

The Basic Education in Africa Programme (BEAP)

A policy Paper – Responding to demands for access, quality, relevance and equity



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Foreword

Since the 1990s, education stakeholders have been increasingly asking questions about the direction of basic education development in Africa, within the framework of various international policy statements and agendas for action. It is well known that, thanks to international joint efforts, access to primary education has dramatically increased in the region; though many still drop out and the quality of basic education remains poor. Education initiatives over the last 20 years at least have seen education offered in a truncated manner and with an emphasis on primary education only. Today, the number and the profile of students completing primary education are changing, which puts the present type of basic (ECCE, primary and post-primary) education under enormous pressure to change. In order to adapt to the dramatic increase in access at primary levels, more fundamental issues need to be addressed, especially those related to addressing basic education as a whole, including early childhood education and the former lower secondary education, as well as preparing the youth for life and the world of work.

The Basic Education in Africa Programme (BEAP) is based on an in-depth knowledge of the background of education in Africa including the failure of African education systems to shake off the shackles of inherited systems. BEAP is an example of the close collaboration between UNESCO BREDa, UNESCO IBE and other partners since 2006, within the shared and determined pursuit of quality, equity and inclusion in education. Today, BEAP is referred to as one of the main lines of action in Africa, under UNESCO's Major Programme I for the biennium starting in 2010 (35 C/5). After successful policy dialogue and BEAP

launches carried out in the pilot countries – The Gambia, Ethiopia, Cote d'Ivoire and Tanzania –, we believe there is a need for sharing our convictions, as well as updated information on the remarkable advancements, in both theoretical and practical terms, that have been made since the inception of the BEAP.

In this sense, the Policy Document can be seen as a milestone of the BEAP. Through it, we aim to present, among other aspects, BEAP's origin, objectives, philosophical foundations, working modalities, as well as the comprehensive range of components it has been conceived to cover: curriculum development (including teaching-learning materials, methods, assessment and certification), teacher education, whole school development, systemic change as well as linkages with sectors other than education. The introduction of entrepreneurship education is seen as a major milestone to reform education systems in order to improve relevance to better prepare young people for life and work.

While confirming our long-term commitment to the BEAP and to the development of basic education in Africa in a broader perspective, we warmly welcome new partners to join us in this endeavour. This will greatly contribute to maximizing the impacts of various initiatives aimed at moving the basic education agenda forward in the region.

We would like to acknowledge the concrete and regular support that the GTZ/BMZ has so far provided to the Programme's activities and we look forward to further developing this collaboration.



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As principal officers in charge of coordinating BEAP's development and implementation, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the ADG/Education and to both BREDA and IBE Directors, for their strong conviction and guidance in the Programme's advancement.

On one hand, BEAP has been benefiting from a shared vision with ADEA on basic education, especially on post-primary education; on the other, the Programme's take-off would never have been possible in the absence of African countries' determination to improve the education of their young generations. Thus, we would like to thank ADEA for its effort and expertise, as well as the innumerable officials of ministries of education and UNESCO National Commissions who have contributed to BEAP's setting up in their countries.

We are also grateful to Wim Hoppers, for his analytical and rigorous insight while drafting this Policy Document, taking into account the huge amount of relevant documentation that has so far been produced within BEAP's activities.

BEAP owns its current achievements to the activism of our numerous colleagues who have played an important role in both technical and operational terms, in particular: Wahab A. Coulibaly (UNESCO Accra), Lili Ji (IBE), Fatoumata Marega (BRED A), Paul Mpayimana (UNESCO Addis Ababa), Florence Elva Ssereo (UNESCO Dar es Salaam) and Philip Stabback (consultant).

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Executive Summary

Origin and purpose

- The BEAP is a UNESCO-backed African programme that seeks to support a holistic and comprehensive reform of basic education in the spirit of EFA. It provides a framework for curriculum renewal linked to a variety of complementary initiatives, which together may assist towards improving quality, relevance and equity in education. By so doing it helps to increase the responsiveness of education to the expectations and needs of learners and society, and thus contributes significantly to achieving the goals of EFA and of national development.
- The BEAP has been elaborated by UNESCO as an integrated instrument to implement the goals of the Kigali Call for Action (Sept. 2007) within the context of the AU Second Decade of Education for Africa (Sept. 2006), taking also into account the outcomes of other regional meetings, in particular the ADEA Biennale at Maputo (May 2008). The programme is coordinated by BREDA and IBE, with support of Cluster and National Offices in Africa, and the engagement of multiple partners.
- The Kigali regional meeting, considering the state of basic education in Africa, concluded that current efforts towards expansion and improvement needed to be placed within a wider frame of comprehensive reform, based on the principles of social justice, equity and social inclusion, and focussing on three major thrusts:
 - (a) The extension of quality basic (primary) education to a minimum of 9-10 years duration, thus including lower secondary education
 - (b) The viewing of this cycle in a holistic perspective, ensuring that it is inclusive, coherent and seamless
 - (c) The development of a skills- and competency-based integrated curriculum framework relevant to the expectations and needs of all children and youth in Africa as a basis for lifelong learning.
- It is the aim of BEAP to provide clear guidance and ongoing support to countries wishing to move into this direction, adapting such support to already ongoing work in countries themselves. Specifically, the BEAP assists: to improve the existing curriculum, covering a longer cycle and a wider range of learning outcomes; to develop meaningful articulation between basic education and the world of work, as well as further education and training; to supplement in-country human resources, by providing technical assistance and capacity development; to review supplementary components of basic education, such as diversification of provisions and school models so as to enhance inclusive participation in education; and to encourage sharing of expertise and south-south cooperation.
- The BEAP comes at a time of increased Africa-wide concerns about the inability of education systems inherited from the colonial powers to meet the serious challenges that have emerged from rapid socio-economic changes on the continent. These – like increased poverty, inequalities, global competition, migration and conflict – have demonstrated the need for education to become much more inclusive, more responsive, and more directly related to individual needs and circumstances, and the current expectations and demands of society and economy.

What the BEAP is all about

- The expansion of basic education requires an effort to re-conceptualise lower secondary education and other skill-oriented post-primary programmes, building upon a reformed, higher quality and more equitable and inclusive basic education at primary and early childhood education level. It also challenges governments to utilise, democratise and improve all existing learning opportunities, including those run by communities, civil society and private sector, whether they are school-based or work-based.

- At the same time the expansion provides the challenge of comprehensive curriculum reform so as to align curriculum structure, content, pedagogy and assessment to the re-defined objectives of basic education and the changing profile of learners. The emphasis would lie on the achievement of a range of relevant learning outcomes that would prepare all learners for life, for citizenship, for work and for continued learning, regardless of mode of provision.
- Thus the key principles of the BEAP are: the 'right-to-education' (including the right to complete the entire cycle); lifelong and life-wide learning; inclusive education; the centrality of quality and relevance; an emphasis on skills and competencies as learning processes and outcomes; the democratisation of access and participation in education, as well as of participation in decision-making; taking a holistic approach to basic education development; and the importance of 'equitable diversity'. Here, entrepreneurship education and its various modes of delivery (right from early childhood) to prepare young people for life and work are being conceived as an overarching approach to foster those principles throughout all levels of education systems. These together facilitate an integrated approach to the achievement of all EFA goals.
- While the BEAP recognises that curriculum (along with its assessment) is the heart of basic education reform and that thus its review will constitute the core of its work, there is a range of other components of basic education which may well need adaptation in order to ensure its success. These include teacher education reform, attention to learner support materials and ICT, the move towards diversified modes of provision, whole school improvement, issues of governance and management, the linkages with community and labour market, and inter-sectoral collaboration at national and local levels.

How the BEAP can work in countries

- As a programme of support the BEAP, on the one hand, wants to be sensitive to the national context within which the joint stakeholders are already implementing significant sector plans, while, on the other hand, it also wishes to be effective in filling the gaps and making the connections in such a way that the core dimensions of the new vision – access, quality with relevance, and equity – receive optimal attention.
 - For these reasons essential operational principles have been identified, including:
 - The urgency with which essential reforms need to be tackled
 - That the BEAP is fundamentally country-led
 - The importance of participating countries sharing the underlying vision of basic education reform
 - The need for coordination, efficiency and focus on country needs and priorities
 - The link between BEAP initiatives and existing initiatives and sector plans
 - The attention to feasibility and sustainability
 - The use of appropriate methodologies like sensitisation, dialogue and facilitation
 - The provision of targeted, collegial and culturally-sensitive technical support
 - The centrality of capacity development linked to technical development work in core dimensions of basic education
 - The adherence to inclusive participation and the formation of partnerships
 - The value of inter-country and south-south collaboration.
- Although it is important for the BEAP's work to be consistent with existing national policies, it may well be that the move towards an inclusive and holistic approach to basic education development, with emphasis on the principles of quality and equity, may require more specific policy guidelines to be elaborated in selected areas. Examples include ensuring full participation by disadvantaged and vulnerable children, the promotion of effective horizontal and vertical transfers between one mode of provision and another, and the effective functioning of a system of national assessment of learning outcomes.



- As part of the BEAP a series of possible steps has been devised, that leave adequate space for a logical sequence of activities, from preparatory work to monitoring and evaluation. In each type of activity BEAP can provide assistance through consultations, technical support, exchanges and ongoing on-line communication. All this offers a menu from which a tailor-made programme can be designed and implemented, in accordance with country needs. Finding appropriate mechanisms that reflect country ownership is an essential condition to make this work.
- Additional enabling conditions for such integrated basic education reform to take place are the review of roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders in this process – notably the state and non-government partners, and the forging of new and workable partnerships, including public-private partnerships. Such types of cooperation can not only bring in additional expertise and capacity, but also mobilise supplementary funding. A major requirement remains the willingness to think differently and try out novel solutions. In turn, this will depend much on the quality of overall political leadership provided to give direction to the reform process, as well as the trust in the senior professional cadre of the country.

Challenges for countries through BEAP

- In each of the key components of basic education reform that may receive attention in countries, there are strategic challenges that need much thought and action in order for reform goals to be achieved in a coherent manner. These include:
 - In the area of curriculum development: to develop an integrated framework, with clear learning outcomes, norms and standards, that can adequately inform syllabus construction – valid across different modes of provision and with common methods of assessment.
 - Also in the area of curriculum development: to move from a knowledge-based approach to learning towards a competency-based approach, focussing on a range of core competencies for all learners completing expanded basic education.
 - In the area of assessment: the construction of a learning assessment system that can effectively be used as a formative basis for enhancing students' learning as well as for making decisions regarding career prospects and entry into options for post-basic education and training.

