primary education policy in 2003, those who never could afford to go to school finally had their chance. The national press reported on an 82-year-old man who enrolled in grade 1 at Kapkeduiwo Primary School in the Uasin Gichu District. Three years later he was still in school, attending grade 4.

Source: World Bank and UNICEF 2009.

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most vulnerable children and the reasons why they do not attend or drop out of school should also be conducted before deciding on complementary measures to meet their educational needs (see appendix). Definitions and analysis should be consistent with the country's PRSP, if one exists.

3. Identifying existing resources

It is important to identify existing resources and determine whether they are sufficient for current needs or already stretched, because the envelope of resources will suggest future requirements and policy options. Indeed, depending on the average budget envelope dedicated to financing school fee abolition and the physical resources mobilized, what is desirable may not be feasible, and adjustments in the policy priorities will have to be made. Identifying existing resources should not be undertaken as an isolated exercise, focused only on school fee abolition, but should be part of overall sector planning (including within the framework of the EFA/FTI) or plan updating that incorporates school fee abolition. Such planning should consider the issues identified below.

*Current pattern of education budget provision
and allocation*

What is the current share of government budgetary resources allocated to the education sector and the share of the education budget dedicated to primary education? What share of these budgetary resources comes from the central government, regional and local governments, school fees, and

external agencies (international development agencies, NGOs, and the private sector)? What share of resources (from the various sources) goes toward capital expenditures and what share goes toward recurrent costs of various kinds (salary and nonsalary inputs)?

Financing mechanisms

How are funds, teachers, and material resources typically distributed to schools? Is the distribution system centralized or decentralized? What channels are used to pay teacher salaries (box 2.5)? What formulas are used to determine the size of allocations (funds, teachers, and other resources) to each school? Do the formulas take into account higher enrollment? Where school fees were formerly collected locally to support school operations, are there mechanisms in place to replace such revenues? What proportion of funds transferred actually make it to their destination? Do all schools have access to a banking or postal account?

School infrastructure

School infrastructure should be assessed in terms of physical needs and resources. What are current needs for new schools and classrooms and the

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Box 2.5 The money trail: How are teachers paid in the Democratic Republic of Congo?

There are no banks in the interior of the Democratic Republic of Congo. To pay teacher salaries, the government funnels funds through multiple channels, which can result in significant delays. The government deposits funds with the central bank. The central bank then transfers the funds to its regional branches, which channel the money to a regional commission, made up of representatives of the education, finance, and budget ministries. This regional commission sends the money to regional school boards, which transfer the money to school principals, who pay the teachers. An independent authority maintains the teacher rolls and conducts periodic censuses.

Source: World Bank 2004c.

renovation of existing ones? What plans are under way for new construction and renovation? How many units are planned and completed each year? Are government school designs appropriate and economical? Are construction standards adequate? What is the state of the local construction industry (competition, unit costs, costs/quality of building materials, transport, labor, builders, and district engineers)? In what ways do communities typically participate? How prepared is the government for the timely provision of new school places in response to the expected surge in enrollment? Where new construction/renovation cannot keep pace with enrollment expansion, are interim arrangements—use of homes, churches, mosques, community centers, and temporary shelters—desirable and possible?

Teachers

What is the teacher-student ratio, disaggregated by region, socioeconomic status, and rural-urban location? What teaching modalities (single class, multishift, multigrade) are used? What are teacher certification requirements, and what proportion of teachers are certified? How long is pre-service training? How many students can teacher colleges train per year? What is the estimate of the teacher shortage (or surplus)? How many teachers were recruited per year in recent years? Is there equity in teacher deployment? How high is turnover, as a result of retirement, disease (HIV/AIDS or other), or other causes? Does the government (or community) have a policy of recruiting contract teachers? What is the salary of contract teachers compared with that of "regular" teachers? Is there an in-service teacher system? If so, how much training per year do teachers typically receive? What is the current range of teacher incentives, and what is the state of teacher morale?

Teaching and learning material

How is the supply delivery chain organized, especially for textbooks and other teaching and learning material? Is there in-country capacity

to publish textbooks? What is the state of the distribution system? Are schools involved in the selection and purchase of textbooks? To what extent are textbooks used in classroom instruction? What is the typical book-student ratio, broken down by grade level, region, and urban-rural location?

Governance and management

Given the need for more efficient management of funds and other school resources, it is important to examine the current school governance and management structure (covered more fully in Step 6). How decentralized is the school system? What decisions are made at the central, provincial, district, and school levels? Where are funds generated and spent? How transparent are decision-making processes? What accountability mechanisms are in place for the use of funds? Do parliament or other bodies hold the government accountable for the funds it uses for education? Does the national government hold other levels of government accountable? Do districts hold schools accountable? To what extent are school committees involved in school management and oversight? Do schools manage their own funds (for example, through block grants [grants whose use is determined by recipients])? What planning and management tools are used at the school level? Are head teachers and school committees trained in budgeting, finance, planning, and reporting skills?

Monitoring and Evaluation

A rigorous situation analysis is crucial to evidence-based planning. Such analysis establishes a number of baseline data points (on resources available for primary education; fees collected; student enrollment, progress, and learning outcomes; and the availability of needed resources for quality primary education), all of which need to be tracked at critical points

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(at least every two years) in order to monitor and evaluate both implementation and results. After fees have been eliminated, for example, it is essential that evidence be collected from the field to ensure that new, unofficial fees have not taken their place. It is also essential that enrollment figures be tracked to determine the size and nature of the enrollment surge and assess how the system is coping with it (prompting problem solving where necessary). It is also important to track the provision of essential resources for learning to make sure that quality has not suffered. Periodically, it is important to track student dropout and learning outcomes to make sure that students are progressing and learning at acceptable levels.

The initial situation analysis and subsequent M&E activities need to be organized and managed by an experienced M&E team. This team could create the M&E design (including sample and timing), organize political and institutional support (buy-in) for the evaluation, obtain or create evaluation instruments, manage field work, and produce data analyses and reports. It is important that the initial situation analysis and follow-up M&E work cover a full range of geographic areas and socioeconomic groupings, so that regional and social disparities can be identified and addressed. Findings should be disaggregated (by region, urban-rural location, and socioeconomic status) in order to identify inequities. It is not necessary to collect baseline and M&E data from all areas and schools: a representative sampling is generally adequate. Gathering learning outcomes data could present a challenge, unless a country has regular standardized assessments that can be used. If it does not, the team and its consultants could create and use simple tests of reading fluency and numeracy, as the NGO Pratham (2006) does annually in India.

The situation analysis and follow-up M&E work itself should also be subjected to M&E. The group that has commissioned the situation analysis (generally the steering group) needs to undertake its own quality control by periodically assessing the quality and timeliness of the data collected during both the initial situation analysis and subsequent M&E.

Step 3:
Establishing Priorities

Background/Rationale

When school fees are eliminated, demand for education usually surges and school-level revenues fall dramatically. Covering lost revenue while serving large numbers of students may seriously overload already stressed educational systems, especially if they also seek to improve educational quality.

To cope, educational planners need to seek alternative sources of revenue and adopt innovative, more cost-effective ways of providing educational services (see Steps 4 and 5). Where school fees represent a significant portion of education sector funding, it may not be possible to move to full fee abolition everywhere at once. This suggests the need for a staged approach to school fee abolition, in which some fees are removed before others and pupils are covered in a gradual, sequenced manner. Such an approach requires setting priorities.

In many places where a school fee abolition policy is already in place, some children will still not be able to enroll in school, because of high opportunity costs or other economic barriers. Governments that are serious about abolishing all economic barriers to learning opportunities will need to set priorities for overcoming such barriers.

The objective of this step is to set priorities on the types of fees to eliminate first; determine the sequencing of school fee abolition by geographic area, grade/age level, or socioeconomic characteristics; and target groups needing complementary measures.

Making Policy Choices

Priority setting for school fee abolition is often needed in two areas: the types of fees and the phasing-in sequence. The choices and trade-offs at play will vary from one country to another, depending on a number of factors, including the policy objectives of the government; the amount of revenue collected through fees before fees were abolished; the magnitude of the enrollment surge; the educational resources (classrooms, teachers, learning materials, and community support) available; and the amount of funding at hand (and financing gaps identified). Setting priorities is both a technical and a political issue, so planners must anticipate and plan ways to mitigate the political fallout. As the ultimate goal of school fee abolition is good-quality, fee-free education for all, prioritization seeks to identify which fees to eliminate first, under the assumption that all will eventually be eliminated, and which groups to reach first, under the assumption that all will eventually be freed from the need to pay.

Priority setting for removing nonfee economic barriers will be based on the nature of the excluded groups and the particular constraints they face (see Step 2). Some solutions will be within the control of the education establishment; others will require cross-sectoral cooperation and complementary programs sponsored by other ministries.

1. Setting priorities for types of fees

Answering a simple question can help policy makers prioritize which fees or costs to parents should be eliminated at the outset: What basic minimum costs of education should absolutely be covered by public

financing? One may reasonably argue that basic infrastructure (core buildings and furnishings) and payment of teachers should be a public responsibility and that if parents have to pay any fees at all, those fees should be used to improve conditions at local schools. In this case, priority could be given to eliminating fees collected to cover the operating costs of central or decentralized structures and core school buildings, and to pay teacher salaries (box 3.1). However, if no child should be prevented from attending school because of inability to pay, no fees—even those that directly benefit the local school—should be compulsory. Local school officials could offer fee waivers to children living below the poverty line. Once national economic conditions have improved and more funds are available for education, even locally assessed fees for improving school conditions could be eliminated. After those fees are eliminated, only voluntary community contributions should remain, and mechanisms should be set up to ensure that such contributions are truly voluntary and do not constitute a barrier to attendance.

This formulation still leaves some private costs in an ambiguous position. Should the costs of textbooks be a public responsibility? Can

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Box 3.1 Who pays teachers in much of rural Africa?

Parents pay a large share of primary school teachers' salaries in many African countries. In francophone countries this happens largely in rural areas where there is no public school, where parents establish "community schools" and hire and pay teachers fully or partially. A study of 12 African countries finds that in or around 2002, almost one-third of all primary school teachers were paid by parents (ranging from 4 percent in Niger to 68 percent in Chad), although in some countries (including Chad) part of the salary was subsidized by the government. The situation varies from one country to another, but it is often the poorest rural communities that finance their children's education while better-off urban areas benefit from publicly financed teachers. On average, teachers paid by parents receive only about one-fourth the salary paid to civil service teachers.

Source: Mingat 2004.

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household provision of a uniform be considered a voluntary contribution that enhances school conditions? Every government will need to think through such questions. With respect to text and reading books, where governments are not able to cover the price of textbooks for all, a compromise may be possible between doing so and shifting the full cost to students (examples include the various rental schemes used in many countries and efforts to lengthen the shelf life of books). Concerning school uniforms, countries (or localities) may need to reconsider policies on the need for uniforms or at least provide subsidies to those who cannot afford them, as India has done (Ayyar and Bashir 2004). All countries need to make it clear that the inability or unwillingness of parents to purchase uniforms will not be a barrier to school attendance.

Another difficult question is whether the government should regulate or subsidize fees for private education. There are different kinds of private schools in Africa, and the distinction between public and private is not always clear cut. Some schools run by religious organizations or private associations serve as alternatives to government schools, which are often relatively expensive and elitist. Other schools have sprung up to fill in gaps where no government schools exist, often at the initiative and expense of families. Recently, a third kind of private school has emerged (in South Asia, for example): a low-cost alternative to state schools that is supposed to be (but may not always actually be) of better quality, run by local entrepreneurs. In some countries, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo and Haiti, where state schools have been in default as a result of dysfunctional governance, most children who are in school attend private fee-charging schools.

Abolishing fees in state schools is likely to affect the balance between public and private schools in different (and sometimes unexpected) ways. In Kenya school fee abolition caused a widespread transfer of students from low-quality private schools to public schools in all grades. In Malawi, where "big bang" school fee abolition led to the weakening of

many public schools, the flight was in the other direction (World Bank and UNICEF 2009). Abolishing fees in private schools would also create waves, including an enrollment surge in many kinds of private schools. A reasonable position would be for the state to subsidize attendance (pay fees) at private schools where no public school is available but not to cover fees at schools voluntarily selected by families as alternatives to public schools.

2. Setting priorities for sequencing school fee abolition

Governments are rarely in a position to waive all school fees, public and private, at once. The few countries that have done so—taking the "big bang" approach to school fee abolition, which suddenly opened the door to millions of new learners—have had difficulty managing the explosive nature of the expansion (box 3.2). Because of financial constraints and time lags for building classrooms and providing new teachers,

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Box 3.2 "Big bang" fee abolition in Malawi and Uganda

In 1994 Malawi's newly elected government eliminated school fees for primary education. As a result, the gross enrollment ratio increased that year from 89 to 133 percent. The enrollment surge was not accompanied by a commensurate rise in the number of classrooms, teachers, or materials. A study conducted in 2004 found average ratios of 119 pupils per classroom, 62 pupils per teacher (100 in first grade), 38 pupils per desk, and 24 pupils per book. As a result of the perceived decline in quality, enrollment ratios subsequently declined.

In Uganda political pressures in 1997 prompted the government to adopt the "big bang" approach to primary school fee reduction. Enrollment rose from about 3 million in the early 1990s to 5.3 million in 1997 and 7.3 million in 2002. In 2000 the average number of pupils per classroom was 106, and the average number of pupils per textbook was 7. Test results in 1999 showed significant declines in the proportion of students meeting minimum standards.

Source: World Bank IEG 2004; Bentaouet-Kattan 2006.

most educational systems need to phase in school fee abolition. Three approaches to sequencing are described below.