- In teacher education: to develop an integrated frame for recruiting, training, deploying, promoting and remunerating new teachers as well as re-training and providing incentives to existing teachers in a manner that makes the most efficient usage of human resources.
- In learner support materials: to reduce reliance on single textbooks and to devise ways to produce and utilise materials economically, leaving much scope for revision, adaptation and replacement, and for teacher self-reliance.
- In diversifying modes of provision: to recognise and promote equitable diversity in modes of provision while utilising key instruments (curriculum framework, quality norms & standards, common assessment, qualification frameworks) to maintain the integrity of the system
- In whole school improvement: to develop sets of indicators that reflect agreed upon norms of 'good education' but have also been shown to be associated with effective processes of learning and with learning achievement.
- In governance and management: to review roles and responsibilities and develop modalities for meaningful partnerships that contribute to basic education development, with special attention to quality and equity.
- In linkages with community and labour market: to develop creative ways to link quality learning with the changing socio-economic environment.
- In developing entrepreneurship education as an overarching principle: integrate entrepreneurship education in curricula, syllabi and teacher education, but also into national movements.
- In inter-sectoral collaboration: to develop effective mechanisms for cooperation at national and local levels.

How far the BEAP has come

- During the present pilot phase, countries across the region have been keen to become involved with the programme. With the assistance of UNESCO, several countries have taken initial steps towards reviewing the state of basic education and planning BEAP sponsored activities, particularly in the area of curriculum development and capacity development.
- While such valuable steps are being taken, showing that the approach taken by the BEAP is yielding results, lessons are being learned and fresh challenges are emerging. The latter mostly concern how to change attitudes and to lay a sound operational basis, coupled with ongoing reflection, for effective country-led action to unfold.
- Efforts to cost out the implications of the implementation of the BEAP and demonstrate the social and economic sustainability of the Programme for the development of the country are ongoing. Thus far, in many countries (such as those participating in the Fast Track Initiative) costings of basic education expansion have been limited to working out the financial feasibility of universalising primary education and of the progression of successful graduates to higher levels. In these exercises there has been no serious thinking about the necessity of extending basic education to 9-10 years. The ADEA Biennale in Maputo in 2008 made it clear that, eight years after the Dakar Framework, countries need to provide a different basic education (not just an extension of primary education) and to develop strategies for achieving this.

1 Origin and purpose of the BEAP

What is the Basic Education in Africa Programme (BEAP)?

The BEAP is a UNESCO-backed African programme that seeks to support a holistic and comprehensive reform of basic education. It provides a framework for curriculum renewal linked to comprehensive approaches in basic education reform, which together may assist towards improving quality, relevance and equity in education. By so doing, it helps to increase the responsiveness of education to the expectations and diverse needs of learners and society, and thus contribute significantly to achieving the goals of EFA and of national development.

The BEAP has been conceived by UNESCO as an integrated instrument to implement the goals of the AU Second Decade of Education for Africa (Sept. 2006), the Kigali Call for Action (Sept. 2007) and the outcomes of the ADEA Biennale at Maputo (May 2008), with the assistance of development partners.

1.1 Background

The BEAP finds its origin in a number of meetings, which took place under the auspices of international organisations in Africa, focused on improving strategies to achieve Education for All (EFA) and on reviewing the content and scope of EFA as this was being implemented. It also relates to the widely felt need to adopt a more holistic perspective on educational development, to move beyond the expansion of primary education towards addressing the need for post-primary education, and to promote a closer integration between general and vocational education.

The principal meetings included Regional Seminars on Reforming Secondary Education in Africa (Addis Ababa, November 2005 organised by UNESCO's Regional Office for Education in Africa (BREDA), and Accra, April 2007 organised by the World Bank), the Regional Workshop on Extending Basic Education in Africa held in Kigali in September 2007 and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) Biennale on Post-Primary Education held in Maputo in May 2008. All of these addressed issues are related to improved access, quality and equity, and would affect the further development of basic education in Africa.

For UNESCO, the BEAP reflects its commitment for the coming years to give priority to Africa, as most of the countries at risk of not meeting the EFA goals by 2015 are on this continent. Under UNESCO's Major Programme I for the biennium starting in 2010, activities in this region will receive extra funding for basic education, while the work of UNESCO Education Institutes and Centres¹ will also contribute explicitly to EFA goals. A major focus of UNESCO in Africa is on the strengthening of national capacities to plan, implement and manage basic education. This will be executed in line with the Kigali Call for Action, which initiated the BEAP.

The Kigali Call for Action is an action plan that resulted from a high-level UNESCO Regional Seminar on basic education held in Kigali in September 2007. This seminar looked especially at the concerted and commendable efforts of African countries to achieve EFA targets and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The ministry of education (MoE) and agency participants came to the conclusion that a thorough, sector-wide reform of basic education in African countries is essential to reach these goals. It found that there is a need for:

A new vision:

a democratised vision for basic education based on the principles of social justice, equity and social inclusion; one which provides an ample range of learning opportunities and outcomes for a broader range of students, and one which enhances the capacities of all students to contribute to stable, peaceful, equitable and prosperous societies.

According to the Kigali participants the sector-wide reform should consist of:

- (a) The extension of basic (primary) education to a minimum of 9-10 years duration, thus including lower secondary education (LSE).
- (b) The viewing of this cycle in a holistic perspective, ensuring that it is inclusive, coherent and seamless.
- (c) The development of a skills- and competency-based curriculum framework relevant to the needs of children and youth in Africa as a basis for lifelong learning.

In order for EFA and MDG goals to be achieved it was considered essential that these reforms will be introduced and that clear overall policies and national plans will be developed towards their implementation, along with strategies for the effective mobilisation of financial partners.

The above is based on the realisation that without a more fundamental and comprehensive reform of the outcomes, content, pedagogical approach and structure of basic education, EFA and MDGs cannot meaningfully be achieved and the 'expanded vision' of Jomtien remains a distant dream. Moreover, only by changing the actual paradigm of basic education, making substantive progress towards quality and equity, can a sound foundation emerge upon which a sustainable and successful further development of Upper Secondary Education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Higher Education can be built.

The BEAP was initiated by the Kigali process in order to give clear guidance and support to countries wishing to move further in this direction. The commitment to EFA and the MDGs by most African countries and the many reform efforts that were already ongoing have given great urgency to a programme like BEAP in order to provide a more comprehensive and targeted frame for supporting processes of educational change.

The intentions in Kigali were fully endorsed by the debates and outcomes of the Maputo Biennale of ADEA (May 2008). The latter concluded that comprehensive development of the whole architecture of post-primary education is highly desirable, and should be linked to an expanded vision of basic education as a whole.

1.2 Rationale and objectives

The immediate rationale for establishing the BEAP has been that many countries needed assistance in working out a comprehensive approach to basic education reform, with a view to:

- operationalise the vision and principles underlying a new approach, represented by the Kigali and Maputo agendas, into a plan of action;
- handle the complexities of developing a new and integrated curriculum framework that was more than just a set of syllabi (the classical study programmes) and that focused consistently on relevant learning processes and outcomes;
- develop workable strategies to ensure that an inclusive basic education is equitable enabling the entire age-group to succeed;
- include entrepreneurship education as an overarching strategy to prepare young people for life and work in education systems;
- making the connection with a variety of professional support services necessary to enable the quality of teaching and learning to be dramatically improved;
- match the proposals for comprehensive support to basic education development with the sector plans and strategies that had already been agreed upon between the partners;
- and, simultaneously, develop the overall capacity in the ministry of education and among the other principal stakeholders for leading, managing and implementing this agenda.

It had also become evident that many countries had difficulties in harmonising different international agendas to which they had subscribed – such as EFA, MDGs, post-primary education development, the African Union Decade of Education for Africa targets – and incorporating these in a coherent, unified and balanced agenda that could serve national development purposes.

A major challenge that had always been a problematic part of national EFA implementation plans concerned the inter-relationships between the different EFA goals and the question of how potential synergies could be capitalised upon as part of the sector plans. In this context, partners in various countries had become worried about apparent reduction in the attention given to the different components of their national education agendas - such as to skills development and adult literacy. Thus, there have been voices to adjust national targets where this seemed to be necessary in relation to the resource base and national socio-economic priorities.

External facilitation and support, focused on building a comprehensive perspective of country educational development needs, could help in enhancing national dialogue, re-arranging priorities, creating synergies, and strengthening national capabilities in moving the entire process forward.

In this light, the objectives of the BEAP, as a UNESCO sponsored programme of capacity development and assistance, have been constructed as follows:

Objectives of the BEAP

- (1) Assist countries in working towards comprehensive reform of Basic Education, building upon existing plans and initiatives, and utilising available resources.
- (2) Help countries to develop effective, context-related approaches to dramatically improve participation, quality, relevance and equity in basic education.
- (3) Support the improvement of existing curriculum for Basic Education in partner countries by:
 - i. extending and democratising basic education to a minimum of nine to ten years with emphasis on a 1 or 2 years of childhood education (i.e pre-school or kindergarten)
 - ii. ensuring an appropriate balance and relevance of learning outcomes including knowledge, skills, competencies, values and attitudes in the basic education curricula
- (4) Incorporate within the curriculum design up-dated curriculum-related initiatives and research – for example, on entrepreneurship education, enhancing learning, life competencies, maths, science and education, as well as career guidance.
- (5) Assist in developing meaningful articulation of basic education with demands of the world of work and socio-economic needs, as well as with post-basic levels of further education and training
- (6) Supplement and coordinate existing in-country resources and initiatives so that the improvements and priorities identified by countries can be addressed
- (7) Build in-country capacity in curriculum design, development, implementation and evaluation, teacher training, assessment and certification systems
- (8) Support the design and promotion of diversified school models and learning contexts so as to enhance inclusive education and learner-centred pedagogies
- (9) Support country teams in assessing the funding implications of implementing improvements to Basic Education provision
- (10) Help ensure sustainability and implementation of outcomes of curriculum and related reforms
- (11) Encourage South-South and North-South cooperation and sharing of available expertise
- (12) Ensure a proper ownership at national level of the BEAP

At the country level, the BEAP programme involves all partners who have a stake in educational development, including the ministry of education, civil society/NGOs, private sector organisations (such as business structures, unions, education services providers), universities and centres of expertise, local authorities, and international technical and financial partners.

UNESCO, through its regional office in Dakar (BREDA), is involved as facilitator and source of external expertise. BREDA collaborates for expertise in specific areas with the German (GTZ on behalf of BMZ) Sector project on Post-primary education.

In the first instance, the BEAP has been conceived as a programme to be piloted in at least three countries, using UNESCO/BREDA resources. Feedback from these countries will enable the programme to be modified and to be taken to scale, involving not only many more countries but also more international agencies

in a collective endeavour. Presently, the BEAP is being implemented in The Gambia, Ethiopia, and Cote d'Ivoire.

1.3 Educational and socio-economic context

The wider significance of a programme like the BEAP lies in the fundamental difficulties with quality and equity which education in Africa has been facing for a long time. These have come out very sharply in the drive towards universal primary education in the period since Jomtien. This movement has revealed the out-datedness of exclusivist, elitist, teacher- and exam-oriented education systems inherited from colonial masters, and their inappropriateness in serving the needs of entire age-groups in open and democratising societies.

The ills of education that have come to be regarded as highly problematic are:

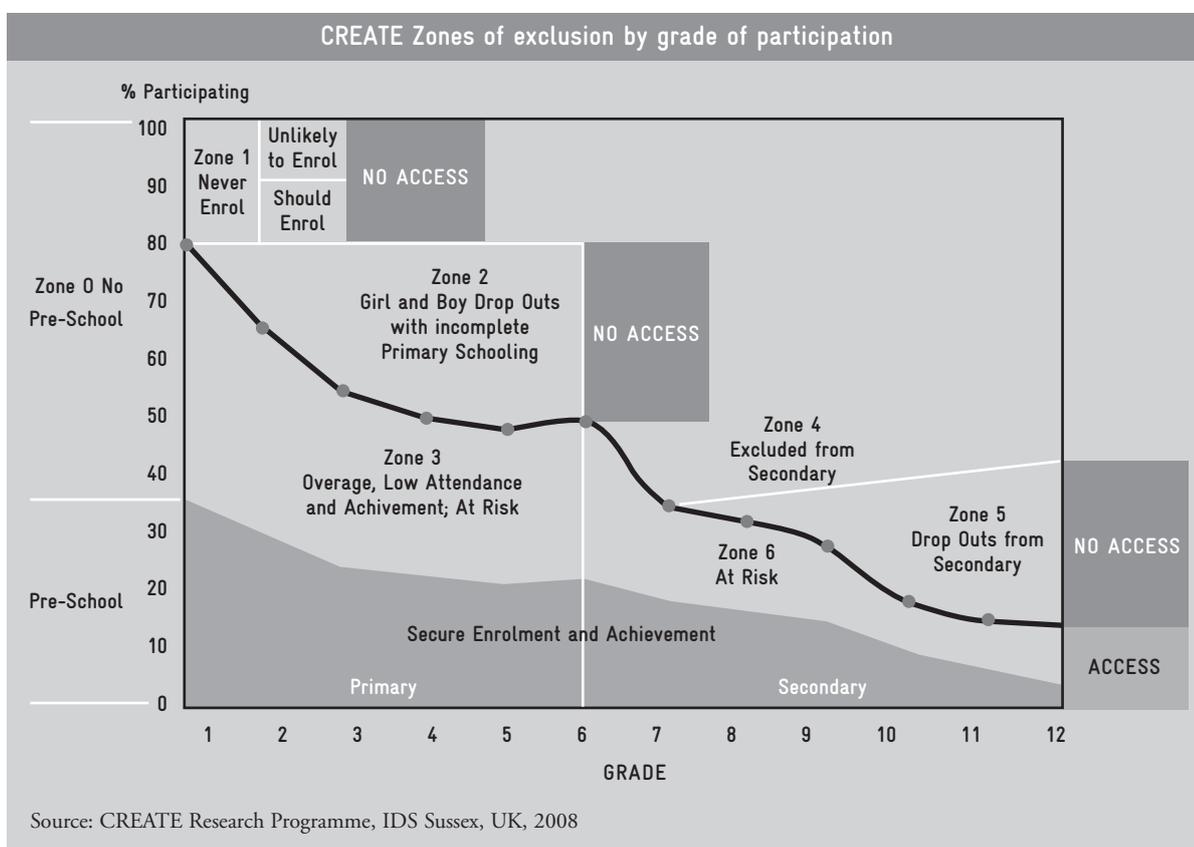
Continuing problems of education

- The fragmentation of education systems, both vertically and horizontally, with very poor articulation between the different components
- The highly academic nature of formal education and the perceived lack of relevance of much of its content
- The sharp divisions between 'general' and 'vocational' education
- The nationally prescribed curriculum as 'content to be taught', leaving little scope for contextualisation and adaptation of learning
- The continued dominance of traditional teacher-centred pedagogical practices
- The continued rigidity and exclusionary nature of formal education, with little attention to practices that retain learners in school
- The emphasis on the 'regular' school as the single acceptable mode of education delivery, preventing many children from enrolling or continuing
- The emphasis on 'quality' as inputs of teachers, materials and physical infrastructure, to the detriment of 'quality' as process of teaching and learning, and of learning achievement
- The generally poor level of quality of process and outcomes, which has accompanied rapid school expansion, contributing to many young people leaving prematurely
- The fragmentation of the teaching profession, and the poor status and remuneration of teachers

Problems of quality and equity are still much reflected in participation rates. The average survival rate in primary education in Sub-Saharan Africa stands at 63 percent, out of which a similar percentage on average makes the transition into LSE². Beyond these aggregate figures, there remain major disparities between boys and girls (especially at the secondary level), between urban and rural areas, and between rich and poor. At the international level, across Africa there are major disparities between countries affected by conflict and

displacements, and those that are not. Furthermore, systems have great difficulties in addressing the needs of large numbers of disadvantaged and vulnerable children.

The figure below gives an impression of the (African) average drop-out of learners during a 12 year primary + secondary cycle. It demonstrates that on average only about 30 percent of a cohort of learners achieve a full 9-year cycle of basic education.



² UNESCO/UIS, *Global Education Digest*. Montreal, UIS, 2007



Education-related difficulties have been considerably exacerbated by the many changes in the socio-economic environment, notably the deepening of poverty and inequality (especially affecting young people in peri-urban and rural areas, girls and minority groups), changes in the labour market and loss of formal sector employment, increased migration flows, greater instability of families and communities, and the impact of HIV and AIDS. There are also the challenges emanating from the demographics of African development, notably the rapid increases in the numbers of young people below 18 years of age.

Policy-makers are extremely concerned about improving upon current participation figures and ensuring that over time all children of the relevant age-group reach at least the end of 9-year high-quality equitable and relevant basic education, regardless of background, home circumstances and individual characteristics. Their concern stems from the changing role that education is expected to play in current socio-economic circumstances. While education continues to be seen as the major gateway for individuals to enter the labour market, it is also valued for its general contribution to the alleviation of poverty and inequality, the acquisition of a wide variety of personal, work-related and

health-related skills, and the adoption of attitudes and values related to democratic participation and civic responsibilities.

The BEAP recognises these aspirations and aims to help ensure that education is of such quality and relevance that it does produce the skills and competencies society requires and that these have an impact on the lives of learners themselves, their communities and the country at large.

Significant for the BEAP is that the call for major reform of basic education occurs at a time when, both at the continental and at the sub-regional level in Africa, collaboration among countries in many different sectors of socio-economic development is rapidly increasing - such as under the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). These, in turn, have also spurred the interest in working more closely together in the education sphere, so as to generate and guide countries' reform - in particular through the current Second Decade of Education in Africa. Such collaborations have also created focal points for international organisations to provide support across countries at regional and sub-regional level.

2 What the BEAP is all about

2.1 Focus and scope

Essentially, the focus of the BEAP is on access, quality, relevance and equity in an expanded basic education framework. Following the conclusions from the Kigali and Maputo debates, the BEAP seeks to improve quality and equity through the two strategies agreed upon on both occasions: extending basic education in terms of years, and widening its scope in terms of curriculum and modes of provision.

Extending basic education

After some 8 years, post-Dakar, of closely targeted and sustained efforts (EFA and MDG goals) on providing universal primary education, the success of access, as amply illustrated in the 2008 EFA Monitoring Report, requires a broader and more sustained drive in favour of 9-10 years of education as a right for every young person. There is a need to offer an extended basic education to all, promoting the socio-economic integration of Africa's youth and ensuring the preparation, in a cost-effective manner, of a high level cadre for today's knowledge economy.

This message has been recognised by most African governments. Indeed, some – like Kenya – have already set their eyes on ensuring full access to an even longer cycle of 14 years of basic education for all, including a full two-year pre-primary preparatory period of early childhood care and education (ECCE).

Such extension will often require a massive effort, not simply to construct more secondary schools, but foremost to re-conceptualise lower secondary education, turning this into the 'upper' part of an extended basic education, of which the 'lower' part consists of a higher-quality and more cost-effective primary education. It also challenges governments to use and improve upon all learning opportunities, formal and non-formal, that are already available at primary and lower secondary levels, making these part of an integrated set of basic education provisions. These may include those run by communities, civil society and the private (including civil society) sector, whether they are school-based or work-based.

Recently, the ADEA Biennale, held in Maputo (2008), came to mark a clear distinction between this extended basic education, incorporating at least junior secondary education, on the one hand, and forms of 'post-basic' education and training on the other hand. The latter includes all opportunities for further learning, at present usually those at upper secondary level and at tertiary level. While basic education was considered as a foundation to which all children are entitled to as of right, 'post-basic' education and training is to be accessible on the basis of choice, and the ability of the country to provide relevant opportunities.

The critical challenge for countries of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is to achieve over a short span of time what took Europe over a century: the transition from an elitist tradition in education to effective democratisation of education, an expanded basic education in terms of access, participation, achievement and decision-making. Elitism is very strongly entrenched and educational transformation requires the vision and political ability to think creatively about innovative strategies, to confront vested interests, and to generate support for far reaching reforms over time. Governments with the help of technical partners need to look for suitable and sustainable strategies to adapt educational policies to the changing learner profile.

In some countries, which already have high enrolment in primary and secondary schools, the provision of additional access is a manageable process; in which the key challenge will be democratisation of the learning process itself and the opening up of curriculum and pedagogy to the needs and dispositions of new categories of learners. In others, with much smaller 'formal' systems, the challenge is both to democratise learning and to dramatically expand the system. In part, this may entail bringing into the fold of extended basic education a wide array of other - often 'non-formal' or even informal - learning opportunities, which can be enhanced and strengthened to become acceptable alternative pathways offering equivalent basic education.