Phasing in by region

School fee abolition can be used as a means of reducing geographic disparities in education. Priority could be given to the poorest regions, to regions with the lowest coverage of public schools, or to regions with the lowest education performance in terms of enrollment ratios, admission rates, education survival, or education quality. Targeting of this type will require reliable statistics as well as administrative capacity to implement the targeting in an effective and transparent manner. In India the districts first selected to participate in the highly subsidized District Primary Education Project were those with the lowest female literacy levels (Ayyar and Bashir 2004).

Phasing in by grade level or age group

The most straightforward way of phasing in school fee abolition is to do so by grade level, with first graders enjoying fee abolition in year one, first and second graders in year two, and so forth (box 3.3). Phasing in in this way allows governments to gradually expand the funding envelope, and it gives them time to acquire resources requiring a long lead time (for example, classrooms and trained teachers). One disadvantage of phasing in by grade is that it opens classes to a very wide range of ages (especially grade 1, where students may range from 6 to 80 years), sometimes even

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Box 3.3 Phasing in school fee abolition by grade in Lesotho

Lesotho phased in the abolition of school fees by grade. In 2000 it introduced free primary education starting with grade 1. The following year it abolished fees in grade 2. By 2006 fees had been abolished in grades 1–6.

Source: Bentaouet-Kattan 2006.

bringing into lower grades those who belong in a higher one so that they can benefit from fee removal.

Phasing in school fee abolition by age allows governments to better control the surge in enrollment, because overage learners are not eligible, at least initially. It may also be a pedagogically sound choice, keeping the age levels of students in a classroom within a fairly narrow range. Countries that restrict school fee abolition to school-age children often provide free complementary or equivalent education programs to overage children (box 3.4). This approach is best used in countries that have reliable age data on children.

Phasing in by socioeconomic characteristics

If the main goal is to improve equity of access and outcomes, prioritizing according to socioeconomic characteristics may be the best approach (box 3.5). Such an approach could target girls, orphans, children below the poverty line, children with learning disabilities, children from disadvantaged groups (such as scheduled castes or tribes in India), or other groups. This type of targeting can be complicated, because most schools will have a mix of targeted and nontargeted students. Strict selection criteria need to be specified and enforced and careful follow-up processes established to make sure that the right children are targeted and receiving intended benefits—standards that are difficult to maintain in many low-income

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Box 3.4 Reaching overage children in India

Complementary education programs can build on school fee abolition initiatives to provide opportunities for disadvantaged and excluded children. Mobilized by the District Basic Education Program, districts in many Indian states used "bridging programs" to help overage students work in an accelerated way to catch up with their cohorts.

Source: Ayyar and Bashir 2004.

Box 3.5 Targeting the most vulnerable in China

The scholarship scheme of the Gansu Basic Education Project in China targets the needs of the poorest families, girls, and minorities, according to the following principles:

- At least 70 percent of scholarship recipients should be girls and at least 60 percent should be from ethnic minorities. This rule was later changed so that all scholarships go to minority girls.
- In townships in which the enrollment rate is below 60 percent, half of the scholarship funds should be used to support children who never attended school.
- Only children from families with annual income of less than 300 yuan who have at their disposal less than 300 grams of grain per capita are eligible.

To select recipients, schools were directed to weigh these criteria as follows: four points for being an orphan; three points for being a girl, belonging to an ethnic minority, or not being enrolled in school; and two points for having a parent with a disability or coming from a single-parent home. Girls had preference over boys when scores were equal. Support was disbursed in kind (mainly textbooks and stationery) rather than cash. Scholarship funds were distributed to four counties, according to income levels, the number of school-age children, and enrollment rates.

Source: Bray, Ding, and Huang 2004.

countries. In some cases this approach may be best done in conjunction with NGOs to help reduce costs to the state and draw on the special know-how of such partners.

3. Targeting groups requiring more than school fee abolition

Several tested intervention strategies can be considered for the most vulnerable, children for whom school fee abolition is not sufficient to ensure school participation (for a fuller discussion, see the appendix). Some scholarships for poor and disadvantaged children cover not only fees but

also additional expenses related to schooling. This type of targeted support is usually practiced at the local district/community level, but it has also been applied at the national or provincial level with some success. It usually involves external financing, although there are numerous examples of schemes funded by government, NGOs, and the private sector. The advantage of these interventions is that they do not interfere with the financing of education but simply pay the bills for eligible children. Difficulties include defining eligibility criteria, protecting against fraud, dealing with the costs of administering the scheme, ensuring sustainability, and avoiding the stigma that can be attached to poverty targeting.

Some programs offer incentives to the families of disadvantaged children on the condition that their children enroll in or regularly attend school. These incentives can be in cash (conditional cash transfers) or some other form, such as food rations. Bangladesh has rewarded families for keeping girls in school (Khandker, Pitt, and Fuwa 2003). Providing poor families with access to credit can also increase school attendance if it relieves families of the need to use child labor. Such schemes can be costly to ministries of education, however, which explains why they have been used largely in middle-income countries, such as Brazil and Mexico. They are also difficult to monitor. The financial burden of such programs can be shared with other ministries, such as the ministry of social welfare, and become part of an overall poverty reduction strategy. In one lower-income country (Ghana), such a program is part of a social protection strategy funded by the Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment (World Bank and UNICEF 2009).

School feeding programs have been established in many countries, assisted by NGOs and international agencies such as the UN World Food Programme, which was assisting 74 countries in 2005 (WFP 2006). These programs have been helpful in attracting children to school and providing the nutrition and health support that poorly nourished children need to perform better. In many cases the World Food Programme,

government agencies, and NGOs work together to provide nutritious meals and snacks at school or food bundles to take home. By 2005 the World Food Programme had phased out support to 35 countries that had taken over the program themselves.

Monitoring and Evaluation

M&E for this step entails collecting and analyzing data in order to ensure that the priorities established for sequencing the program are carried out and that disadvantaged social groups are targeted and provided with additional incentives to enroll in and attend school. M&E could involve periodic data collection from a random sample of districts and schools as well as government offices (and officials) and target group households. It could be undertaken in conjunction with the progress monitoring described in Step 2.

Step 4:
Estimating Costs and
Identifying Financing

Background/Rationale

School fee abolition cannot succeed if it is undertaken as an isolated policy measure. Because it is so closely interlinked with other sectors, great care needs to be taken to estimate costs and potential financing. Careful estimates are crucial to determine sustainability and affordability, to make more efficient use of existing resources, and to revise budget strategies.

Fee abolition unleashes successive waves of costs. Not only is there major budget pressure to replace fee revenues, funds are also needed to address enrollment surges. Financing is also necessary to reach marginalized children and to bring the whole system up to minimum standards ("catching up"), by, for instance, making sure that all children, even those who did not have them in the past, have textbooks. Finally, there is the need to prepare for the downstream costs of larger numbers of children making the transition to lower-secondary schools.

Policy decisions will be based on a number of considerations in addition to costs, including the likely availability of teachers and the implementation capacity of the system. To begin the process of estimating costs and identifying finances, countries must first identify inefficiencies and explore avenues for more efficient and equitable use of resources. Once

there is a policy decision on the scope and pacing of school fee abolition, the likely financing gap can be determined. It can then be presented to external agencies in the hope of securing financial assistance.

The objective of this step is to estimate costs related to the range of policy options and to identify sources of national and international financing.

Taking Action

1. Estimating costs

Estimating the costs of school fee abolition cannot be approached as an isolated undertaking; this effort must be embedded in sectorwide planning and the preparation of poverty reduction strategies. Prompted by internal politics and the requirements of external financial agencies, many governments will already have developed education sector plans—often with an emphasis on EFA goals—and poverty reduction strategies. Some governments may already have included school fee abolition within their plans and cost estimates. Others, having decided on school fee abolition more recently, will need to revisit such plans/strategies with school fee abolition in mind.

Given the complexity of such planning, many governments have turned to the routine use of computer simulation models, which allow them to view school fee abolition in the context of a wide range of other initiatives and programs and varying conditions (box 4.1). Good simulation models are flexible enough to be easily adapted to new scenarios, such as those that will emerge in the dialogue over school fee abolition. They also factor in the unique features of individual school systems or subsystems and provide a quick view of the financial implications of different policy options (Chang and Radi 2001; Mingat, Rakotomalala, and Tan 2001).

To estimate future costs, simulation models require reliable information on capital and recurrent costs; the size and prevalence of existing fees

Box 4.1 Using simulation models in planning in Ethiopia

During the planning process, Ethiopia used various simulation models to estimate the financial impact of school fee reduction and the resulting increases in enrollments on government costs, making it possible to estimate a range of funding requirements from domestic and international sources. Similarly the government used an estimation tool to determine the size of the subsidy needed to allow equitable funding support to districts and schools.

Source: UNICEF and World Bank 2006.

and their use at the school and district levels; the current and projected size of school-age populations; current enrollment and the estimated surge in demand once fees are removed; and current educational facilities and resources (buildings, teachers, learning materials, and community support). To the extent possible, data should be collected from existing sources; if they are unreliable, primary data collection efforts will be needed. Simulation models should also show how sensitive policy options are to changes in demand and prices. This will provide a solid basis for estimating per pupil unit costs and, ultimately, the level of funding (often in the form of capitation grants) that will need to be transferred to schools. In the weeks and months following implementation of fee removal, it will be crucial to revisit any simulation models used to review assumptions and revise strategies and plans. Estimating the specific cost implications of school fee abolition will require attention to needed increases in government expenditures for teachers, construction costs, and teaching and learning materials.

Teacher costs

Teacher salaries and related costs account for up to 90 percent of recurrent expenditures of education in developing countries. Given the likelihood of a surge in student enrollment following the abolition of school fees, these costs will almost certainly account for a much larger share of expenditures

in the immediate post–fee removal period than will the replacement of the direct fees themselves. This has been the experience of some of the countries that have reported on their experiences with fee removal, including Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, and Mozambique (World Bank and UNICEF 2009). It is critical that the simulation models provide the basis for making choices among a range of policy options linked to the financing of additional teachers, including class size, teacher recruitment, teacher training, the use of contract teachers, and region-specific deployment patterns.

It is often noted that teachers are paid too little and cost too much. Raising teacher salaries can make countries even more dependent on external financing, increasing the vulnerability of their education systems. Yet reducing teacher salaries can shrink the pool of potential teachers, reduce teacher motivation (and presumably teaching and learning outcomes), and even oblige teachers to seek other jobs or other sources of income. Simulation models can address this challenge in part by exploring a range of policy options aimed at ensuring that teachers are used more effectively. Ultimately, however, country-specific solutions that vary depending on the technical and political judgments of decision makers will be needed (see Step 5 for a fuller discussion of policy options linked to teachers and teacher costs).

Another challenge in estimating teacher costs is that it is impossible to know in advance how fee reduction will affect student enrollment numbers. Analysis and creative thinking can help provide a picture of what to expect. For instance, students can be registered well in advance of the school year to determine likely enrollment patterns. Fee abolition programs can be piloted in a region or district for a year or more to give a better sense of likely national trends (box 4.2).

Construction costs

The experiences of Malawi and Uganda (see box 3.2) reveal the negative consequences of inadequate provision of school places. Even before launching

Box 4.2 Piloting school fee abolition in Ghana

In the 2004/05 school year, the government of Ghana piloted a program of school fee abolition accompanied by a capitation grant scheme, designed to compensate for the loss of fee revenue in 40 districts. The pilot was carefully monitored and evaluated, and based on the positive results, the program was scaled up the next year to cover all districts in the country.

Source: World Bank and UNICEF 2009.

its school fee abolition policy, Tanzania assessed its school infrastructure as inadequate, given the dilapidated condition of many of its school buildings. Even though school fee abolition was phased in, communities had to build makeshift shelters to house new classes, negatively affecting learning outcomes and the perceived benefits of sending children to school (World Bank 2004d). The lack of clean water and adequate sanitation in schools can also be a limiting factor, affecting enrollment decisions, especially for girls, and reducing learning time through water-related illness. Reducing these negatives through better planning and the use of innovative, ecosustainable school designs will enhance learning (Dierkx 2007).

Building new schools and adding new classrooms to existing schools is thus a key step in implementing school fee abolition, but it can be very costly and time consuming. In Nigeria, under the country's Community-Based Poverty Reduction Project (2001), construction time for a typical school with six classrooms averaged 15 months and cost $28,000; in many locations, time and costs are even higher.[3] The costs of renovating and maintaining existing schools and replacing those beyond repair and the impact of new construction on the environment are rarely addressed.

Innovations in construction design and processes are making school construction and renovation less costly, creating hope that expansion targets can be met with the funds available. New school designs in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India, in the mid-1990s reduced unit costs to such an extent that 75 percent more classrooms could be constructed

than originally budgeted for (World Bank IEG 2007b). Many locations in India also shifted to the use of floor mats instead of desks in the lower grades (accompanied by changes in pedagogy that emphasized small group instruction), yielding large savings on furniture costs. Other developing country governments are reducing costs and improving quality by transferring funds for school construction and renovation directly to communities, which, with the help of engineering consultants, have generally been found to be more cost-effective than construction firms. A recent estimate for sub-Saharan Africa is that the region would require considerably less government funding to meet its EFA school construction needs if communities were contracted to do the building instead of conventional construction firms (Theunynck 2009).

Building new schools or adding new classrooms to existing schools in a timely manner for inclusive education depends on at least five factors:

- A school map to locate schools appropriately in order to reduce travel time (walking time is a significant deterrent to the participation of girls, especially adolescents)
- Appropriate architectural design, taking into account costs, the climatic/cultural context of regions to maintain diversity, child friendliness, and ecosustainability
- Efficient procurement methods
- The capacity of the local construction industry and the school community
- The government's financing capacity.

Calculating the additional number of schools and classrooms needed requires the following actions:

- Forecasting the likely increases in student enrollment by grade, based on past trends and estimates of new pupils who will enroll after fees

are abolished, taking care to distinguish those who are school age from those who are overage (and may be treated in some other location or after regular school hours)

- Setting standards for space per pupil and class size (width and length), as well as for exterior/interior learning spaces, such as learning decks and small-group spaces, and water/sanitation facilities
- Taking into account agreed on short- and medium-term strategies, such as multishifting, multigrade teaching, and reduction of repetition
- Obtaining reliable data on available classrooms.

The next step is to calculate the unit cost per school or classroom (including an administration block and water/sanitation facilities) and estimate the total funding needed.

Costs of learning and teaching materials

Researchers have identified learning materials (textbooks, reference books, and library books) as one of the key contributors to educational outcomes in developing countries (Boussiere 2004). New enrollees attracted by school fee abolition will need access to good textbooks in order to benefit from schooling; students already in school will need better access to textbooks (in many low-income countries there is still more than one student per textbook).

School fee abolition policies provide planners and policy makers the opportunity to reorganize processes for producing and distributing textbooks and other learning materials so that more and better materials are made available at lower cost. As with teachers and buildings, the planning process begins with estimates of student enrollment under surge conditions, broken down by age and grade level. Also important will be estimates of the annual rate of student progress from grade to grade. Other planning issues are the number of school subjects and related books called for in the curriculum by grade level (a number that

can often be reduced by better curricular planning), the number of pupils per book that the budget can allow (ideally no more than one pupil per book), and current government success in distributing textbooks equitably across regions and social groupings. These factors should make it possible to estimate the number of textbooks and other materials needed by grade level and location.

The costs for learning materials can be estimated by multiplying the estimated numbers of books by the unit cost for production and distribution. Given enrollment surges and the need to provide better access to books than before school fee abolition, the new cost estimates could be daunting. However, experience in many countries shows that it is possible to reduce unit costs substantially, even while increasing the quality of materials. Growing numbers of countries are turning to the private publishing industry for production and distribution of textbooks, breaking government monopolies on textbooks and driving prices down through competition in the marketplace (box 4.3). To do so, they need to create

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Box 4.3 Procuring better textbooks for less in Brazil and Uganda

The private sector was tapped to produce and distribute textbooks in the Northeast region of Brazil in the 1990s. Publishers were selected using a well-constructed methodology that reduced the unit cost of textbooks by 30–50 percent. In addition, the durability of textbooks increased from one to two years to four years, and the content and presentational quality improved significantly.

In Uganda in 2002, private publishing companies competed in supplying textbooks (three alternative approved titles for each subject by grade) through a selection process that was well constructed and open. This process reduced the unit cost of textbooks by two-thirds and resulted in a dramatic increase in durability and presentation quality (more and better use of illustrations and improved page design). The Ministry of Education received three times more textbooks than before for the same annual budget, and the textbooks were of better quality and durability.

Source: Read 2007.

clear specifications for authors and publishers and employ a well-designed and transparent contractor selection process that gives proper weight to content, quality of presentation, and price. Additional economies have been achieved where countries allow schools to select titles from an approved list, stimulating better quality and lower prices through competition, and to purchase books from local suppliers whose contracts include delivering the books. Governments can also reduce costs by calling for more durable textbooks, which can last many more years than before and can be provided to pupils on a lending basis. In areas where children do not speak the metropolitan language, money can be saved by purchasing early grade books in the mother tongue. Experience in countries such as Mali shows that pupils who learn in their own languages have less tendency to drop out or repeat grades (World Bank IEG 2007a).

2. Mobilizing domestic resources

In EFA/FTI (low-income countries), 81 percent of the funding for basic education comes from domestic budgets and 19 percent comes from donors (about 4 percent of which comes from the FTI Catalytic Fund). In non-FTI low-income countries, about 85 percent of the funding comes from domestic budgets (data from EFA/FTI Secretariat). Clearly, opportunities for mobilizing additional resources domestically will be at the heart of any EFA strategy. Yet most countries are already heavily invested in the education sector and will find it challenging to mobilize additional financing (box 4.4).

In order to address this dilemma, school fee abolition policies need to be nested within broad macroeconomic, sector development, and educational financing policies. The foundation of such policies is a government's capacity to raise revenues and increase spending on education (in relation to gross domestic product [GDP], for example). A basic policy benchmark is the proportion of government recurrent budget expenditures allocated to education. Additional indicators particularly relevant to school fee abolition are the share of the recurrent education budget

Box 4.4 Increasing government expenditure for education during school fee abolition in Cambodia, Kenya, and Uganda

Cambodia's program to reduce school costs for the poorest families was accompanied by an increase in education's share of the total government's recurrent budget. Direct expenditure for education increased by a factor of 2.5 between 1996 and 2004. By 2004 spending on education represented 19 percent of total government recurrent expenditures, up from 15 percent in 2000.

In Kenya, implementation of the Free Primary Education program was accompanied by the allocation of additional funds to the education sector. In nominal terms the budget for education increased by about 35 percent between 2001/02 and 2003/04, or just over 10 percent a year. By 2004 the share of the recurrent budget devoted to education was more than 33 percent, up from 20.5 percent in 1981. In recent years the increase in funding for education has been at least partially covered by large increases in tax revenues, from 200 billion Kenya shillings (K Sh) in 2003 to about K Sh 600 billion at the end of 2007 (personal communication with Kenyan Education Ministry Permanent Secretary to the Director of UNESCO/IIEP, December 2007).

Universal primary education in Uganda was accompanied by restructuring in government spending patterns. The share of the national recurrent budget allocated to education grew from 20 percent in 2000 to 33.5 percent in 2004. Spending on primary education increased from less than 40 percent in the early 1990s to about 70 percent since 1997/98.

Source: Bentaouet-Kattan 2006; World Bank and UNICEF 2009; World Bank Edstats 2008.

allocated to primary education and the nonsalary share of recurrent spending. These indicators vary widely across countries, depending on national conditions, goals, and policy frameworks; there is no magic formula for ensuring successful school fee abolition (box 4.5).

The creators of the EFA/FTI framework envisioned that governments would need to spend, on average, about 3 percent of GDP on education to achieve education for all, with about half of this allocated to primary education (box 4.6). This is only a broad estimate of what constitutes good country performance; there is considerable variation across countries. In Kenya, Lesotho, and the Republic of Yemen, for example,

Box 4.5 Replacing school fees in China and Ethiopia

The Gansu Basic Education Project in China sets two commitments to help finance free education: county budgetary allocations to education in county fiscal expenditure increase by 1 percentage point every year, and the share of county budgetary allocations to nonpersonnel expenditures and expenditure on student fiscal aid in county recurrent educational expenditures increase 0.5–1.0 percent every year, depending on the county.

In Ethiopia the government gives block grants to schools to replace the money they used to receive through fee collection. The regional governments give the *woredas* (districts) their total annual budget in a lump sum, using three basic criteria: the *woreda's* population, socioeconomic indices, and efforts to generate revenue.

Source: Bray, Ding, and Huang 2004; World Bank and UNICEF 2009.

domestic efforts are particularly strong, with governments spending between 2.5 percent and 3.5 percent of GDP on primary education (Kenya 2005; Lesotho 2005; Republic of Yemen 2002). In Pakistan, by contrast, the rate has been much lower (less than 1 percent) for a variety of historical reasons (Boussiere and others 2007). The average expenditure on primary education for countries eligible for International Development Association (IDA) funds has been 1.5 percent of GDP (unweighted averages) in recent years (Bruns, Mingat, and Rakotomalala 2003).

Box 4.6 EFA/FTI financing benchmarks

As a multiagency partnership supporting accelerated progress toward EFA, the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) has put out a set of benchmarks for countries to consider in establishing their own EFA financing goals, based on the financing patterns of 10 countries making good progress on EFA goals. The benchmarks are indicators to consider, not required levels for becoming an FTI partner. These benchmarks suggest that 20 percent of the recurrent budget should go to education spending, 33 percent of recurrent spending on education should go to expenditures other than teacher salaries, and half of recurrent education spending should go to primary education.

Source: Bruns, Mingat, and Rakotomalala 2003.

In addition to government budgets, some countries have seen the increasing emergence of private voluntary funds. In Kenya, for instance, the Ministry of Education opened an account at the Kenya Commercial Bank under the name Universal Primary Education Fund to receive donations from individuals and the private sector. There was strong support for the program both within Kenya and abroad, with private contributions amounting to 798 million Kenya shillings (roughly $10 million) (World Bank and UNICEF 2009).

Other countries, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, have seen the emergence of alumni clubs—groups of former students who provide direct support to individual schools. Such efforts account for a very modest portion of sector financing, however, with little participation to date by large corporations or private foundations.

A challenging element of school fee abolition policies will be establishing an appropriate policy regarding community schools. This category of schools often functions with significant NGO support. Such schools are considered private schools in many countries; as fees are abolished, they may be seen as outside the scope of government intervention or even as a way to mobilize new domestic resources. In fact, these schools have generally been established only because the public education system failed to provide services in certain regions, usually rural and remote, of the country. The costing and simulation exercises that are often part of the planning process described above should present scenarios that include the costs of bringing these schools under public financing. Policy dialogue should include all key stakeholders involved in managing these schools to ensure that the participation and ownership of local communities that support these schools are maintained if fee abolition is extended to community schools. Doing so will be key to ensuring that services are maintained and teachers paid on a sustainable basis (see Step 6 for a fuller discussion of community schools and the opportunities and challenges presented by decentralization).

3. Seeking external financing to fill the gap

Development agencies contribute only a small proportion of the financing needed for school fee abolition. But as government educational funding has increased in recent years, so has external financing, which can lighten cost burdens (box 4.7). Between 2000 and 2004, there was a steady increase of official development assistance commitments to education (from $6.5 billion to $10.7 billion), although commitments in 2005 fell sharply. Annual official development assistance to basic education in all low-income countries almost doubled, from $2.7 billion in 2000 to $5.1 billion in 2004 (these amounts also fell in 2005).[4]

To be fully useful in planning, external aid needs to be predictable, harmonized, and fully aligned with country priorities. Evidence from a 2003 joint evaluation of external support to basic education revealed some progress among agencies in harmonizing approaches to external assistance and connecting it to nationally owned plans and a national agenda, often using sectorwide approaches (Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Box 4.7 Securing external financial support for school fee abolition in Kenya

In Kenya the additional cost burden of replacing fees and expanding the system has been reduced by external agency support. The World Bank provided two development credits, totaling almost $200 million, disbursed for books, materials, and other operating costs. The two credits have supported major transformation of the primary education program, which attracted 1 million new students over a four-year period. This financing also provided Kenya the opportunity to pilot a promising conditional cash transfer scheme, aimed at AIDS orphans and their host families in the Nairobi metropolitan area. During 2002–04 Kenya also received grants from the Department for International Development (U.K.) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (DFID/Sida) ($32 million), the World Food Programme ($14 million), Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) ($10 million), and UNICEF ($2.5 million), as well as contributions from NGOs, including Oxfam and ActionAid.

Source: World Bank 2003b, 2006; World Bank and UNICEF 2009.

2003). However, the report also showed evidence of agencies pushing their own agendas and indicated the need for greater harmonization.

One promising movement toward coordinated development agency support of country-owned basic education programs is the EFA/FTI (2004), which seeks to help countries accelerate their progress toward EFA by mobilizing external funding and coordinating agency support of government plans. The EFA/FTI operates according to a compact between partner countries and a consortium of donors. Within this contract, governments pledge to develop sound policies and plans, demonstrate results on key performance indicators, exercise leadership in developing and implementing EFA programs, and coordinate donor support. For their part, development agencies commit to increase financial and technical support in a predictable manner, align with country development priorities, coordinate support around one education plan, and harmonize procedures as much as possible. School fee abolition plans and financial requirements that are included in a government's sector plans supported by the EFA/FTI can receive increased and coordinated external financing through this mechanism.

Another mechanism that holds promise for increased financing of the education sector, and in particular school fee abolition, is the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, which enables eligible countries to convert debt relief into financing for development. The impact varies from one country to another, depending on the debt burden, but countries benefiting from debt relief have committed to use an average 40 percent of their debt payment savings on basic education (Hinchliffe 2004). This national funding mechanism also has the advantage of avoiding an increase in external dependency.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Fundamental to effective planning is the estimation of financing requirements in the face of fee revenue loss, enrollment surges, and the need

to maintain or increase educational quality and then mobilizing the needed domestic and international funding. Once these formidable tasks are completed, high-status, high-visibility M&E systems will need to be established to track (at least annually) the actual costs of school fee abolition and changes in cost factors (deviations from estimates of student numbers and costs per student and those for construction, teachers, and learning materials); document changes in resources available (domestic and international), including any increases in government budgets, private sector contributions (including those by NGOs), and development agency support (financial and nonfinancial); and update estimates of new resources needed (financing gaps). Much of this M&E, especially the tracking of costs, will already have been covered in the design for Step 2; the other tasks can be conducted in conjunction with the M&E connected to Step 2. As with the other M&E tasks, continuous updating of cost and financing data will be needed to support ongoing (evidence-based) planning, strategizing, and course correction.

4

Step 5:
Planning for Quality

Background/Rationale

When school systems are flooded with new students and the meager resources provided by fees are no longer available to schools, the results can be catastrophic. When fees were eliminated in Ethiopia, for example, repetition rates soared and learning outcomes sagged. In Malawi class sizes ballooned and materials were almost nonexistent. Within months the same parents who had enthusiastically sent their children to school, many for the first time ever, were pulling their children out again. A decade later, parents, teachers, and school administrators feel that the education system has still not recovered.