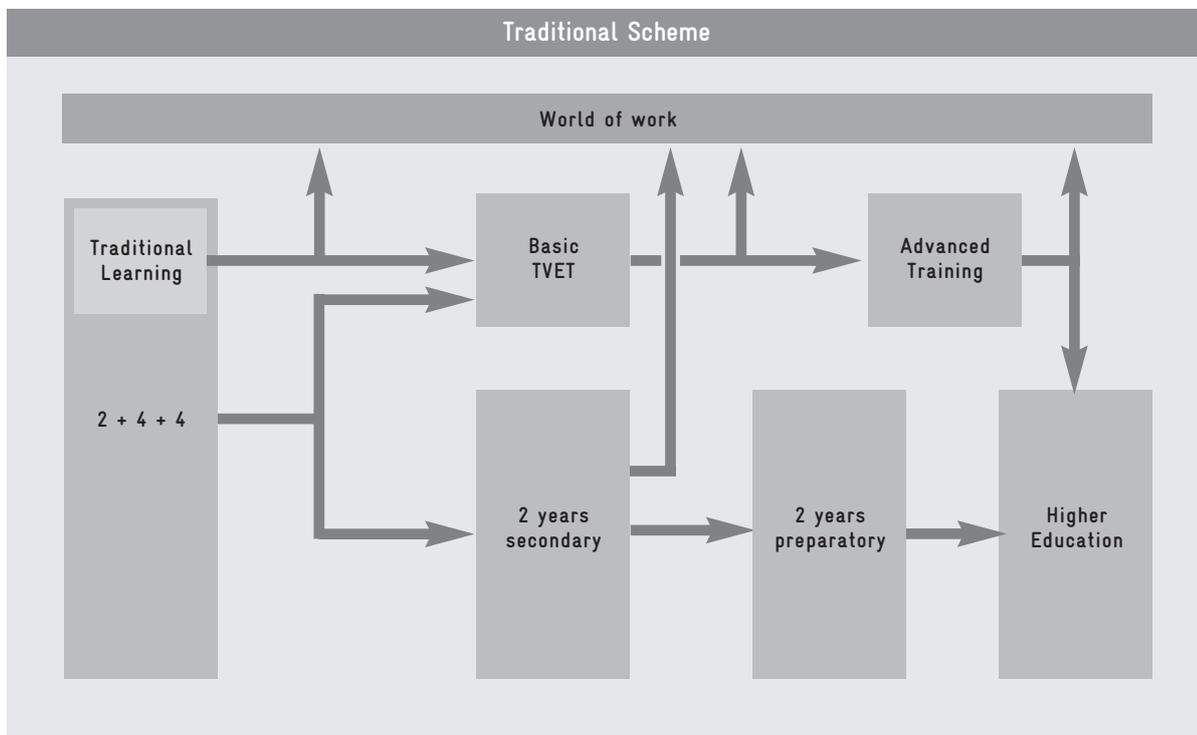
Widening basic education

One of the most difficult tasks facing policy makers is that of comprehensive curriculum reform to align curriculum structure, content, pedagogy and assessment to the redefined objectives of a basic education and to the changing profile of the student body entering the world of work with only the education received at school. Instead of equipping a narrowly selected elite for further academic education, the role ascribed to basic education becomes that of preparing an entire age group for integration into adult society (life skills, key competencies and citizenship education), into the world of work (core generic skills) and for further studies as applicable in a general perspective of lifelong learning (learnability). There is also a need to accommodate problem-solving skills, civic and citizenship education, team work and ICT within the curriculum, as well as international language mastery, and maths and science skills. Here entrepreneurship education can serve as an overarching approach to addressing those issues throughout all education levels.

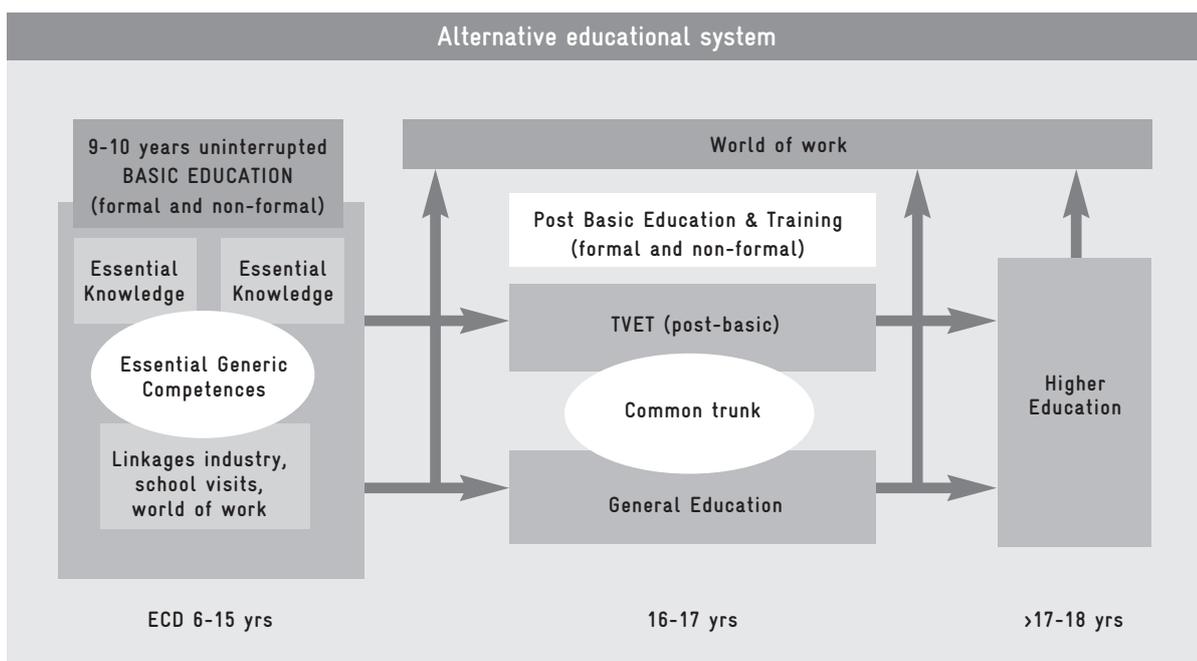
Hence, the BEAP promotes the development of an integrated and broad curriculum, which is outcome oriented and covers a wider variety of skills and competencies, as an essential preparation of young people for life, for work, for society, and for further learning.

The task of making universal basic education available to children excluded by virtue of poverty, geography and gender has to become the focus of attention as countries progress towards higher levels of enrolment nationally. This may require the adoption of, or experimentation with, a variety of complementary models of basic education provision, adjusted – in terms of flexible organisation and/or of curriculum adaptation – to the needs and circumstances of specific groups of children and young people, while ensuring equivalence. All modes of provision would need to be linked through 'ladders and bridges' and a common system of formative and summative assessment. Governments also need to provide in-school or out-of-school remedial programmes of a non-formal nature to assist as many learners as possible, such as drop-outs or over-aged children, to re-enter schooling.

In structural terms the proposed shift is one from a traditional scheme, like this one,



to a possible new scheme that is deemed to be of greater relevance in the future:



At the ADEA Biennale at Maputo, this change from the old perspectives on basic education to the new perspectives has been qualified as a 'paradigm shift'. The table below shows a variety of dimensions of education in which such a paradigm manifests itself:

Old paradigm	New paradigm
• Elitist system	• Democratic system
• Aiming for exclusion	• Aiming for inclusion
• No attention to situations of disadvantage	• Identification of disadvantage and policy adjustments
• High dropout rate and loss of basic right	• Complementary + remedial options and fulfilment of right
• Fragmented system	• Integrated system
• Primary education as basic education	• Extended primary as basic education
• LSE as part of secondary education	• LSE re-conceptualised as part of extended basic education
• Formal vs. non-formal	• Diversified
• Education vs. training	• Education and Training
• Unequal access, standards and set outcomes	• Equal access, standards and set outcomes
• Curriculum as content	• Curriculum as learning process
• Teacher-centred and girl-unfriendly	• Learner-centred and girl-friendly
• Quality promoted (from higher education) downwards	• Quality built from bottom (primary level) upwards
• Little relevance for life and work	• High responsiveness to life and work
• Selective vertical articulation	• Open horizontal and vertical articulation
• Assessment for selection	• Assessment for certifying achievement and choice
• Separate certifying agencies for education and training types	• Integrated national qualifications framework
• State as main provider and funder	• State shares responsibilities with private and voluntary partners
• High and unsustainable costs of education expansion	• Needs and resources reconciled in sustainable manner

2.2 Underlying concepts and principles

In the BEAP, the following concepts and principles are considered the starting points for all its work in basic education. They are derived from the ideas that inspired the education conferences in Jomtien and Dakar, and from further key principles that have emerged internationally as essential ingredients for social development to which all governments subscribe.

The right to education

The right to education for children, youth and adults has been enshrined in international conventions and in the constitution of many African countries. In Dakar, it was reconfirmed that all children, particularly girls, including children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to a complete, free and compulsory basic education of good quality³. Countries have been free to define the duration of the primary/basic education that should be achieved by all. The BEAP takes the most inclusive and comprehensive view of education – as expressed in Dakar.

Lifelong and life-wide learning

Lifelong learning as an organising principle rests upon the integration of learning and living, both vertically and horizontally. Vertically, by connecting various development stages of the learner and different levels of education. Horizontally, by linking learning to all spheres of life: family, community, study, work and leisure⁴. Lifelong learning implies the linking of different types of education (formal, non-formal and informal) in a such way that learners, of different ages, can interrupt or resume learning, or move from one type to another, at any time, depending on changing needs and circumstances. It encourages countries to develop alternative learning routes for young people from lower-basic education to higher education, accessing the same curriculum, but adapted to changing needs.

Inclusive education

In the current understanding of the term, inclusive education refers to the efforts of bringing all learners regardless of background into a common (basic) education framework. Inclusion here means that all children and young people have equal opportunities of learning in the same school or in different types of schools, independent of their cultural and social backgrounds, such as their differences in abilities and capacities or the circumstances under which they live.

Quality and relevance

Quality has many different meanings, and is to some extent dependent on a shared perspective as to what constitutes 'good education'. While in the past much emphasis has been placed on the nature and quality of 'inputs' into basic education (such as learning materials and teachers), currently far more attention is given to the actual nature of teaching-learning interactions at the classroom level, and the extent to which essential learning outcomes are being achieved.