Most countries abolishing fees in recent years have focused on reducing these risks and limiting the damage to the quality of education. The increased visibility and political support that a school fee abolition policy can engender provide a critical opportunity to improve quality. Kenya was able to harness this attention by quickly focusing on the timely provision of resources and teaching and learning materials directly to schools (box 5.1). Tanzania phased in its school fee abolition over several years, in the process establishing new and decentralized arrangements for quality improvement interventions (teacher deployment, procurement of

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Box 5.1 Meeting the challenge of post–fee abolition in Kenya

Abolishing school fees can lead to longer-term education reforms and improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Kenya experienced, or continues to experience, many of these outcomes:

- Enrollment increased from 5.9 million in 2002 to 7.6 million in 2005.
- Lower primary textbook to student ratios, although still low, reached the targeted 1:3 for English and science.
- The primary completion rate rose from 63 percent in 2002 to 76 percent in 2004.
- Repetition rates declined from 13 percent in 1999 to 10 percent in 2003.
- Dropout rates declined from 5 percent in 1999 to 2 percent in 2003.
- Improvements in learning outcomes between 2002 and 2005 were shown in all but 7 out of 21 sample districts.
- Grants of $14 per pupil per year provide instructional materials.
- Funds are transferred directly to individual school accounts.

Source: World Bank and UNICEF 2009.

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textbooks and learning materials, and strengthening of local capacity for education management) (Bentaouet-Kattan 2006). Both countries were able to replace a weak resource distribution system with a much stronger one, holding out the promise for long-term improvements in equity and systemwide quality.

The objective of this step is to identify opportunities for improving quality and maintaining the focus on quality issues. It explores ways to rapidly increase the supply of schools or classrooms, capable teachers, and teaching and learning materials needed to accommodate the surge in enrollment accompanying school fee abolition while at the same time improving school quality. These strategies go well beyond school fee abolition; they belong to the kind of sectorwide planning and restructuring that the move toward school fee abolition should engender. Most important, the solutions focus on ensuring that specific

short-term measures taken during the school fee abolition process do not stand in the way of long-term quality enhancement reforms after the initial crisis has passed.

Taking Action

1. Providing the needed supply of capable teachers

When fees are removed in countries in which enrollment is low, the greatest challenge will be to provide sufficient numbers of capable teachers to cope with the surge and to give those teachers adequate support in a challenging environment. The need for new teachers should be estimated only after evaluating how existing teachers can be used more effectively. Since reforms take time to put into place, short-term backup measures may also be needed.

Using existing teachers more effectively

There may be a strong temptation for countries to treat all schools and all teachers in the same way, in the belief that this approach will simplify the process. Developing a range of innovative strategies is far more likely to maximize opportunities for all children to learn.

INCREASING HOURS OF SCHOOLING. The principle of equal opportunity to learn means that all children should receive an agreed on minimum number of hours of instruction annually. There is great variation in hours of schooling across countries and across schools within many countries. Even where the intended length of the school year is the same, the actual length of the school year may vary considerably. Training programs for teachers can provide teachers with management tools and other strategies to protect or increase their teaching hours. The state of Pernambuco in Brazil, for example, recently instituted an in-service program to help

teachers improve their teaching and better manage their hours in the classroom (Abadzi 2007).

ADOPTING MULTIGRADE TEACHING. Most school fee abolition efforts will have their greatest impact on scattered, rural, and remote populations. Multigrade teaching is often the only viable approach for addressing the needs of low-enrollment schools in these areas. One-room classrooms, in particular, may be the most cost-effective way to serve as many as 5–10 percent of rural children in some countries. Where this is necessary, positive learning outcomes can be achieved through increased teacher focus on individualized student needs and through peer and cross-age tutoring. These approaches require flexibility in how the curriculum is used, as well as pre- and in-service support. Multigrade teaching also offers an opportunity to improve teaching and learning. It has been argued that children in these classes frequently outperform children in monograde classrooms, although studies have noted that teachers often find it difficult to keep children in multigrade classes on task (Mingat and Jarousse 1991; Lehman 2003; Little 2006).

REDUCING THE USE OF MULTISHIFT TEACHING. During the mid-1980s to early 1990s, teachers in Burundi received about a 10 percent salary increase for taking responsibility for an additional shift. Although the strategy allowed for a rapid increase in enrollment, which tripled in less than 10 years, it cut weekly student–teacher contact hours from 35.0 to 18.5 and ultimately proved unsustainable. Such losses in student–teacher contact hours are an inevitable consequence where teachers are responsible for more than one shift.[5] Because of the risks of reduced instructional time for multishifting with the same teachers, this strategy should be considered only under the most extreme circumstances and only for short transitional periods as longer-term sustainable alternatives are developed (Bray 2008).

ADJUSTING CLASS SIZE. Educators everywhere would like to decrease class size in order to allow more individual attention to pupils. Doing so comes at a high price, however, because teachers represent the single most costly expenditure for school systems. Studies around the world have shown little difference in learning outcomes with class sizes of 20–40. However, class sizes exceeding 40–45 have an adverse effect on student learning (Bruns, Mingat, and Rakotomalala 2003). The FTI Indicative Framework proposes that countries seek to maintain an average class size of no more than 40. (This target would probably be better expressed in terms of minimum and maximum class sizes, as an average class size of 40 may mask wide variations across schools, with many large urban schools having student-teacher ratios that are twice the national average.)

REDUCING THE REPETITION RATE. Low-income countries are the least able to afford the "luxury" of high repetition rates, but they are where rates are often highest. Many countries in sub-Saharan Africa have annual repetition rates of 20 percent or more (UNESCO 2006). Research shows that grade repetition is not an effective way of improving children's learning (Verspoor 2006). School fee abolition can provide an opportunity to revisit repetition policies. Many countries have introduced subcycles within which repetition is not allowed (a common formula is to forbid repetition after grades 1, 3, and 5, for instance). Such policies have had a significant impact on repetition and have freed up places for more students.[6] Other policies, such as use of mother tongue teaching in the lower grades, can virtually eliminate grade repetition. In Mali, for instance, grade repetition is about 20 percent in French-language primary schools but less than 5 percent in schools that do not transition fully from local languages to French until grade 4. This reduction in grade repetition has been achieved with no loss in terms of student learning outcomes (Bender and others 2007).

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AVOIDING TEACHER REDEPLOYMENT. Teacher redeployment appears attractive on paper, but it has rarely worked well in practice. Guinea successfully redeployed about one-third of its teachers from teacher surplus to teacher shortage areas in the early 1990s to expand schooling in rural areas (Sow 1995), but its success has not been replicated elsewhere. Moreover, even in Guinea it proved difficult to move more female teachers to rural areas, which had been one of the goals of the initiative. More promising approaches may be to implement policies that link all new teacher positions directly to schools or that fill remote school positions with local teachers who may not be fully qualified but can become so through in-service or distance education. These measures fill gaps in remote regions and ensure that over time local communities have a greater say in teacher recruitment and deployment policies.

Increasing the supply of teachers

A number of strategies have successfully increased the supply of teachers in countries that have removed school fees. The main advantage of many of these strategies is that they can easily be implemented over the short term. The main risk is that the approaches may not be sustainable unless there is thoughtful ongoing dialogue with teachers' unions and other key actors. Even though EFA goals are shared by all major teachers' organizations and will receive their support, there is often a perceived trade-off between teachers' interests and those of schoolchildren, particularly at the onset of the reform process. The options must therefore be discussed candidly and negotiated carefully if short-term solutions are not to prevent long-term implementation.

RECRUITING UNEMPLOYED GRADUATES AS TEACHER CANDIDATES. Students perform better when teachers have a deeper knowledge of the subjects they are teaching (Villegas-Reimers 2003). Many countries in sub-Saharan Africa recruit teacher candidates after junior-secondary school and

provide them with up to four years of teacher preparation. This long lead time makes it difficult to rapidly increase the number of qualified teachers when fees are removed. These countries would achieve better results by recruiting teacher candidates from among unemployed graduates of senior-secondary schools and providing them with a relatively short period of teacher preparation (typically up to one year, with additional support during the first year of teaching). Shortening the period of teacher preparation in this way makes it possible to prepare many more teachers each year while maintaining or even increasing quality (box 5.2).

USING SENIOR TEACHERS. Some countries have called back retired teachers or temporarily extended the retirement age. Senior teachers may also be used to mentor young teachers with less training.

DEPLOYING TEACHING ASSISTANTS AND PARA-TEACHERS. Studies generally find that teaching assistants and para-teachers can perform well given adequate professional support and a way into the mainstream teaching force (ADEA 2004). Such approaches may be necessary in the short run, when qualified teachers cannot be found or cannot be deployed to rural areas. Many states in India have recruited para-teachers, with mixed results. In the most populous state (Uttar Pradesh), they have often improved educational quality, but it is not clear how sustainable

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Box 5.2 Guinea's reforms in teacher recruitment

Guinea shortened the length of its teacher preparation program from three years to one year and increased the intake level of teacher candidates from grade 10 to grade 13. Combined with several other measures, this measure helped increase the number of trained teacher candidates from 200 to more than 2,000 a year. School directors and teacher associates perceived that the new trainees had better teaching skills than did those trained in the conventional manner.

Source: World Bank 2003c.

the improvement is (Govinda and Josephine 2004). Elsewhere in rural India, state governments have established an education guarantee scheme under which parents may recruit the best available parent as a teacher, with reimbursement from the government, until the government is able to provide a fully qualified teacher. Although this is not an optimal solution, it can ensure that children who would otherwise be forced to stay at home receive some schooling over the short term (Clarke 2003). In many rural parts of Yemen, where the female teachers needed to attract girls to school are virtually unavailable and cannot easily be deployed from other regions, para-teachers may be the only solution over the short run, until a new generation of female students is available for recruitment (UNESCO 2007). In all cases, para-teachers require strong support, including adequate supplies of teaching and learning materials.

EMPLOYING CONTRACT TEACHERS. Many countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, have recruited teachers outside of traditional civil service channels, usually in order to reduce unit costs but also to increase flexibility and local involvement in recruitment. The approach has significantly increased teacher availability in these countries. Where there is greater community involvement in monitoring attendance and performance, this approach has the potential to improve quality. Some countries, however, have made the mistake of providing too little pre- or in-service training to contract teachers; many have provided little in the way of long-term stability or career prospects, a problem that will contribute to instability over time and ultimately may lead to deterioration in quality (Fyfe 2007).

RECRUITING TEACHERS OR TEACHER CANDIDATES ACROSS BORDERS. Developed countries increasingly recruit teachers from other countries. This has rarely been done in developing countries, often because of unnecessarily restrictive local regulations. Yet countries with insufficient

teacher candidates may find that highly educated teacher candidates could be recruited from countries with high unemployment rates and that with minimal training they could help alleviate teacher shortages (Appleton, Morgan, and Sives 2006).

SCALING UP DISTANCE EDUCATION. Some countries have successfully supplemented teaching programs with rural radio (Guinea, Malawi) or other distance education programs. These programs tend to be more successful when targeted to teachers to supplement pre- and in-service training; they have been less successful when targeted at pupils themselves. Where such programs already exist, it may be possible to scale them up to support fee abolition. It will almost certainly not be feasible to develop such programs as a response to fee abolition unless significant advance work has already been done (Robinson and Latchem 2002; UNESCO 2008).

ADDRESSING TEACHER QUALITY THROUGH TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT. Maintaining school quality in the context of school fee abolition assumes not only that teacher supply is adequate but that teachers receive adequate and appropriate training and professional support. Teacher training and professional support require careful planning, tailored to the local environment (sometimes varying across different parts of a country), but it need not be costly. Cost-effective approaches to training include reducing the length of initial teacher preparation and managing in-service training in a decentralized manner (for example, through school clusters), with instructors often serving as teaching peers (master teachers). Rewards for teachers must include adequate and regular salary payments. They can also include symbolic rewards or acts of appreciation by the community. The positive effect of such rewards on teacher performance and attendance can more than offset the expenses incurred (Dembele and Lefoka 2007).

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PROVIDING BRIEF PRESERVICE TRAINING. As educational profession-
als, teachers need to be prepared for their demanding tasks, particu-
larly where school fee abolition has led to larger than normal class sizes.
Teacher preparation or preservice training will need to be long enough to
provide teacher candidates a grounding in pedagogy and classroom man-
agement (according to an ADEA conference, at least six months) but not
so long that graduation rates are too low and rural teacher candidates start
to become rooted in the college town, which often occurs after one to two
years (ADEA 2004).

FOCUSING TRAINING ON HANDS-ON TEACHER PREPARATION. Preservice
training programs have often been overloaded with highly theoretical
courses, which do not contribute substantially to teacher performance.
More effective seem to be hands-on methods courses and school-based
training. One model includes one year of practical training at the college
followed by another year of in-service training or internship at a school,
where teacher candidates may also be mentored by more experienced
teachers (Verspoor 2003). The precise balance between pre- and in-service
training will depend on local conditions, stakeholder preferences, agree-
ments with teachers' unions, and the characteristics of the candidate
pool (whether or not there are unemployed secondary school gradu-
ates). Given that many new teachers will be posted to crowded schools
or remote areas, preparation should include methods for managing large
classes or multigrade teaching.

PROVIDING DECENTRALIZED AND NEEDS-BASED IN-SERVICE TRAINING. Like
other professionals, teachers—especially inexperienced teachers who may
have come through short preservice training programs—need on-site pro-
fessional support to sharpen their skills and keep up their morale. Some
innovative and effective programs (such as those in Cambodia, Guinea,
India, and Indonesia) have been undertaken at the school cluster level
(teachers from a group of neighboring schools), often addressing needs

determined by the teachers themselves (Ayyar and Bashir 2004; Schwille, Dembele, and Diallo 2001; World Bank 1998, 2002). Trainers may be drawn from school districts, local training colleges, or more experienced (master) teachers. Head teachers who have been trained in instructional leadership can also contribute to professional support at the school level, often by holding teacher meetings and working sessions.

offering financial and nonfinancial teacher incentives. Other professional supports to teachers include adequate salaries and their timely payment (so that teachers do not have to take on second jobs or miss school to travel to district offices seeking payments) and promotions/incentives based on desired performance and results (Vegas and Umansky 2005). Support from the community or school committee (by, for example, recognizing teachers' efforts or supporting school events) can also increase teacher status and morale.

2. Constructing and renovating schools and classrooms

Governments are often daunted by the challenge of providing good classroom space for the scores of new learners attracted by free primary education. Some have turned to temporary or prefabricated structures, but the experience with them has generally not been positive (Theunynck 2009) (box 5.3).

More promising has been the more efficient use of existing buildings and innovative, cost-effective approaches to constructing or renovating permanent structures using improved designs or community-based approaches. Given the principle of expanding access without diminishing quality, such structures need to meet health, safety, and instructional design standards. Experiences in many countries show that governments can make good progress toward providing good learning spaces for all within a reasonable budget, using some of the strategies discussed below.

Box 5.3 Using tents as temporary classrooms in Lesotho

In Lesotho the government purchased tents as temporary classrooms and contracted the military to transport tents and school equipment by helicopter to remote areas. Regular classrooms have been slow in coming, however, and the temporary solution may have driven out the preferred long-term solution. The result is that children are still in tents.

Source: Interview with Aidan Mulkeen, Africa Region Human Development Team, World Bank.

Using existing classrooms more intensively

Multishift classrooms, in which one classroom is used for two or more classes taught by different teachers, can address the challenge of insufficient infrastructure at a time of surging enrollment. This approach does not carry the same risk of reduced instructional time as multishifting with the same teachers, but it should nevertheless generally be considered temporary, as one shift will have to take place during hot afternoon hours that may extend into early evening. As long as there are sufficient teachers to staff both shifts, this approach can help alleviate overcrowding while maintaining quality standards (Bray 2008).

Using unoccupied locations

Community spaces, youth centers, churches or mosques, and homes have provided space for classrooms in many communities (Khan 1981). This may be an especially appropriate short-term solution in sparsely populated areas, where multigrade teaching (for example, one-room schooling) is called for.

Using school mapping to determine school locations

In the near chaos of school construction and contracting by governments, NGOs, and the private sector, schools have often been placed where they are least needed (that is, where plenty of places already

exist). Changes in demographics, such as urbanization, often result in shifts in the school-age population, leaving some schools half empty and others bursting at the seams. Many countries now use school mapping techniques (sometime employing global positioning systems) to plot where new schools should be placed and old schools expanded (World Bank 1998).

Creating innovative and economical school designs

In many places school designs are not standardized, often old-fashioned (colonial era), and expensive. To deal with the problem, some states in India have created new standard school designs that are both economical and durable and have solid pedagogical features. The state of Uttar Pradesh adopted a design in the mid-1990s that allowed it to construct 75 percent more classrooms than originally planned without expanding the budget (World Bank IEG 2007b). Ghana also built low-cost schools (box 5.4). One way to inject creativity into the design process is for government planners to strengthen links with university, research institution, commercial design, and international agency partners, from which ideas can emerge for blending new and appropriate technologies with time-tested building methods.

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Box 5.4 Building low-cost schools in Ghana

In the 1990s the government replaced thousands of dilapidated school structures with solid but low-cost pavilions (a cement floor and a roof supported by steel girders), with the understanding that the community would "clad" the outside walls (most did). As a result, two-thirds of the school buildings could be used when it rained in 2003, up from less than half in 1988. The change increased school attendance, which led to improved learning outcomes.

Source: World Bank IEG 2003.

Simplifying school furnishings requirements

In countries such as India, considerable savings for initial school furnishings and maintenance have been made through the use of floor mats in place of desks and other efforts to simplify school furnishings. Such approaches support child-friendly teaching methods, such as small group work. They will need to be discussed with local authorities to determine cultural appropriateness.

Financing school construction through social funds

A recent phenomenon in many low-income countries is the use of "social funds" in financing community development. A social fund is a fund (often bolstered by external donors) made available to communities in support of an agenda created by the community itself through participatory processes. Among the priorities most frequently put forward by communities for social fund support has been the construction of primary schools (to the relief of ministries of education). In Yemen social funds supported the construction of enough schools for an additional 1 million students over a nine-year period beginning in the 1990s; over the same period construction funded by the Ministry of Education added just 50,000 new student places (World Bank IEG 2006). When social funds are used to create new school buildings in this manner, care must be taken to involve education officials in posting teachers to them and arranging for their recurrent costs to be covered.

*Contracting with communities for building construction
and rehabilitation*

Experience in many parts of the world demonstrates that communities can effectively manage the timely construction and renovation of schools. Good practice includes bringing viable community-level school committees into contractual agreements in which they commit to building facilities according to standard drawings (with some variations related

to culture and local environment), within an agreed on maximum cost. The committees subsequently manage the funds and the procurement of goods and services, paying qualified builders on the basis of certification of works by an engineer responsible for site supervision. The government commits itself to disburse the funds to the community in installments, on the basis of progress. Experiences with this model in settings as diverse as India, Indonesia, and Tanzania reveal a pattern of effective and timely construction, community ownership of and pride in the building, and lower costs than those from conventional contracting (World Bank 2005c; Theunynck 2009). As noted in Step 3, community-based construction in sub-Saharan Africa is estimated to cost considerably less than commercial or government contractors (Theunynck 2009).

Ensuring good maintenance

Untold resources are siphoned away from education systems every year to cover the renovation or replacement of buildings that have not been provided needed (often simple and low-cost) maintenance. Continued use of dilapidated buildings is a breeding ground for poor student attendance and performance. Good maintenance should therefore be part of any program of cost-effective building provision. Good maintenance starts with selecting designs and building materials that can be maintained by the community. Maintenance should be covered by cash transfers. If communities are in charge of deciding how to spend the funds, they must keep in mind the need to allocate funding to maintenance (Theunynck 2009).

Ensuring access by children with disabilities

Most children with disabilities do not have good access to schooling in developing countries. Careful planning can ensure access at a relatively low cost, making it possible to create inclusive classrooms (World Bank 2005a; World Vision 2007).

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3. Ensuring adequate supplies of textbooks and other teaching and learning materials

Providing good-quality teaching and learning materials for all in a timely fashion is a significant challenge under school fee abolition, especially in countries in which provision of materials was inadequate before school fees were abolished. However, recent breakthroughs in materials production and distribution are making it possible to provide better materials for less. Conditions and receptivity to change are different in every country, but the following approaches have been useful in many locations where school fee abolition is being implemented.

Changing curriculum design and policy

As part of the sector planning in which school fee abolition needs to be embedded, governments may find it desirable to reform the basic education curriculum. In many cases this will lead to a reduction in the number of subjects taught. School systems that may at one time have required the teaching of as many as 18 subjects at the primary level may decide to focus on 4 or 5 core subjects, with an emphasis on literacy and basic math skills. Reducing the number of subjects taught will reduce the number of textbooks needed. Planners and curriculum developers may also take this opportunity to simplify content in the core subjects, reduce biases that might alienate girls and minority groups, and use native languages as a medium of instruction for pupils not fluent in the metropolitan language. Governments may also decide to put more than one title on their "approved list" for subjects at each grade level, in order to cater to different preferences and spark competition among publishers. Other curriculum reforms include the reduction of the number of school years (box 5.5) (Read 2007; UNESCO 2008).

Setting national standards for textbooks and other learning materials

Most countries with poor records of providing effective learning materials have not set clear quality standards. As governments turn to

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Box 5.5 Curriculum reform in Ghana

In the mid-1980s Ghana's government embarked on an ambitious program to streamline the basic education curriculum, reducing the number of preuniversity school years from 17 to 12. Its Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) program in the mid-1990s further streamlined the curriculum, reducing the required learning materials in line with a more focused curriculum.

Source: World Bank IEG 2003.

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the publishing industry for the production of learning materials, they will need to set standards that make clear their requirements on content, sociocultural messages (removal of biases), presentational quality, and durability. Asked during a 2004 regional workshop on learning materials in Africa how it was able to provide durable, high-quality textbooks for 50 percent less than before, a publisher indicated that doing so simply had never been required before (Read 2007).

Moving toward a public/private partnership in learning materials provision

In many countries, shifting textbook production to the private sector may improve quality and reduce costs. Such a shift would mean that the government would take on a quality assurance role, set guidelines for publishers, create and use rigorous methods for selecting contractors (giving proper weight to content, presentation, and costs), help strengthen the publishing industry (national and regional), and establish predictable budgets for materials acquisition. Under such partnerships, the distribution of materials would be shifted from a government function (usually inadequately fulfilled) to a requirement of the contractor. On making such a transition following the abolition of school fees, Uganda saw the number of textbook publishers increase from 2 in 1996 to 14 in 2002 (Read 2007).

*Devolving responsibility for purchasing books
to the local level*

Allowing schools or districts to select their own textbooks from approved lists and to purchase them with their own operating funds (for example, block grants) can enhance the commitment of a school or district to and use of textbooks while reducing prices and improving service (through competition among local suppliers). Contracts with local suppliers (tendered in an open and transparent manner) should include delivery of books to schools. This will increase the price of books, but, as Kenya discovered (box 5.6), in the end it will be much more cost-effective than using government supply chains. Schools could also be provided funds with which to purchase their own library books and to purchase or produce their own audiovisual materials. In India's District Primary Education Projects, teachers were provided grants of about $10 a year for the purchase or production of teaching aids (Ayyar and Bashir 2004). Such highly decentralized approaches to materials acquisition will

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Box 5.6 Local purchase of instructional material in Kenya

The availability of textbooks and other materials, such as geometry sets, maps, and charts, has increased significantly in Kenya as a result of the regular transfer of funds from the central government to school instructional materials committees, which select and purchase the materials locally. By 2004, the national average textbook to student ratio at the lower primary level had reached 1:3 in English and science, 1:4 in mathematics, and 1:5 in Kiswahili, still quite low but much better than in the past.

The textbook policy introduced to support the process of fee abolition represented a permanent change in sectoral financing that has been widely acknowledged as having improved the teaching and learning environment. By giving local schools responsibility for purchasing books, the reform has also improved the relevance of the purchases, empowered the school-level instructional materials teams, and removed a cost burden from the parents.

Source: World Bank and UNICEF 2009.

require the establishment of reporting systems that enable the government to track whether all schools are acquiring adequate supplies of books and materials.

Requiring the production of durable books

Severe financial constraints on learning materials budgets have often forced governments to produce flimsy, short-lived books. Experience has shown, however, that the production of durable books (those well constructed out of long-lasting materials) is more cost-effective. Such books can be used over a period of three to four years and provided to pupils on a loan basis instead of being given to them. Schools using books in this manner will need to foster in pupils a sense of responsibility for the upkeep of the books (see Step 4 for examples of systems increasing the life span of their books from one or two years to four years) (Read 2007).

Exploring the use of information technologies

Information technologies are beginning to enter schools in many developing countries. Well-resourced schools with computers are now able to access a wealth of digitized learning materials at a low recurrent cost. A large proportion of low-income countries cannot yet supply their mainstream (rural) primary schools with computers or even electrical power, however. Such schools can provide transistor radios or audio cassette recorders for receiving or playing interactive radio or other distance education programs.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Planning for quality must include a significant M&E agenda. Step 4 already highlighted the crucial role of M&E in tracking the allocation of funds to

school quality improvement (teachers, physical facilities, and learning materials). Under Step 5 it is also essential to track the implementation of planned programs and program outputs according to preestablished indicators (for example, the number of teachers deployed, schools and classrooms built, and books and materials put into use). Ultimately, however, what should be important to stakeholders are educational outcomes, such as enrollment ratios, student perseverance (reduced dropout), and student learning (achievement) outcomes. The focus will need to be on the extent to which these indicators—broken down by geographical region and socioeconomic groups, including the most vulnerable—are falling or rising.

This evaluation task is not conducted exclusively for Step 5: it should be linked with M&E tasks planned in connection with the other steps, especially Step 2. Where possible, it should also be lined with evaluation work undertaken by the education sector as a whole, as school fee abolition will be a part of sectorwide planning and management. Managers and evaluators need to use educational outcome data to show how school fee abolition has influenced educational quality and to identify the challenges that lie ahead.

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Step 6:
Strengthening School Governance and Accountability

Background/Rationale

To effectively manage the loss of funds and the enrollment surge that is likely to accompany school fee abolition at the school level without sacrificing school quality, governments must find ways to replace lost revenue and obtain additional resources cost-effectively. Getting funds and other resources to the school, however, does not guarantee good learning outcomes. In fact, there is little correlation between the level of funding and learning outcomes. What is key, according to analyses conducted in many parts of the world, are school-level processes for "transforming resources into results" (Beifith 2007). Improving these processes generally requires changes in school governance and management.

In most cases, fees formerly used at the school level to cover operating costs will need to be replaced by resource transfers from the central (or some other level of) government. The way in which these resources are transferred is critical. Conventional supply chains have been beset by breakdowns and leakage. Experiences in a growing number of countries show that such weakness can be overcome if funds (in the form of grants) are transferred directly to schools, which then "purchase" resources according to their needs (Fredriksen 2007, 2009).

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This increasingly popular course requires planners to address a series of questions. What is the minimum package of resources that school grants should cover? Should the grants vary according to school size and the socioeconomic conditions of the target groups? If so, how? What governance systems should be set up at the school level to plan and oversee school improvement and manage the grant funds? How can schools be made accountable for the funds they use? If communities are no longer collecting and managing local fees, how can their continued engagement be ensured?

Even with improved school governance, teachers and principals will need to acquire new coping skills to deal with crowded classrooms and the demands of new school improvement plans. In addition, principals will need to acquire or sharpen instructional management skills, and supervisors will need to make improved classroom management a focal point of their school visits.

The objective of this step is to support effective and transparent mechanisms to allocate and manage the resources designed to replace fees while strengthening community ownership and support for schools, and improving school instructional management and supervision.

6

Taking Action

1. Creating transparent, decentralized resource
allocation systems

When the central government replaces school fees—either solely through its own resources or with support from external partners—the new allocation of funds needs to be reflected in the national budget. This is also important at the local level in cases where revenues will be collected locally or transferred by the central government through local adminis-trative units to local communities, schools, or parent groups.