In line with the discussions in Kigali and Maputo, the BEAP will give much attention to 'relevance' as one major dimension of quality, i.e. whether learners acquire those skills and competencies that give the best preparation for life and work in the context of country conditions. Quality, along with equity, should be seen as policy principles to orientate processes of educational and curricular change.

Skills and competencies as learning outcomes

A major principle that the BEAP promotes is the stronger emphasis on achieving learning outcomes, as different from 'teaching the syllabus', and related to this, the focus on skills and competencies as a key principle of curriculum organisation. A focus on competencies emphasises that learning is not only about developing a skill per se, but also about the ability to apply such skill in learning and life situations. In order to achieve this, the combined usage of a range of learning outcomes (attitudes, values, and knowledge) is required. Competencies include cognitive abilities, life and social abilities, and are defined within the context of countries' realities.

³ *The Dakar Framework for Action, 2000.*

⁴ *Presentation Adama Ouane, Director ULL, to the Maputo ADEA Biennale, May 2008.*

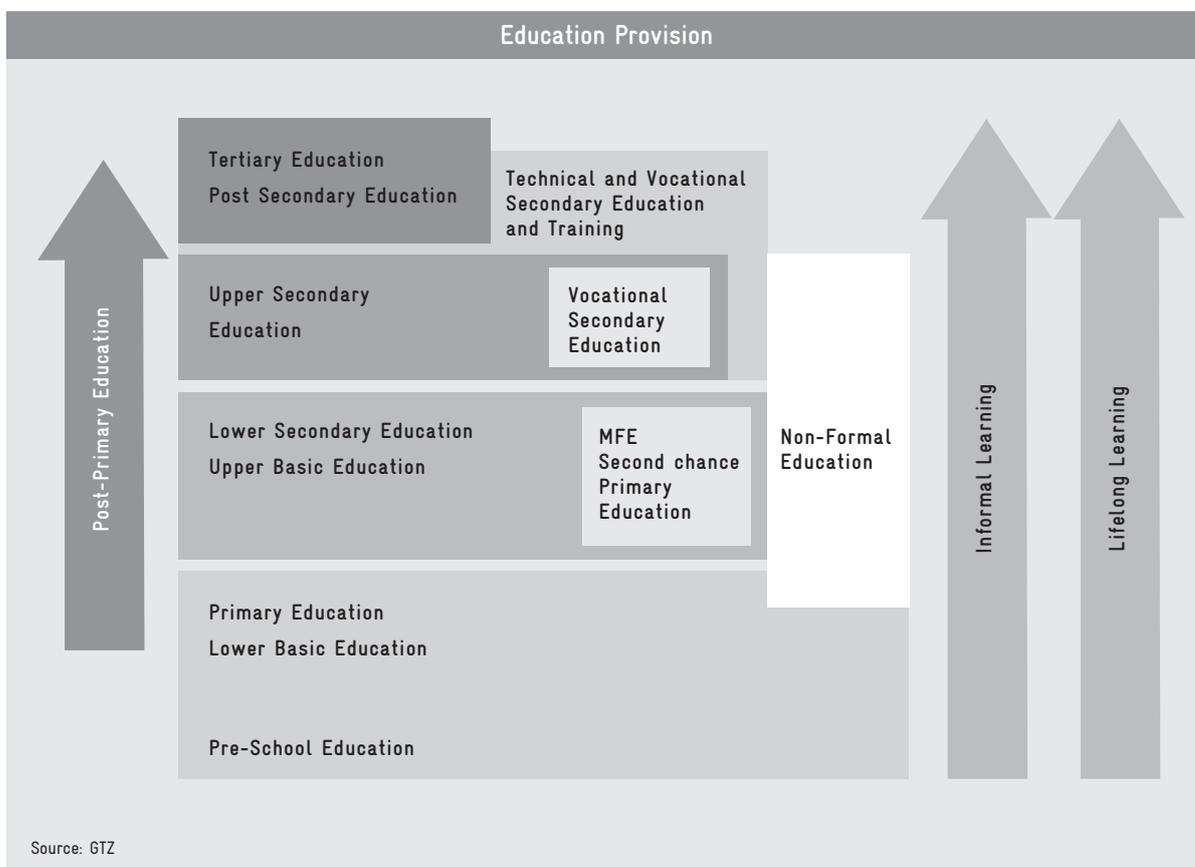
Entrepreneurship education can serve as a means to plan, organise and implement those issues.

Democratisation

Further democratisation of basic education is fundamental. This concept refers in part to the comprehensive access, engagement, participation and attainment of relevant outcomes by all learners regardless of socio-economic background, gender, culture, religion, household circumstances, etc.. This implies the need to adapt the substance of the national curriculum and the pedagogical approach to the environment, background and diversity of the learners. Democratisation is also about participation in decision-making in education by relevant stakeholders, including teachers, learners and parents, at local and at national levels.

Holistic approach to basic education development

This means that further expansion of quality basic education takes a wide perspective regarding the diverse types of learners to be accommodated, as well as regarding the range of learning opportunities required to meet their needs and circumstances. Where alternative modes of provision (such as non-formal schools, nomadic education, or faith-based schools) have been accepted, effective linkages are required to enable young people to move from one type to another, or to re-enter formal schooling; thus navigating through the complete cycle of basic education. This encourages ministries of education to take a system's perspective of basic education provision, and to carefully consider how to build upon current learning opportunities and pedagogical practices to ensure that all learners can



successfully complete the entire cycle in a cost-effective manner.

Equitable diversity

This indicates that, while diversity of needs and circumstances, and thus of modes of basic education provision, needs to be recognised and respected, all school-age children should have equitable access to quality learning opportunities that meet basic norms and standards. Furthermore, all learners should have equitable access to the same broad-based national basic education curriculum, and equal chances to complete the cycle and achieve core learning outcomes.

Equitable diversity is also relevant at the level of modes of basic education provision, ensuring that all recognised 'schools' of one type or another, have equitable access to national resources, both financial and human.

BEAP addresses all 6 EFA Goals

- Goal 1:** Integration of early childhood: extending basic education to a minimum of nine years with emphasis on an additional 1 or 2 years of childhood education (i.e pre-school or kindergarten)
- Goal 2:** Increase access to a minimum of 9-10 years free and compulsory basic education, providing a democratized vision for basic education based on principles of social justice, equity and social inclusion
- Goal 3:** Ensure an appropriate balance of learning outcomes including knowledge, skills, competencies, values and attitudes in the basic education curricula
- Goal 4:** Literacy at all levels
- Goal 5:** Inclusive education: provides an ample range of learning opportunities, processes and outcomes for a broader range of students gender parity, rural and urban, different modes of delivery, in and outside school, formal and non-formal provision
- Goal 6:** Quality of education: curriculum relevance, training of teachers to develop skills for the school leaver to come out with the appropriate profile to enter the world of work or to go for higher studies, having got an entrepreneurship education, enhancing learning, life skills, maths, science and technology education, as well as career guidance, use of mother tongue

3. Areas of BEAP concern

As a programme of support to countries' ongoing work on basic education (BE) development, the BEAP anticipates different entry points depending on countries' needs. Thus the BEAP has identified a range of components that may become the focus of collaborative action.

The principles components of a holistic perspective on BE development are the following:

Curriculum development

The curriculum is the very heart of basic education and describes what is the agreed upon framework for teaching and learning. Curriculum reflects the kind of society being developed, and is thus linked to key definitions of the role that education should play. The national vision on the curriculum and its expression in an appropriate framework informs all decisions in respect of other dimensions of the system.

The BEAP, representing the common insights gained at forums such as in Kigali and Maputo, aims for achieving an integrated common curriculum framework for all basic education: ECCE, primary education, (lower) secondary education, development of basic skills and competencies. Such an integrated framework enables all learners to progress through all levels, regardless of school type, and to achieve BE learning outcomes. Moreover, such framework will provide the basis for pedagogical guidelines, for learner support materials, for assessment practices, etc.

Assessment and certification

Assessment, the validation and measurement of knowledge and competencies, and their reflection in statements of results are integral parts of curriculum. In the new vision of an integrated basic education framework, assessment becomes partly a tool to enable teachers and learners to receive continuous feedback on what is being learned, and partly - at the end of the cycle - to identify what children have learned and what strengths they have, as a basis for making choices for entering the labour market or further education. New approaches and procedures for assessment will have to be developed, and teachers trained in working with these.

Teacher education, professional development and support

In a comprehensive vision of the curriculum, teachers engage in the process of curriculum change, not only as implementers but also as co-developers of the curriculum. In this sense the curriculum is a "dense and flexible contract between politics/society and teachers". As teacher development is a continuous process, an integrated development of initial training, ongoing updating and up-grading, together with effective support structures, is essential. On this basis new policies and strategies for teacher education and support will have to be developed.

Textbooks, learner support materials and ICT

The availability of different types of teacher and learner support materials complements the teacher and may in some cases (partially or wholly) substitute for the teacher. Their quality and appropriateness helps to determine to what extent and how the teacher can 'make the curriculum happen' – with all its intentions and potential.

Diversified modes of provision

This is the organisational dimension of learning. As learners may have different backgrounds, circumstances and needs, appropriate learning experiences may differ from school to school and from one classroom to another. With regards to specific categories of learners, such as those who cannot attend on a fulltime basis or have additional needs, complementary types of schools may be necessary. Curriculum frames, teachers and materials, all should be developed such that they can respond to learner diversity.

Whole school improvement

At the institutional level integrated basic education development is a matter for the whole school community, i.e. teachers, learners, parents, other local stakeholders. This applies regardless of the type of school or mode of delivery. Here the micro-situation of the classroom is the centre around which all inputs and services are grouped and where their synergies have to yield their results. Whole school improvement needs to benefit from professional support services, whether through teacher-resource centres or types of advisory services.

Governance and management

Because of the key role of institutional and systemic management and governance structures in creating and maintaining the enabling conditions to make teaching and learning work, their continuous improvement is essential. The democratisation of basic education requires optimal participation of different stakeholders in overall decision-making as well as in curriculum development and implementation.

Linkages with community and labour market

Such linkages express themselves in curriculum terms – in the responsiveness of teaching and learning to the needs of society – and in terms of collaborations, for example, as regards local knowledge and school-work interactions. Entrepreneurship education can be used as an approach to ensure relevance of learning for life and work.