Two approaches may be used to transfer resources from government treasuries. Under the first approach, governments may procure the goods and services that were previously purchased by schools and financed through compulsory fees (or purchased directly by parents) and distribute them to schools free of charge. Procurement and distribution may be done by central government or local administrations through supply chains, depending on the country's administrative setup. Under the second approach, governments may transfer funds directly to schools or communities so that they can purchase the goods and services previously financed through fees or parental purchase.

The approach chosen will depend on administrative traditions, levels of decentralization, and the strength and transparency of existing administrative, financial, and procurement systems. Other factors—such as the availability of transportation and other local market conditions (for example, the presence of bookstores near schools)—also play a role. Different approaches can also be combined, so that some materials (for example, textbooks) are procured centrally and distributed to schools while others (school supplies, maintenance services) are financed by the central or regional government but purchased directly by schools.

Governments that have opted to transfer funds directly are increasingly doing so through block grants to schools or communities. The size of such grants is often based on the number of students (capitation grants) or other criteria (such as the percentage of children below the poverty level). Found in all regions of the world, this approach is particularly prevalent in sub-Saharan Africa (box 6.1).

Providing block grants to schools for local purchasing decisions also redistributes power among various groups—central and local officials, principals, teachers, and parents—that have stakes in the content and quality of education. A strong central authority can promote the society-wide benefits of education, such as social cohesion, and ensure that every community has

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Box 6.1 Block grants to schools in Mozambique and Tanzania

Launched in 2003, Mozambique's Direct Support to Schools Program promotes decentralization of decision making and resource management in the education sector and quality improvement through the supply of learning materials and community involvement. Funds covering school materials from an approved list are allocated per school on a per capita basis. Other initiatives are also financed, including improving access to clean water and providing school-based health, HIV/AIDS interventions, latrines, and other infrastructural improvements. The school council determines the needs of each school, with goods and services purchased directly by the school director and community representative. School management is trained in procurement and financial procedures. School councils, not the central government, decide how the funds will be used and ensure transparency and accountability. Quality is achieved by allowing school councils to identify what basic materials for learners and teachers are purchased from the funds. The transfer of funds is efficient. Links between school and community are strengthened through joint involvement and responsibility.

Tanzania's Primary Education Development Program, launched in 2001, abolished school fees and introduced financial support in the form of two complementary schools grants: a capitation grant (for provision of textbooks, teaching aids, teaching material development, small repairs, and other expenses related to improving the quality of education) and an investment grant (for construction of classrooms and water and sanitation facilities and major rehabilitation of existing buildings). Funds were channeled on a quarterly basis from the government to local government authorities, who disburse them to schools according to set criteria. The capitation grant is allocated on a per pupil basis (equivalent to $10 per pupil in 2002). The investment grant is made on the basis of investment plans, approved by the local government authority. Schools maintain separate bank accounts for the two types of funding. Village councils develop overall policy, while school committees determine priorities and implementation schedules and supervise execution. The project provides extensive resources for capacity building at different levels.

Source: World Bank 2001; World Bank and UNICEF 2009.

access to school. But only community and school stakeholders can determine and plan for the specific needs of a school and monitor daily performance against school improvement plans.

The use of block grants does not imply that central authorities should abdicate their responsibility for quality education. Even when funds are transferred from the central government to schools, central authorities can reinforce the capacities of their decentralized structures to enable them to better perform their new administrative and monitoring responsibilities, ensure that funds are transferred in a transparent manner, and hold schools and communities accountable for the funds they receive. Local administrations at different levels should support and monitor the steps taken by districts, communities, and schools to replace the goods and services financed through fees and to set up transparent administrative, financial, procurement, and evaluation systems. Because the government now provides the school funds, it has greater legitimacy in performing this type of regulatory role.

The following questions may be considered when designing a block grant system (Fredriksen 2007, 2009):

- What expenses should the grants cover? Should they finance what UNICEF calls an "essential learning package" (box 6.2)? What are the minimum resources needed to promote acceptable learning outcomes in the school? Should school grants cover capital or just recurrent costs? Should they include teacher salaries? Should there be any restrictions on the use of grants (lists of items that are allowed and disallowed)?
- How should the money given to schools be calculated? Some countries (such as Tanzania, see box 6.1) use a simple capitation grant formula, based on the number of pupils enrolled. Other systems are more complex. For example, under the assumption that some costs are relatively independent of school size while others are directly related to enrollment,

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Box 6.2 Essential Learning Package (ELP): Goals and strategy

The goals and strategy of the ELP include the following:

- Help government generate a quantum leap in enrollment toward universal primary school completion by 2015.
- Strengthen the capacity of existing units to deliver essential services.
- Procure and deliver supplies.
- Use national education budgets more effectively.
- Get essential resources to points of need.

Source: UNICEF WCARO 2007.

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one funding formula splits the grant into two parts, a fixed part for every school and a part that varies with the number of students. This approach ensures that small schools get what they need to fund fixed costs (costs that are independent of how many pupils they enroll). Other approaches factor in the degree of pupil or community disadvantage. Block grants in Benin, for example, are based on the number of authorized classes per school, plus additional amounts for schools located in "deprived areas" or having low gross enrollment rates for girls (ADEA, UNICEF, and World Bank 2007).

- How should inaccurate enrollment data be dealt with? In many locations enrollment data are of poor quality or intentionally inflated by managers in order to increase capitation grants. School systems using capitation grants will need to find ways to validate enrollment data or use other bases for school grants, such as the number of graduates the previous year, which can be more easily validated (Birdsall, Savedoff, and Vyborny 2008).

- How often should funds be transferred, once a year or more often? Should continued receipt of funds be contingent on school/community performance in using grant funds (for example, certified use of funds for intended purposes, transparency, and widespread community involvement)?

2. Creating transparent governance systems at the school and community levels

Understanding how financial transfers were made before fees were eliminated will help policy makers create effective systems for managing funds transferred through block grants. If an effective and transparent system is already in place and can be used in its current form or strengthened to manage school grants, it should not be destabilized. If the revenues collected through school fees had been managed by district officers or school heads alone or in a nontransparent manner, the establishment of the school grant system provides an opportunity to put in place a more participatory and transparent system (box 6.3).

School grants are usually managed at the school level by a school management committee (the name, organizational form, and composition of this body will vary). These committees generally include parents, community members, the school principal, and teachers; they are often built on the preexisting PTA structure. School management committees play an important role in developing school improvement plans, making funding decisions, and overseeing whether funds are used efficiently and for intended purposes (box 6.4).

While parental/community involvement in school management can play an important role in ensuring that children receive quality education, it also has its risks. School communities may not have enough

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Box 6.3 Siphoning off school funds at the district level in Uganda

Uganda conducted a Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) in 1996 to ascertain how much of the funding allocated to schools actually reached them. The findings are disturbing. Between 1991 and 1995, at best less than 30 percent of annual capitation grants from the central government reached the school level; the rest was used by district authorities, some for purposes other than education. Having made this discovery, Ugandan officials successfully rectified this situation in subsequent years.

Source: Ablo and Reinikka 1998.

Box 6.4 School grant planning in Cambodia and Ghana

In Cambodia school planning facilitators help school committees understand and appreciate what makes for a well-functioning school. In Ghana school action plans are formed by school management committees on the basis of a "performance assessment meeting" that includes references to the school's standardized test results compared with the district average.

Source: World Bank IEG 2003; World Bank 2004a.

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information to make good funding decisions, for example, or school committees can be "captured" by community elites who promote their own agendas.

For school committees to perform their role well, the following institutional arrangements need to be in place:

- For planning and monitoring purposes, school committees need to know how an effective school operates and how their school is functioning in relation to this ideal on various effectiveness indicators. Indicators include teacher attendance and lesson preparation, student attendance and attentiveness, hours of instruction given and coverage of the curriculum, and school performance on the latest standardized test. Effective school committees do not micromanage the school or step in where principals and teachers have professional authority.

- To provide transparent public information about the internal allocation of funds, school committees need to post the amount of money received and the way in which it was used in a public place, such as a school notice board. Doing so promotes accountability to the community.

- For the development of new competencies among head teachers and management committees (in school planning, financial management, negotiation and leaderships skills, and managing interpersonal interaction, for example), special training sessions need to be organized and training and guidance manuals provided.

- For improving school performance and accountability, supervision systems need to be strengthened. This occurs best within sound decentralization frameworks (box 6.5). Supervision should include periodic visits to schools and ongoing coaching from district or regional offices.

For the channeling of funds through the banking system, accounts in the name of the schools need to be opened and, if possible, banking fees waived or reduced—as they have been in Ghana and Kenya (World Bank and UNICEF 2009). This means that even private actors, such as banks, can be targeted in the communication campaigns and involved at certain stages in the implementation of school fee abolition–related policies. If bank accounts cannot be opened, transparent ways will have to be found to transfer cash.

3. Maintaining community engagement

Communities play an important role in promoting effective schools in terms of both learning outcomes and effective resource management.

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Box 6.5 Decentralization in education: International lessons learned

Several key lessons have been learned from experience around the world:

- Accountability is crucial for results.
- Assignment of function and responsibility must be clear and not overlapping.
- Parental participation and empowerment are essential to good governance.
- Well-trained principals are crucial for well-managed schools.
- Design of financial transfer determines equity and efficiency.
- Ministries of education must be reconstructed to support the decentralization process.

Source: Gershberg and Winkler 2004.

It is therefore very important that elimination of school fees not disengage communities' interest and willingness to support their local school. Because in many locations community mobilization was tied to the collection and spending of school fees, community disengagement has occurred in some locations where school fees were abolished. Fee abolition needs to be introduced in a way that retains or promotes community involvement in establishing, supporting, or overseeing school activities, so the school is seen as "our school" rather than "the government's school."

Strong local ownership requires action in a number of areas:

- Fee abolition needs to be communicated in a way that emphasizes the very important role communities and parents need to play in ensuring that their school benefits from this reform.
- Although the ideal is to eliminate all compulsory fees, this does not mean that parents and community members cannot make voluntary contributions to the school. Such contributions could be in the form of in-kind contributions (such as donated labor for school renovation, maintenance) or school feeding programs (box 6.6). Voluntary contributions not only reinforce the community's sense of ownership, they also provide sorely needed extra revenues for schools, which are often

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Box 6.6 Voluntary school contributions in Ethiopia and Mozambique

In Ethiopia schools cannot request fees in grades 1–10. "Free" education in this context does not mean that communities cannot voluntarily contribute labor, materials, or cash, however, which are often used to improve the quality of buildings, maintenance, and learning materials.

When fees were abolished in Mozambique, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance agreed that school fees should be abolished for grades 1–7 but that communities could make their own decisions about how to raise funds for schools as long as they would not lead to the exclusion or dropout of learners.

Source: World Bank and UNICEF 2009.

severely underfunded. Close monitoring is required to ensure that voluntary contributions do not become compulsory or a burden to those who cannot afford them but feel social pressure to contribute.

- In addition to allowing community financial contributions, it is important that governments increase parental awareness of other kinds of community involvement in school affairs (for example, assisting teachers, encouraging homework, attending or sponsoring special events). Such efforts can significantly enhance school effectiveness and learning outcomes. In many locations governments have promoted more community involvement by improving the relevance of the curriculum to community life or using local languages as the medium of instruction.

- Involving teachers, school heads, parents, the community, and even students in school improvement planning and management (for example, in the use of block grants or in school construction or renovation) is another way to ensure that the community contributes to improved educational outcomes. Structuring their regular involvement in school decision making will help make these groups feel empowered and engaged, with positive effects on learning outcomes (box 6.7).

Box 6.7 School-based management in El Salvador and Nicaragua

In El Salvador's Community-Managed School Program (EDUCO), all decisions—including the hiring, monitoring, and dismissing of teachers—are made by an autonomous community education association, which also manages school funds. Despite rapid expansion of EDUCO schools, educational quality was found to be comparable to that of traditional schools.

Nicaragua gives school-site councils—made up of teachers, students, and a voting majority of parents—authority to determine how 100 percent of the school's resources are allocated. These councils also hire and fire principals. Two evaluations find that decisions made at the school level contributed to higher test scores.

Source: King and Ozler 1998; Jimenez and Sawada 1999.

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4. Strengthening instructional management

Just as school fee abolition provides an opening for improvements and efficiencies in the provision of school resources (funds, infrastructure, trained teachers, and learning materials), it can also create an awareness of the need for improved instructional management. This is particularly important in new schools and in schools that find it difficult to cope with the influx of new students. At the school level, this generally requires two management improvements: enhancing the instructional management role and capacity of head teachers (principals) and strengthening school supervision.

Using head teachers as instructional managers

Effective schools are unlikely to develop unless head teachers are trained and ready to lead the instructional change process. This will require them to move beyond the traditional role of administrator to one in which they observe their teacher colleagues in action and engage them in a transformative process, improving the way in which they work with children (Verspoor 2004). Such a process also entails teachers' support of one another through exchanges and meetings at the school and school cluster level. In only a few countries are head teachers being effectively trained for this instructional management role (Verspoor singles out Kenya). Such training represents a modest expense given the transformations it could lead to.

Strengthening school supervision

Supervision of schools takes on new meaning when schools move from collecting their own fees to managing resources transferred from the government, often in the form of block grants. Rigorous supervision of schools and school committees will be needed to ensure that funds are used according to local plans and government regulations (accountability) and to assist school heads in supervising improvements in

instruction. This will be particularly challenging to governments, because the number and size of schools to be supervised, given enrollment surges, will likely increase.