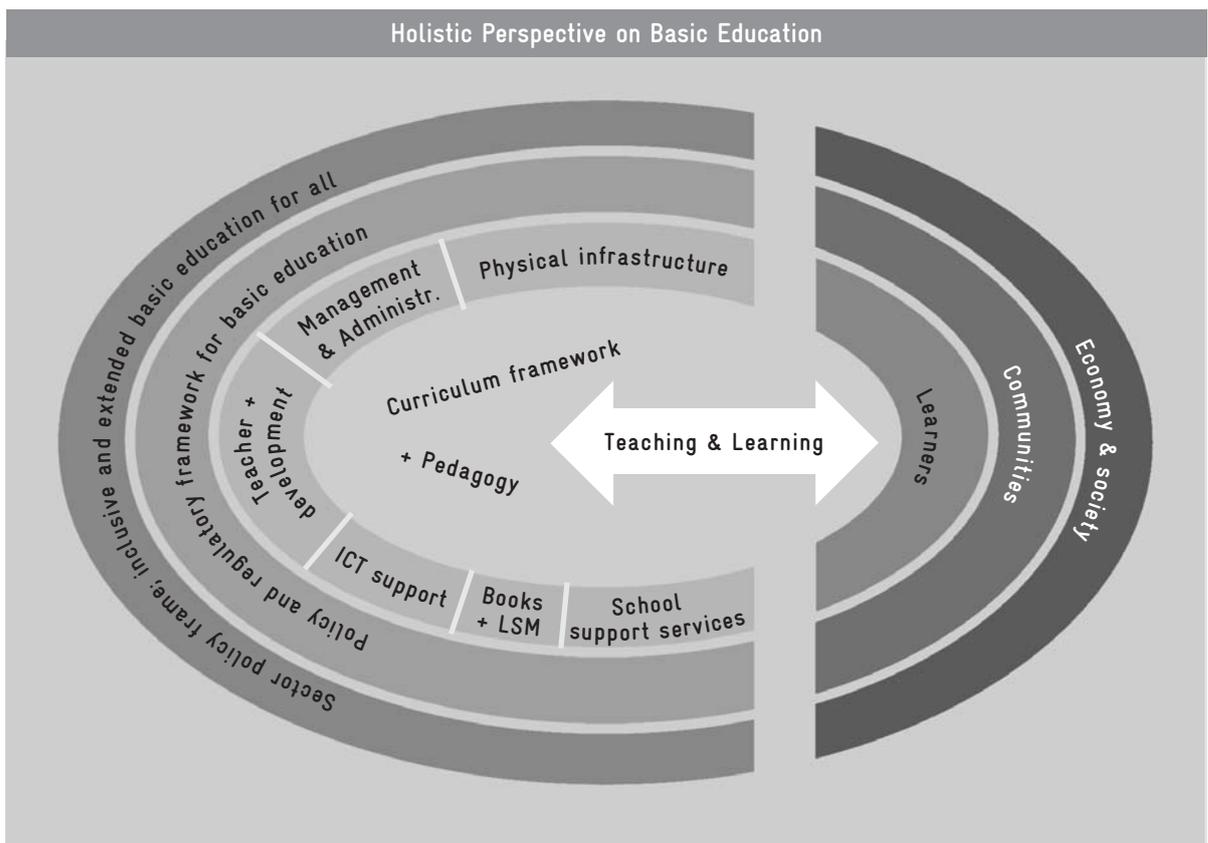
Inter-sectoral collaboration

Basic education cannot be effective without close linkages with the activities of organisations in related sectors. This is relevant at the systemic level, at the regional/local level and at the institutional level. Many young people can only learn well, if their health, social care, psycho-social and other non-education support needs are being met. This requires collaboration with other sector ministries or with civil society organisations active at lower levels. Education cannot be an isolated process, but needs to function as an integral part of the wider society.

All the different components listed above need to harmonise with one another in order to achieve holistic basic education development. Synergies need to be pursued at all times, regardless of whether the starting point for a country's reform was the curriculum or teacher improvement or education management development.

The diagram below shows how the components may synergise with one another, in order to effectively impact on curriculum implementation through the actual teaching-learning situation where basic education has to happen. While the inner rings of teachers,

materials, etc. impact more directly on the curriculum, the outer rings represent other essential ingredients that must be in place in order to make effective and relevant learning possible.



3 How the BEAP works in countries

3.1 Principles guiding implementation

The BEAP is a programme of UNESCO, based in Dakar. Essentially, the programme comprises a set of carefully designed activities aimed at doing the ground work and developing a tailor-made agenda for fundamental and comprehensive basic education reform, along the lines set out by the Regional meetings in Kigali and Maputo. The programme is mediated by UNESCO, together with other development partners. In principle, this programme can be taken up by all countries in the Africa Region.

In order to meet its objectives, and to adhere to its principles regarding BE development (page 21), the programme's design and planning are built upon a number of fundamental principles that guide its implementation.

These are:

Change in the nature and scope of basic education development must be initiated as a matter of urgency.

Nearly all African countries, with their partners, have been engaged in the reform and further development of their basic education for quite some time. Both the Kigali and the Maputo processes recognised the need to urgently place these developments within the frame of a reconstituted vision of basic education that offers fresh guidance to the direction, content and the coherence of education reform so as to fast-track measures to improve participation, quality and equity.

The BEAP is fundamentally country-led.

Countries wishing to participate must make their own decisions regarding the focus of the programme (in terms of specific components as entry-points) and the actual strategies and methodologies that will be followed. Implementation of plans agreed upon should be driven by appropriate country-based structures.

BEAP works with partner countries who share the fundamental goals of broadening and enhancing learning conditions, opportunities, processes and outcomes for young people through expanding and democratising the concept of basic education.

The supporting efforts of UNESCO and its partners must be coordinated, efficient, and focused on country needs and priorities.

This implies that visions, strategies and methodologies, as well as selected priorities, should become integral parts of the country's overall educational development plans, and thus embedded in appropriate mechanisms for coordination, supervision and quality control.

The BEAP is neither a parallel programme nor a project; it links up with existing initiatives and engages like-minded donors and development agencies already involved with country-led reform.

Any changes initiated by the BEAP within a country's basic education development effort must be feasible and sustainable.

Thus, BEAP inspired adjustments or new initiative need to harmonise with the country's human and budgetary capabilities and the intentions for their future development - even while some development costs may be borne by external assistance.

The key methodologies UNESCO uses for its support are sensitisation, dialogue and facilitation.

It was very much understood, both in Kigali and in Maputo, that a re-constitution and re-conceptualisation of basic education, at primary and at post-primary levels, required a change of mindset and the adoption of a new 'paradigm' in educational development. The above methodologies are essential in assisting countries to review their system's development and practices, and to design and implement follow-up work within country contexts.



The provision of external technical support must be targeted, collegial and culturally sensitive.

External technical support must be used to the extent there is sufficient local expertise to do the work. When it is used it should preferably be obtained from within the (sub-)region, be supportive, culturally sensitive and always be provided in collegial fashion, i.e. in close cooperation with country-based colleagues.

Capacity development needs to be at the heart of every intervention of BEAP.

Further developing the human and organisational capacity of ministries of education and their national partners is crucial for the success of the BEAP, if countries are to interpret and adapt a new vision on basic education development in accordance with their own national goals, conditions and potential.

Inclusive participation and formation of partnerships are essential for achieving a democratic and meaningful process leading to sustainable results.

Any new vision of education needs to involve all stakeholders in a country and address their circumstances, interests and needs in order to have an impact on learning and achievement. Stakeholders should include communities and civil society, as well as socio-economic organisations like teachers' unions and employers, and universities. A comprehensive basic education reform requires a massive, lengthy and joint effort, involving new types of partnerships.

The value of inter-country and south-south collaboration.

Given the innovative nature of the proposed reform of basic education, and the many challenges that come along with it, collaborations among countries will be much encouraged. Foremost this can happen between countries in the various sub-regions of Africa. Beyond the continent, this can happen through sharing challenges, visions and experiences between regions, in particular across the south - for example in relation to competency-based approaches in basic education.

3.2 Policy dimensions of BEAP

An agenda for comprehensive basic education reform may in some countries affect existing policies and strategies for educational development. Whereas nearly all countries have education policies that are congruent with the goals and basic concepts adopted in Jomtien and Dakar, many are still working on policy frameworks that may accommodate specific measures to be taken, affecting groups of learners or the functioning of various components of the system. In addition, there may be new policy agendas related to the expansion of basic education up to 9-10 years, or even beyond.

Although the BEAP wishes its work to be consistent with the existing national policy and priorities in education, some of the initiatives taken under its umbrella may have implications for the further improvement and operationalisation of policy. They may thus, indirectly or directly, stimulate the design or the adaptation of additional policy guidelines or regulatory frameworks. Where these exist, they will greatly stimulate BEAP's work.

Examples of such specific policy guidelines or regulatory frameworks concern:

- An overall integrated curriculum framework covering basic education as a whole, from ECCE to lower secondary education, with core life competencies and learning outcomes across different modes of provision
- Policy guidelines concerning basic education for disadvantaged and vulnerable children
- Policy guidelines for the roles of (and support to) non-formal education alternatives and/or forms of open and distance learning
- Policy frame for special education, or for nomadic education
- Policy frames for faith-based learning as part of basic education
- Policy frame for integrated teacher training, development and support for basic education
- Guidelines concerning system articulation: i.e. the horizontal and vertical transfers of learners between one type of education and another
- Framework on the role and approach to skills development: including life skills, social skills and work-related skills (e.g. entrepreneurship development)
- Framework on the place, role and conduct of systemic evaluations, and of national assessment at the end of the basic education cycle
- The establishment and management of a national qualifications framework

It is also likely that at some point a country may wish to develop an overall integrated policy framework for basic education as a whole, which would provide clear reference points on the basis of which individual sets of guidelines can be harmonised.

3.3 Steps and methods of work

The actual process of how the BEAP works at the country level can be divided into several steps, which are outlined below:

The BEAP Process

Step 1 – Preliminary meetings and authorisations

The BEAP process commences with consultative meetings with the education authorities and development partners in the country, together analysing the educational context, including relevant policies, strategic plans, education reform papers and initiatives and resources available to support priority actions, including those supported by donor agencies.

Step 2 – Sensitisation and dialogue

This is a foundational step focussing on raising awareness as regards the emerging new vision of an extended and broader basic education provision, the degree of alignment of current practices and of the connections between the different dimensions of basic education. This will inform dialogue with the country partners about the nature and extent of a BEAP. BEAP personnel can play a facilitative role here.

Step 3 – Needs identification and analysis

The BEAP provides technical support and expertise for a needs analysis, to be conducted in partnership with relevant education authorities and agencies, focusing on identified key areas of basic education, especially curriculum improvement and national capacity-development, after appropriate authorisations and in-principle agreement.

Step 4 – Development of action plans

The formulation of a range of action plans (sometimes referred to as a ‘road map’) is completed in close cooperation with local authorities and responsible agencies. If necessary, the BEAP can provide technical backstopping here. The aim is to interpret policy objectives and programme priorities and develop achievable actions and tasks, with reasonable timelines, assigning responsibilities, coordinating available and required resources, and identifying gaps.

Step 5 – Implementation support

During the implementation of the processes of curriculum improvement and related capacity-development contained in the action plans, the BEAP makes available as much technical support as is necessary.

Step 6 – Monitoring and evaluation

Throughout the process, the BEAP provides technical inputs to support the monitoring and evaluation of activities to ensure results are achieved and that they meet the expectations and criteria set out at the beginning. For this purpose benchmarks and appropriate indicators of achievement need to be developed as part of the action plans.

Notes:

- The nature and extent of each step will depend on needs, as agreed between the parties
- Action plans can focus on any component of the BEAP (pp. 24-5) as entry point for the programme. This may usually be the issue of curriculum reform; but may also start with, for example, the integration of basic education modes of provision, or with whole school improvement.
- The action plans will be reflected in the 'road map', which itself needs to be aligned with the education sector plan.

Methods of BEAP implementation

- **Sensitisation and stakeholder consultation** meetings and conferences
- Facilitation of **needs analysis and other research work**
- **In-country consultancy and support**, for example:
 - to conduct training workshops in curriculum concepts and processes, planning, monitoring and evaluation methodology, entrepreneurship education, etc.,
 - to undertake task analysis, resource reallocation, fund mobilisation and other planning and implementation activities at particular points of need, and
 - to advise on the curricular structure, the organisation of the syllabus and assessment systems
- Facilitation of **external technical assistance**
- Facilitation of **inter-country exchanges**
- Ongoing **on-line or e-mail communication** – for example to review documents or to respond to specific issues and questions

3.4 Ensuring country ownership

It is essential that for a programme like BEAP country ownership is agreed upon and established from the very beginning. Such ownership can be reflected in several ways:

- (a) The establishment of a **country oversight and management structure**. This may consist of a Steering Committee representing key directorates or departments in the ministry of education, together with significant non-government players in civil society, the private sector, or others such as the teachers' unions – preferably chaired by the Permanent Secretary. This Committee needs to take ultimate responsibility for BEAP design, planning and implementation, involving all stakeholders.
- (b) In addition, there may be a need for a hands-on Management Committee or 'Core Team' which actually manages the development and implementation of the agreed upon action plans. Such Committee or Core Team can be appointed by the ministry of education and can include representatives of main actors in basic education development.
- (c) The identification of a '**focal point**' for the BEAP at senior level in the ministry of education. Such focal point is often essential in order to secure a central responsibility for the BEAP, for example the Director in charge of curriculum development. This person could also serve as the chair of the management committee.
- (d) The establishment of a **multi-partner mechanism for coordination** of holistic basic education development. In view of the commonly rather fragmented nature of basic education development, with responsibilities shared out between a variety of directorates and units (and to some extent also between various government ministries), all with their own budgets and procedures, a mechanism for periodic consultation, harmonisation and monitoring, involving all stakeholders in basic education including those in other ministries, may well be very helpful in promoting coherence.
- (e) The requirement of **human and organisational capacity development** should be considered in all forms of collaboration, whether through inter-country cooperation or through external technical assistance. In each case, external expertise can be attached to those individuals and units who hold formal responsibility. Both parties need to operate under agreed upon terms of reference and to jointly account to programme management structures.

3.5 Partnerships and costs

Partnerships

As indicated above, in order to achieve far-reaching reform in basic education – in terms of mindsets, substance, structures and goals – participation of all relevant stakeholders is essential. This implies much effort to review roles and responsibilities of different parties involved, and possibly to bring in new partners.

In the ADEA Biennale in Maputo, participants recognised the changing role of the state in education development. While the state can no longer be expected to solely carry the burden of providing education and training, it must orientate and retain the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that there is appropriate provision in accordance with the needs of learners and the needs of national socio-economic development. This has led to additional tasks for ministries of education, such as policy coordination, supervision, provision of supportive services, quality control and monitoring. Within this context, the state can encourage multiple stakeholder participation, including local authorities, communities, civil society and socio-economic organisations –all within the context of a national policy, legal and regulatory framework⁶.

However, by far the main role which the state needs to play is that of providing pro-active and courageous political leadership, without which far-reaching basic

education reform and its impact on national development will not come to pass.

Various forms of partnerships (especially between public and private parties – see box) have become very active in different countries. Agreements can and have been made for stakeholder participation in policy-making, management of institutions, implementing complementary (both formal and non-formal) education programmes, providing professional support services and financial support. Thus, many more resources can be mobilised for educational development than previously was the case.

For the realisation of the vision of basic education reform and implementing, the many tasks associated with re-constructing the content and architecture of the totality of basic education provision, many forms of partnerships are required. The BEAP can assist in developing these in the context of the design and implementation of country action plans, and in building capacity in the process.

Partnerships, however, are not without challenges. Much of the quality that is provided depends on the nature, expertise and commitment of the private partners. Equity may be in jeopardy if a profit motive excludes significant parts of the intended target groups. These risks make regulation by the state essential.

Public-Private Partnerships

- PPPs are a form of agreement between public and private parties that contributes to achieving national educational goals
- They involve many different groupings or social & economic organisations, and communities
- Purposes can vary from policy-making and management of institutions to professional support and financing
- Selected programmes, as PPPs, may be run by government but financed privately, or vice versa
- PPPs may mobilise new skills, experience, competencies, and finances for BE development
- However, need for regular framework to ensure quality and equity programmes and access.

Costs of basic education reform

Partnerships can assist in various ways to ease the cost-burden for an integrated basic education development. They can help mobilise additional human and financial resources to complement those provided by the state. They can also assist with providing additional expertise in tackling financial problems in the system, ranging from working out models for improving efficiencies in education provision and improving on quality of education inputs while lowering costs.

Furthermore, partnerships can help in implementing – and partially financing – selected education and training provisions, for which the ministry of education does not have the expertise (or enough funds) – such as types of skills and competencies development, and modalities of ECCE and NFE.

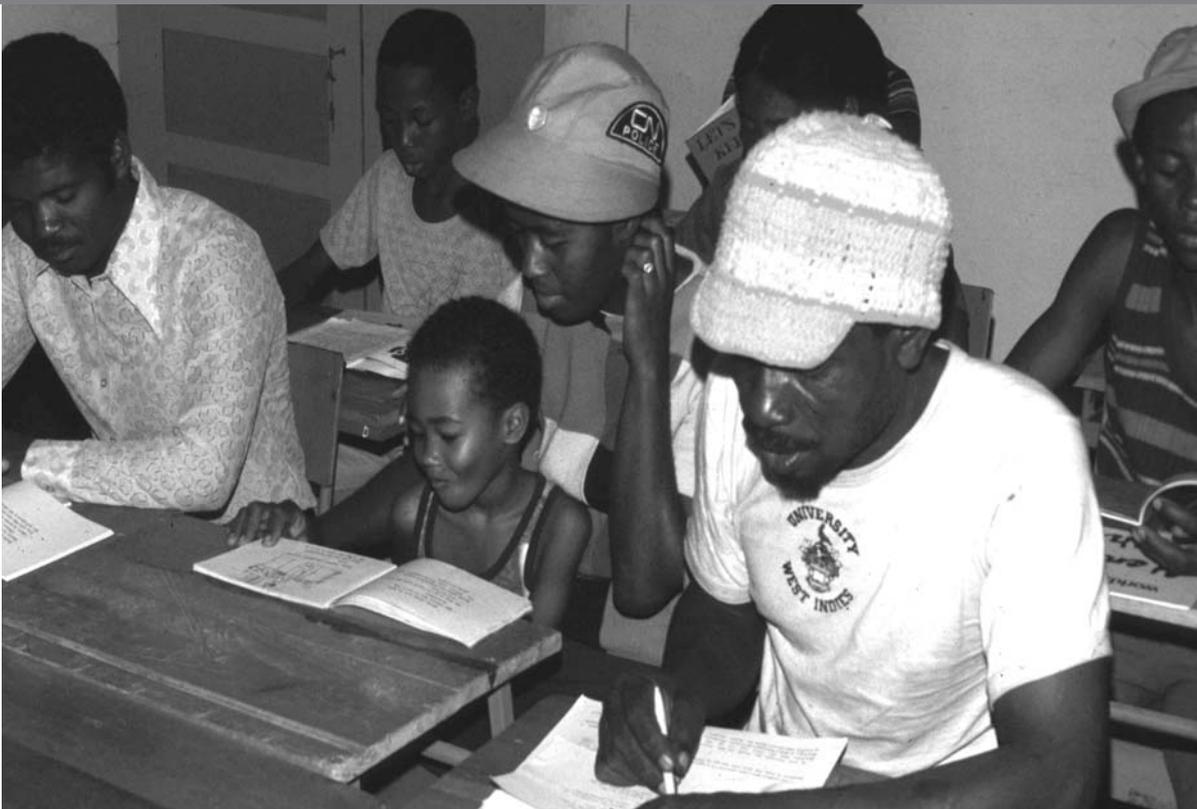
In the context of the BEAP, country stakeholders will face many challenges with regard to the development of cost-effective approaches to achieving an expanded and integrated basic education system. The potentially high costs of extending basic education for all, and of widening the scope of the curriculum and of pedagogical practices, together with additional costs of support systems and professional services, put a premium on improving efficiency, reducing unit-costs and on exploring innovative approaches to teaching and learning. The imperatives of improving quality and equity also call for a more judicious usage of state resources and the mobilisation of supplementary private resources.

Innovations seem to be particularly needed in areas like:

- the pedagogy associated with life and work-related competencies;
- the role and usage of teacher and learner support materials, including textbooks, teacher recruitment, training and development;
- the methodologies for professional support, supervision, and learning assessment;
- the design of appropriate and equivalent complementary basic education programmes for children in special circumstances..