School effectiveness research in the 1990s confirmed the importance of school supervision to the success of systemic change. A study of reforms in Bangladesh, Colombia, and Ethiopia includes among the characteristics of excellent schools frequent supervision by both inspectors and headmasters, providing both pressure and support (Heneveld and Craig 1996). During that decade, Ghana rose to the challenge by expanding not only the number of supervisors but also the average number of times a school was visited (from six in 1988 to nine in 2003) (World Bank IEG 2003). In contrast, in the Indian state of Rajasthan, primary education expansion occurred at a rapid rate with stimulus from the District Primary Education Project (including increases in the number of schools and teachers) but the number of school supervisors increased only modestly, increasing the workload of supervisors and decreasing the amount of professional support schools received (Clarke and Jha 2006). School system managers working on school fee abolition will need to ensure that the number of supervisors and visits, as well as supervisors' roles and capacities in instructional management, are increased commensurate with increases in enrollment and the number of schools and with the government's desire for quality improvement.

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Monitoring and Evaluation

The transformation of school governance and management occasioned by school fee abolition will need to be conscientiously monitored and evaluated. First on the M&E agenda should be the internal M&E tasks already noted—namely, the use of supervisors or other M&E specialists to ensure that new financing mechanisms are working properly and that

funds in expected amounts are arriving at schools in a timely manner and being used for their intended purposes. Periodically (for example, at the beginning and then every two to three years), it would be useful to validate the findings of this M&E through external reviews using the Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) methodology, with the results disclosed widely for public discourse. External evaluation should also be used to identify strengths and weaknesses in the new governance systems, including the mobilization of school management committees and their inclusiveness and effectiveness in planning school improvement and using school grants and the extent to which disadvantaged groups and families have become engaged in school affairs. Finally, careful M&E of school instructional management should be undertaken, covering both the school (in a variety of regions and economic strata) and school supervision systems.

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Appendix:
Combined Strategies to Reach
the Most Vulnerable

Background/Rationale

Even after school fees are abolished, the most vulnerable children still may not seek or be able to access good primary education. Living below the poverty level is a common denominator for these children, but poverty is often intertwined with other social and economic forms of exclusion, such as poor health, disability, loss of family support, child trafficking, dislocation brought by war or other social conflict, or coming from a low caste, marginalized social group, or linguistic minority. In most of these categories, being a girl is an additional disadvantage.

Free primary education is a necessary step for drawing vulnerable groups into the educational process, but it is often not sufficient. To reach many of these children, policy makers will need to combine school fee abolition with additional outreach strategies, many of which involve cooperation with government agencies outside the ministry of education and nongovernment partners (NGOs and international agencies).

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Identifying the Most Vulnerable Groups

Each country is unique in the kinds and sizes of highly vulnerable groups it finds within its borders. Countries that have prepared Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) will already have identified their own pockets of vulnerability and analyzed the particular constraints facing various vulnerable groups. Countries that have conducted household surveys will have identified where and why children are out of school. Any situation analysis undertaken as part of school fee abolition (see Step 2) will have analyzed data on out-of-school children to identify and describe highly vulnerable groups.

Some international resources are also available to assist planners in identifying and understanding highly vulnerable groups and developing appropriate intervention strategies. Such resources include the World Bank–sponsored Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Toolkit (info. worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/237764/toolkiten/index.htm),the Family Health International OVC Support Kit (www.ovcsupport.net), and the 2003 paper by the U.K. Working Group on Education and HIV/ AIDS entitled "Addressing the Educational Needs of Orphans and Vulnerable Children" (Boler and Carroll 2003).

Groups of highly vulnerable children include the following:

- *Children who need to work during school hours.* For families with incomes well below the poverty level, a child's earnings (however small) may be crucial for family survival. Their contribution may include in-kind contributions to family routines, such as gathering wood, fetching water, tending livestock, or minding younger siblings (tasks that invariably fall to girls), or paid work outside the home. Some working children— including children who live at their worksites or on the street, are trafficked or kept as bonded laborers, or work in the sex industry— may have no or only loose connections to their families. Sometimes

cropping systems will require children to miss crucial blocks of school time in order to help with planting or harvesting.

- *Children with chronic health problems or disabilities*. Children from low-income families often suffer from chronic untreated health problems, such as malnutrition, malaria, and worms, which hamper school attendance. They may suffer from physical disabilities, such as blindness, deafness, lack of mobility, or mental or emotional problems. Such disabilities are found at all income levels but are particularly disabling for children from low-income families, which lack the resources to deal with them and often hold fatalistic views of disabilities.
- *Nomads and other transients*. Some families do not have permanent residences but move from one area to another following herds, fisheries, or subsistence crops or markets. For children in such families, enrollment in conventional schools, even if cost free, is not feasible.
- *Children affected by HIV/AIDS*. Children whose parents (one or both) are HIV/AIDS positive are especially vulnerable. The death of a parent may lead to the child's living with other relatives; before death a child may have to provide care. Children affected by HIV/AIDS not only have reduced time for school and reduced parental support, they also have to deal with possible stigma and discrimination at school and severe mental/emotional stress.
- *Refugees and internally displaced children*. Families driven from their homes by war or other social conflicts—whose numbers are growing in all parts of the developing world—focus more on safety and basic survival than on services such as education. If they become refugees in neighboring countries, local schools may be closed to them, or their families may view the schools as inappropriate (because of language and cultural barriers, for example). Refugee camps may not have educational facilities; even where they do, providing education is difficult because of the uncertain tenure of the refugees' stay. Internally displaced children may also have difficulty being accepted in or fitting

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into local schools; resources to set up temporary schools are rarely available. Children who were enticed or forced into being child soldiers face particularly difficult reintegration issues.

- *Social and linguistic minorities*. Certain minorities may have problems seeking or gaining access to government schools even where there are no cost barriers. In some cases they live in remote, sparsely settled communities too small to merit conventional schools. In other cases they belong to low castes (untouchables) or use a language that is not recognized by the government (sometimes not even codified), creating a social barrier between the community and the metropolitan language school or poor student performance. Lack of participation in education for such groups or communities may be both a matter of supply (lack of facilities or barriers to entry) and demand (parents and children not motivated to use an institution perceived as alien or irrelevant to their lives).

Organizing Intervention Strategies

Once highly vulnerable groups have been identified, careful intersectoral intervention planning will be needed to determine how best to reach them. The following steps are useful in organizing intervention strategies.

Determining the scope of engagement

When planning strategies for extending educational opportunities to the most vulnerable it is important for government officials and their agency partners to determine the scope of engagement with the problem. Should the effort be a stand-alone campaign or built into other efforts, such as poverty reduction strategies, EFA programming, school fee abolition policies, or other initiatives, such as those in health or HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment? This *Operational Guide* presents reaching the most

vulnerable as a challenge connected to school fee abolition policies in the context of overall EFA and poverty reduction planning. As such, reaching the most vulnerable must involve officials and NGOs in the education sector as well as in other sectors, such as health, labor, social welfare, social protection, women's affairs, youth, finance, business, law enforcement, and urban/rural development. Under such an approach, planning partners (stakeholders) need to make sure that the most vulnerable are highly visible and a main focus of the intervention, not a marginal add-on.

Stakeholders' discussion of scope should also determine whether the intervention will provide only treatment for vulnerable children or prevention as well (that is, efforts to reduce the number of children falling into vulnerability). Prevention could be defined broadly as dealing with the roots of poverty or as narrowly as revising school curricula to include, for example, messages on HIV/AIDS prevention, health and nutrition, intergroup tolerance, and conflict prevention.

Analyzing the causes and consequences of different kinds of vulnerabilities

Each country (and region within countries) will encounter different mixes of extreme vulnerabilities within its borders. Once these vulnerabilities have been identified, it is important to determine their causes and consequences for primary education. Understanding the causes will assist policy makers and program managers in both creating appropriate outreach programs and working to prevent vulnerability in the future. Fully understanding the consequences of vulnerable children's lack of access to and poor performance in primary education will help further refine outreach programs. Analyzing the causes and consequences is generally best done through participatory processes that involve a full range of stakeholders in brainstorming activities. The results could be the kind of problem tree highlighted in *The OVC Toolkit for Sub-Saharan Africa* (box A.1).

Box A.1 Guidelines for creating a "problem tree" for highly vulnerable children

The following steps guide the participatory analysis of the causes and consequences of different kinds of vulnerabilities in order to develop effective outreach programs:

1. The priority problem is the trunk of the tree (in this case the vulnerability being analyzed is the trunk). The causes or factors that push children into this situation are the roots of the tree; the consequences or effects of this situation of child vulnerability are the branches.
2. Two or three main causes or factors that push children into a specific vulnerability category should be identified. When defining a cause, one should avoid using the phrase "lack of," which limits the types of solutions one will come up with. To get at these factors, one should ask the question "why?" Each answer to the question should be written on a card and pasted below the "priority problem." Only one cause or factor should be written per card. Work on the tree should continue until it has two or three levels of roots, as for each cause or factor there are other underlying indirect causes. It is important that one keeps asking "why" until the same factors start to be repeated. When this happens, the roots of the tree will have been identified.
3. The next step is to develop the branches of the tree. Each branch is an effect or consequence of belonging to a particular category. To identify the effects, the following question should be asked: "What consequences does this have on the child and on society?" A problem can have several different consequences, and each direct consequence or effect may have several indirect effects.
4. Once all groups have finished, each should present and explain its tree to the rest of the group.
5. In reviewing the work, one should make sure that all of the causes are appropriate answers to the question "why" and that all of the effects are answers to the question "what consequences does this have?" It is important that faulty logic be eliminated at this stage. It is also important to show that several of the problem trees share underlying root causes; therefore, investing in prevention for one group may benefit other groups.
6. At the end, any "causes" that are impossible to solve or factors that are impossible to prevent should be eliminated from each tree. These might include natural phenomena, such as hurricanes and other shocks.

Source: Based on World Bank 2005b.

Formulating additional intervention strategies

Once a group of stakeholders has identified the causes and educational consequences of prevalent vulnerabilities (for example, by brainstorming to create a problem tree), it can begin to identify additional solutions. Country and agency experiences in recent years of EFA strategizing have identified a number of educational interventions that may work in a wide variety of settings (table A.1).

In almost all cases, the best strategies will involve some form of inclusive education—that is, efforts to bring the most vulnerable into the mainstream of education instead of creating separate (but rarely equal) programs for them (Peters 2004). Three common strategies that complement school fee abolition well across a wide range of vulnerabilities are school feeding programs, conditional cash transfers, and alternative education programs. Details on these strategies are provided in the next section.

Identifying and co-opting partners

Strategies for reaching the most vulnerable children will require joint actions by many stakeholders. In part this is because of the complex nature of the vulnerabilities and their root causes and the fact that the costs of many needed actions go well beyond the funding capacity of any one agency, such as a ministry of education. As the various actors and stakeholders meet to plan interventions, they must also determine which agency will lead and finance which part of the plan. In addition, governments will need to draw NGOs, business sector partners, and external agencies into the mix. If this effort is part of a formal poverty reduction strategy, such joint planning may have already been done. If it is not, a new joint effort will be needed. Many parts of the plan can be supported by partners, such as those from government, the NGO community, and development agencies (box A.2, page 108).

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Table A.1 Educational consequences of and response options to children's vulnerabilities		
Vulnerable group	*Possible educational consequences*	*Education response options*
School-age children who need to work	• Nonenrollment or school dropout (for example, as a result of low motivation) • Fatigue during classes • Erratic school attendance • Low learning achievement	• Mount community campaigns encouraging enrollment of all children, at least through primary education. • Revise the curriculum, making it more relevant to the daily lives of children. • Promote flexible school hours for working children. • Adjust school vacation to harvest season in farming-intense areas. • Place early child development centers next to schools, and increase their hours to allow older children, who may have to take care of younger children, to attend school. • Provide families with conditional cash transfers. • Organize a food for education program. • Provide flexible alternative learning options (certified open learning or distance education). • Provide bridging programs to help older dropouts reenter school. • Link to broader poverty reduction strategies and the development of alternative livelihood programs.
Children with chronic health problems or disabilities	• Difficulty in entering classroom or hearing/seeing lessons • Frequent absenteeism or dropout • Low attention levels • Disruptive behavior • Stigmatization	• Include micronutrient supplementation in food for education programs. • Provide school-based health services, including deworming. • Test children for hearing, vision, and mental/emotional problems. • Make schools physically accessible. • Target children with disabilities in conditional cash transfer programs. • Integrate children with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classrooms, and train teachers in how to work with them. • Create social campaigns to destigmatize children with disabilities.
Children affected by HIV/AIDS	• Low expectations • Marginalization • Silence surrounding death in many countries, leading to emotional problems • Low motivation caused by depression and anxiety • Low prioritization of orphans' education in extended family • Lack of homework support or household encouragement of children	• Teach teachers and learners about HIV/AIDS to reduce stigma and anxiety. • Develop school-based psychosocial counseling services. • Strengthen links between schools and local health and counseling providers. • Include coping with death as part of school curriculum. • Create after school homework clubs or mentor schemes to support children lacking family support.

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Table A.1 (*continued*)		
Vulnerable group	*Possible educational consequences*	*Education response options*
		• Provide conditional cash transfers to foster parents or extended family of orphans. • Organize a food for education program.
Street children	• Little access to schooling • Nonenrollment or dropout • Problems with authority • Sometimes problems with health, substance abuse, gang/criminal involvement; victim of abuse	• Collaborate with NGOs in attempts to transition children back into mainstream schools. • Provide flexible alternative education options. • Organize food for education program.
Refugees or displaced children	• Denial of right to education • Trauma and fear of violence, which affect learning	• Prioritize provision of education in refugee camps and conflict zones. • Ensure that the venue of learning is secure and free of (removed from) conflict. • Provide flexible, alternative learning options. • Provide sensitivity training for educators on how to work with traumatized children.
Children from social or linguistic minorities	• Cultural alienation, which leads to low enrollment • Biased, discriminatory treatment • Low expectations • Poor learning outcomes (often because of poor understanding of language of instruction)	• Revise curriculum and train teachers to mitigate social and cultural biases. • Adopt bilingual education (starting with mother tongue). • Involve parents from all social strata in school management/support programs (school councils). • Sponsor fairs covering relevant cultures.

Source: Adapted from Boler and Carroll 2003; World Bank 2005b.

Common Intervention Strategies

Some interventions are being planned in many locations for a wide variety of vulnerabilities. A deeper discussion of four interventions is presented here.

Inclusive education

Inclusive education is not so much an intervention strategy as a principle to guide all strategies for reaching highly vulnerable children. One EFA discussion describes inclusive education as

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Box A.2 Cooperating to reach out-of-school children in Ethiopia and India

The Children in Local Development (CHILD) framework was created by Ethiopia's Ministry of Education and the UN World Food Programme to increase the impact and sustainability of the country's school feeding program. It is now implemented by a consortium of partners that includes UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme, the Ethiopian Environmental Protection Authority, Project Concern International, and the Nile Basic Protection Authority.

In difficult areas in India where no primary school exists, alternative and innovative education (AIE) learning centers are being set up for up to 25 children with just one local teacher. Primers in local tribal languages help children make the transition from home to school. Around 2.8 million children are estimated to have attended AIE centers in 2006. AIE includes flexible strategies such as *bhonga shalas* (schools in temporary huts) for children of brick kiln laborers in Maharashtra, *chalta phirta* (mobile) schools for Delhi's street children, tent schools in Kashmir, and boat schools for fishing communities in Andhra Pradesh. In Puducherry, an AIE center was established for 60 children of the nomadic Kuravar community. *Madrasas* and *maktabs* are fortified as AIE centers, with support for teaching various school subjects. When possible, AIE students are mainstreamed into regular schools.

Source: Mehrotra 2008; WFP 2006.

based on the principle that all children should have the opportunity to learn, and that children learn best when they learn together. Inclusive education programs equip ordinary schools to recognize and respond to the needs of diverse students, including those who have traditionally been excluded—both from access to school and from equal participation in school …. It focuses on individual strengths that children bring to school rather than their perceived deficits. (World Bank 2003a, p. 2)

Inclusive education is often associated with outreach to children with disabilities, providing a framework for mainstreaming them into regular classrooms. But the term is also used to cover mainstreaming of other vulnerable groups, such as street children, children affected by HIV/AIDS, working children, and children from sociolinguistic minorities. In most

cases mainstreaming requires certain accommodations to be made, such as making buildings accessible to all students, providing eyeglasses to children who need them, seating hearing-impaired children in front rows, adjusting schedules to the time demands and seasons of working children, revising curricula and learning materials to remove biases against children who were once excluded, and using some form of bilingual or multilingual education. Such accommodations also require training support to teachers, often accompanied by placement in the classroom of teachers' aides (paraprofessionals, parents, or other community members) (box A.3).

Some vulnerable children, such as street children and children with severe disabilities, present challenges that schools cannot address through low-cost accommodations. Special programs for them can still be connected to the mainstream school, for example, by linking the curriculum of out-of-school programs to that used in the mainstream or connecting nonformal education programs to the schools as satellites.

Food for education programs

The term *food for education* is used to describe the broad concept of providing food to encourage involvement and success in education. It includes widely used school feeding programs as well as feeding programs in nonformal education settings and food rations that children

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Box A.3 Inclusive education in Mozambique

The province of Maputo in Mozambique organized an inclusive education competition. Teachers were invited to submit case reports of strategies they used to identify and instruct students with special needs in their classrooms. A panel of education officials and teachers juried the reports. Awards for best case reports included bicycles, radios, and books on inclusive education. The second stage of the competition involved knowledge transfer to schools in Maputo and public education activities.

Source: Lehtomäki 2002.

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can take home. School and nonformal education systems that provide on-site meals have been successful in raising the participation of vulnerable children, as parents see it as a way to supplement their own efforts to feed their school-age children. Take-home rations can also contribute to the overall family food budget, offsetting, at least in part, the opportunity costs of sending children to school (WFP 2006).[7]

In addition to motivating parents to send their children to school, food for education programs help provide the nutrition and calories children need to stay alert and make educational progress (box A.4). Such programs are often accompanied by micronutrient supplementation (providing iron, vitamin A, and iodine, which many poor children lack) and deworming. In 2005, 74 countries sponsored food for education programs with the help of the UN World Food Programme and related agencies, reaching about 22 million children. Eighteen of these programs—including programs in Afghanistan, Arab Republic of Egypt, Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Tajikistan, Uganda, and Zambia—provided both in-school feeding and take-home rations, which research has shown improves sustainability (WFP 2006). An undetermined but growing number of countries provide

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Box A.4 Food for education in Malawi

Enrollment at Sharpe Vale Primary School in Malawi almost doubled, to 2,600, since the introduction of school feeding early in the current decade. One of the school's brightest students, Allinnah Gumboh, who lost both of her parents, graduated in 2005 with the expectation of continuing to secondary school. Like everyone in the school she received a daily plate of porridge supplemented with vegetables, fruits, and ground nuts, as well as a take-home ration at the end of the month. Allinnah was not aware that the food was financed by the UN World Food Programme, but she knew that it helped her concentrate in class.

Source: WFP 2006.

food for education programs without support from the World Food Programme, including at least 30 countries that have "graduated" from such support. School feeding programs usually also rely on the involvement of parents and community members—often through school committees—who organize the meals and cook and serve the food.

NGOs active in such programs have identified several general lessons, such as the following:

- The timing of school-based feeding is important (usually best early in the day).
- The food should meet the nutritional needs, tastes, and customs of the children served.
- Attention must be paid to the sustainability of programs (joint programs by government and NGOs are usually optimal).
- Stigmatization must be avoided (recipients should not be singled out).
- Food should be sourced locally, in order to bolster the local economy and minimize transportation costs (Boler and Carroll 2003).

Conditional cash transfers

Many countries have reached out to highly vulnerable children through the use of conditional cash transfers—cash transferred directly to poor families on the condition that they send their children to school regularly. The design of such a program assumes that schools of adequate quality are available to the target groups and that it is the family's demand (motivation or inability for forgo the child's income) that is the constraining factor.

Conditional cash transfers for education were pioneered in Latin America in middle-income countries. Examples include the Oportunidade (formerly Progresa) program in Mexico and the Bolsa Escola program in Brazil (box A.5). Both programs were rigorously evaluated and found to have strong positive effects on school attendance among the very poor (De Janvry, Finan, and Sadoulet 2006; Skoufias 2007). The impact of

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Box A.5 Brazil's Bolsa Escola: Keeping vulnerable children in school

By 1999 Brazil's net enrollment rate for primary education was about 96 percent, but the country had one of the highest dropout rates in Latin America, especially among low-income students. Based on successful small-scale programs at the municipal level, in 2001 it established a national *Bolsa Escola* program, which involved monthly payments to low-income households with children 6–15 enrolled in grades 1–8 on condition that they had at least 85 percent attendance. Funds were transferred directly to students' mothers through bank accounts.

Coordinated by the Ministry of Education and funded by local domestic resources, the program eventually sought and received international funding support from the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank. The program has been credited with increasing student completion rates. Since 2003 the program has been replaced by a more comprehensive program of transfers covering a full range of family needs among the most vulnerable (Bolsa Familia), a program that now benefits about 8 million households.

Source: De Janvry and others 2005.

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such programs has not been as clearly established in low-income countries, although they are being used in several such countries, including Cambodia and Mozambique.[8]

A crucial feature of such programs is that they target transfers to the neediest recipients. This requires up-to-date data on family income and a child's vulnerability status, as well as careful tracking of both disbursements and school attendance. Because of the high cost of administering such programs, some analysts have suggested targeting entire low-income groups or communities rather than individual families (Kakwani, Soares, and Son 2005). Care must also be taken that such transfers not be used by corrupt managers as vote buying instruments or for other forms of personal gain.

Alternative education programs

A binding constraint for some highly vulnerable children is that they cannot make it to the conventional school, for a variety of reasons. In

some cases it is the remoteness of their home, in others it is the shifting nature of their residence or the fact that they live on the streets or at a workplace or far exceed the regular school age. For such groups governments have often designed alternative education programs, with flexible locations, times for learning, educational delivery systems, and (within limits) modified curricula (alternative programs should still cover basic curricular material). The principle of inclusive education still pertains to such programs but in a modified way: participants should receive at least the same educational status and basic knowledge and skills as students in conventional schools, allowing them to reenter the educational mainstream if they so choose.

Some examples of alternative education programs include the following:

- Nonformal education equivalency courses offered by school systems or NGOs at official, accredited learning centers with flexible hours (box A.6)
- Education "guarantee schemes" (like the one in India), in which a community with a minimum number of learners, a site, and teacher candidates can receive government educational support covering books, teacher salary and training, and government supervision (Clarke 2003)

Box A.6 Providing basic education to hard-to-reach urban children in Bangladesh

A large-scale alternative education effort in Bangladesh is based on an "earn and learn" strategy. The program—which includes 150 NGOs and covers 351,000 working children—offers a two-year bridging course to working children, at the end of which they receive an equivalency of grade 3 and can be admitted to mainstream education. The course runs two hours a day, six days a week. Timing is flexible, so that children are also able to continue working.

Source: Rosati and Lyon 2006.

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- Itinerant teacher or mobile schooling programs, in which teachers go to children's homes or encampments
- Open or distance education programs, in which students work through individual or group printed or electronic instructional materials, making progress on the basis of the number of modules covered
- Residential bridging programs through which youth (dropouts or non-enrollees) go to residential centers or encampments where they take intensive, condensed courses geared to their level of attainment, allowing them to enter or reenter schooling at a higher, age-appropriate level
- Nonresidential bridging programs, which provide the same services at nonresidential locations
- Parent-child courses, in which parents and children go through basic education programs (literacy, numeracy, life skills) at the same time
- Mentor programs, such as that used in Cambodia (box A.7).

Potential pitfalls of such programs can be avoided by careful planning and good M&E. They include the likelihood that former dropouts may be prone to dropping out and need strong support (one way to provide such support would be to accompany such programs with feeding programs, as India does); the fact that programs may suffer from poor quality, given that teachers and tutors are often not well trained or are poorly motivated; and the fact that labor markets may not recognize credentials from such programs as equivalent to those from conventional schools.

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Box A.7 Cambodia's mentor program

Cambodia's mentor program reintegrates Phnom Penh street children into formal schools through the help of mentors. Following a brief training period, locally recruited mentors monitor and provide remedial support within the classroom to mainstreamed children during their first year in school. A similar program in Rangpur, Bangladesh, has helped ease the burden on teachers.

Source: Rosati and Lyon 2006.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Because the highly vulnerable are so hard to reach—and outreach programs for them are innovative, experimental, and risky—it is essential that they be carefully monitored and evaluated. M&E should at least cover the extent to which the identified target groups are being reached by the program (levels of participation) and whether program objectives are being reached. M&E will also be needed to determine whether funds are being used appropriately and efficiently (and not diverted to unauthorized ends).

An essential initial part of any M&E effort is the creation of a design, including the specification of objectives, indicators, and data collection and analysis procedures. Given the need to mobilize stakeholders and communities in support of the interventions, it would be advisable to use participatory processes to create the design and implement the evaluation. Doing so may increase stakeholder buy-in to the intervention.

Once the objectives and indicators have been decided on, the next step is to collect baseline data, which provide a portrait of the target groups and services before the beginning of the project. Typically, an evaluation design includes background information on target groups (much of which will already have been collected in exploratory phases or the situation analysis) as well as the current educational status of the children in the groups (whether they have ever attended school, the grade level reached, reasons for dropping out, achievement levels). Some basic background data should also be collected about the social and economic conditions of the children's environment, to be used to identify possible mediating circumstances or competing explanations for intervention effects. Some ideas on M&E design and the kinds of indicators and background data to be included can be found in *A Guide to Monitoring and Evaluation of the National Response for Children Orphaned and Made Vulnerable by HIV/AIDS,* developed by UNICEF and its partners (UNICEF 2005).

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Once the baseline data have been collected and analyzed and the interventions launched, routine systems for collecting project implementation data (inputs, processes, and outputs) will need to be identified (if they already exist) or created. It will also be important to undertake periodic surveys and observations of programs and their participants, tasks that generally can use participatory processes, including reports from participants themselves. This information can be used to monitor whether the programs are on track or are experiencing implementation difficulties (which subsequently can be rectified).

Program evaluation comes in when intermediate and final outcomes are collected and compared with baseline levels. A determination of project impact can be made if data have also been collected for a control group. Comparing outcomes for test and control groups would also allow policy makers to determine whether or not the demonstrated outcomes would have occurred in the absence of the intervention.

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Notes

1. See World Bank Web site at: http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/ EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTEDUCATION/0,,contentMDK:21056 301~menuPK:282429~pagePK:64020865~piPK:149114~theSiteP K:282386,00.html.

2. In recent years most developing countries have produced, through participatory processes, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), which have been used as a condition for receiving financial support from the IMF, the World Bank, and the EFA/FTI. Given that school fee abolition is pro-poor, it could be expected to have a prominent place in the education section of these papers.

3. See http://www.worldbank.org/nigeria.

4. According to UNESCO (2007), in 2005 official development assistance commitments to education fell about $2 billion and commitments to basic education fell about $1.4 billion from commitments the previous year, bringing them back to 2002 levels.

5. Multishifting is also used to deal with a shortage of classroom space. In this case each shift is full time and has its own teacher (see the discussion below on buildings).

6. According to the FTI Annual Report for 2007, the seven FTI countries showing the most progress in increasing primary completion

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rates were also successful in reducing repetition rates by an average of 43 percent—three times faster than the average reduction rate for other FTI countries.

7. When such a transfer of goods to the family is made conditional on school attendance (as it is in Bangladesh), this program becomes much like a conditional cash transfer.

8. Attanasio and others (2005) provide the following (incomplete) list of countries implementing conditional cash transfers to promote health and education: Brazil, Colombia, Honduras, Mexico, Mozambique, Nicaragua, and Turkey.

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