There are three issues that countries may specially wish to tackle, whether individually or jointly:

- (1) The issue of costing and funding approaches to learning in which ICTs play a greater or lesser role, whether used to enhance the learning by children or to facilitate teacher development and support. The selective and complementary use of distance learning may represent a short-term solution for many countries to bridge the gap between demand for education and supply of qualified teachers.
- (2) The issue of designing and developing, within the context of BEAP supported curriculum reform, other types of teacher and learner support materials, which meet the demands for quality and relevance, but are also cheaper and more user-friendly.
- (3) The issue of establishing norms and standards for different modes of provision (formal / regular schools, part-time education, non-formal complementary programmes), and thus for the most cost-effective ways of implementing a national curriculum within different institutional environments – while still adhering to the principles of quality and equity.



Costs of BEAP implementation

A different cost issue concerns the actual costs of the BEAP programme itself, i.e. the expenditures incurred for the work undertaken by BEAP country teams in the context of implementing the steps in the BEAP process (see page 30), including the technical assistance provided through UNESCO.

Some of these costs will be taken up by the ministry of education of the countries in which the BEAP is being implemented. However, most of the costs for meetings, conferences and workshops, for the capacity development activities, as well as for research and technical development work related to the BEAP will be provided by UNESCO and by various funding agencies that are willing to support this important agenda.

To this effect, the BEAP needs to be adopted by the ministry of education and the SWAp partners as a 'special initiative' aimed at developing and spearheading basic education reform along the lines agreed upon in Kigali and Maputo. This may enable some of the development costs as well as all the agreed upon costs for implementing the BEAP agenda to be incorporated into the sector plans and thus shared with the international partners. The joint sector planning will also be the frame within which the phasing of BEAP implementation can be decided.

The real need for countries is to start thinking differently, in a wider perspective and in greater depth, even more radically. The education model developed for the Industrial Age cannot achieve educational empowerment effectively in the Information Age.

4 Challenges for countries through BEAP

4.1 Curriculum development

The BEAP acknowledges that curriculum reform is the biggest challenge countries face, in a bid to ensure that an integrated basic education curriculum framework emerges that is both inclusive of all children's needs and of high quality and relevance with respect to the changing needs of society.

The curriculum is both a technical and a political issue that is well embedded in the complex interfaces between society, politics and education. Participation of a large number of actors and institutions is therefore essential. Furthermore, interactions are expected to be complex, dynamic, controversial and not linear with a vision of curriculum development as a continuous process and results.

Countries are encouraged to develop a comprehensive vision of a curriculum, with expected outcomes that

include knowledge, skills and competencies, attitudes and values. Their scope ranges from cognitive abilities, through development of language and mathematical competencies, skills, exploration of the social and physical environment, to the acquisition of personal and social competencies, life and work-related skills. Moreover, they combine grounding in local traditional knowledge and values with a global orientation to the achievements of science and technology (a "glo-local" curriculum).

The BEAP makes a distinction between a 'curriculum framework' which provides a set of policies, regulations, directions and guidelines that inform the elaboration of what is to be learned, at what levels, by whom, through which pedagogical approaches, and how this learning is to be assessed. Thus a framework sets the context for the actual design of 'syllabi' and assessment systems by specialists.

Possible contents of a curriculum framework for an integrated and diversified BE cycle

- Introduction - current educational context
- Educational vision and policy statement, including new departure points and principles
- Statement of broad learning objectives, life skills and competencies and outcomes for BE overall, with emphasis core learning outcomes to be achieved by all
- Standards for each level / sub-cycle
- Structure of the education system, including modes of provision
- Organisation of curriculum content – learning areas / subjects
- Core learning areas versus optional ones
- Standards of resources required for implementation
- Teaching methodologies / pedagogical practices
- Guidelines for non-regular learning contexts
- Key indicators for periodic monitoring and evaluation
- Requirements for assessment - formative and summative – and certification

Several **key challenges** need to be addressed in a curriculum framework:

- Developing a curriculum framework that caters for a cycle of uninterrupted learning of 9-10 years, without any inappropriate screening of learners along the way
- Defining and balancing core life skills and competencies and learning outcomes across learning areas
- Identifying and balancing learning outcomes both within and across a range of subjects
- Balancing subjects aiming at work-related skills and competencies (such as entrepreneurship education) with those aiming at general knowledge and skills
- Setting learner- and girl-friendly quality standards (with indicators) for pedagogical practices and learning outcomes in different subjects
- Setting standards or adapting content and pedagogical practices to different localities and learners' circumstances
- Setting norms and standards for quality of learning experiences and environment in non-regular conditions
- Providing guidelines for relating school to the surrounding community and to work
- Setting levels of measurable achievement in subject areas
- Setting system quality standards for credentials / certificates and patterns of study required to be eligible for credentials

A special challenge for curriculum reform is the shift from a **knowledge-based approach** to learning towards a **competency-based approach** to learning, also by using approaches of entrepreneurship education. The essential difference resides in that the second focuses much more on the actual capacity of learners to mobilise, apply or use knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in independent, practical and meaningful ways. BEAP recommends that basic education begins with assisting young people to acquire a key range of **basic, core or generic competencies**.

This implies various challenges, such as defining those competencies that learners should acquire as part of basic education for all; designing learning situations/ projects, as part of pedagogical practice, that enable learners to actually engage in activities in which they can develop and display the desired competencies – for example by showing products of their work; constructing learning environments in schools that enable such practical applications to be carried out; training teaching personnel to be able to handle such pedagogical approach with ability and confidence; bringing in parties from other sectors (such as health and the world of work) to assist in the delivery of competencies; and developing assessment procedures that demonstrate whether the competencies have been acquired.

Clearly, this is a tall order for many systems as they are often not used to getting learners to learn practically and autonomously. Thus, competency-based learning should be introduced gradually and carefully, and by fostering a tailored approach to national and local needs. The BEAP can assist in developing methodologies for moving in this direction.

4.2 Assessment and certification

Since assessment is such a large part of the curriculum development process, this dimension has already been addressed above. There are, however, additional challenges stemming from the role that assessment needs to play in monitoring the actual acquisition by learners of intended learning outcomes with a view of improving pedagogical practices, and – at the end of the basic education cycle – the greatly enhanced function of the summative assessment to serve as a 'profile' on the basis of which learners and prospective further education institutions or employers can draw conclusions regarding future career and/or education/training options.

Specific **challenges** here are:

- Building continuous formative assessment into pedagogical cultures, as a way of continuously monitoring learners' progress and guiding teaching
- Developing a framework for periodic 'systemic assessment' of learning achievement in key competencies on the basis of a national sample, in order for education authorities, learners and the public to track the evolving performance of the system across different regions and different categories of learners
- Refining and re-designing 'end-of-basic-education' assessment so that it can serve the purposes indicated above
- Furthermore, using such assessment for the purpose of articulation between basic education for all on the one hand, and access to forms of post-basic education (i.e. upper secondary education or vocational training, and tertiary education) on the other hand. This allows such assessment to serve as a basis for government to guide student flow through the system
- Creating effective links between school curriculum outcomes and national qualification frameworks in order for young people to be able to transfer between one form of basic education and another (such as skills training alternatives), or to participate in remedial education programmes.

4.3 Teacher education, development and support

Basic education development, along the lines proposed by the meetings in Kigali and Maputo and elaborated in this BEAP policy document, has major implications for teachers. There is a need for many more teachers to be recruited, in particular at upper basic (lower secondary) education level; their training, in terms of both pre-service and in-service training, needs to be overhauled; and all need more opportunities to interact and work with one another, and have access to continuous professional advice and support.

Thus, one of the policy frames listed above (page 18) concerned the development of an integrated frame for teacher education, development and support that links pre-service with in-service provisions in a strategy for career-long development. Such strategy must be linked to policies and procedures for teacher recruitment, deployment and remuneration.

Specific **challenges** here are:

- Developing criteria for providing well-trained and qualified teachers across different stages of basic education within the context of an integrated curriculum framework, thus dealing judiciously with the practice of promoting 'primary' teachers to lower secondary level
- Making effective usage of 'untrained' and 'community' teachers, offering them in-service training and career prospects within a wider and integrated scheme of service
- Training teachers effectively for handling competency-based and entrepreneurial learning
- Making efficient and effective usage of ICT and ODL approaches to become integral elements of teacher in-service and development programmes
- Linking teacher development work to corresponding improvement of institutional management and strengthening of school boards/committees and PTAs
- Encouraging more career prospects for female teachers and creating incentives for them to stay in the service
- Developing pedagogical support programmes for those trainers in the world of work who are engaged in skills development of school-aged children.

4.4 Textbooks, learner support materials and ICT

Within the context of basic education curriculum reform and of the constraints under which basic education provision is to be expanded, new demands emerge as regards the nature and usage of teacher and learner support materials, and the usage of ICT to enhance learning in the classroom. As noted above, materials need to be more user-friendly, cheaper and easier to produce, and more versatile and effective in their usage.

Special **challenges** here are:

- Producing textbooks and support materials in such way that, if and when appropriate, they (wholly or in parts) can easily be revised, adapted or replaced
- Producing textbooks that serve more as teacher and/or learner guides than as sources for what must be memorised
- Helping teachers to design and produce their own teaching and learning materials, especially those that can utilise local resources
- Promoting alternative ways of combining supply of teachers with provision of materials and technologies, thus creating good quality and effective learning experiences, even when fewer qualified teachers are available.

4.5 Diversified modes of provision

An expanded and reformed basic education system that meets social and economic needs must respond to diversity in the learner population; foremost in terms of gender and geography, but also in terms of socio-economic and cultural background and in terms of special circumstances - such as poverty, work, disability, family breakdown, or conflict.

The ultimate test for quality basic education lies in the extent to which it can effectively reach out to all learners in the appropriate age-group and offer them a full basic education experience, on an equitable basis, and if necessary, adapted to their special needs. This is why, within an overall policy framework on basic education, there may well be a need for special policy guidelines for 'alternative' (NFE or otherwise) modes of provision.

Special **challenges** in this regard are:

- Maintaining an integrated curriculum framework, while allowing for adaptations (in learning organisation or pedagogy) to the needs of different learner groups
- Validating all (core) learning through an integrated assessment system that enables learners to enjoy equality of opportunity regardless of learning pathways
- Mainstreaming alternative modes or provision (such as non-formal programmes for disadvantaged children), while protecting special organisational or pedagogical features
- Providing for equitable access to human and financial resources
- Building appropriate partnerships to enable diversity to be achieved.

4.6 Whole school improvement

Quality, equity and other important aspects of good education, like democratic participation and efficiency, need to be realised in the education institutions where inputs are combined to constitute meaningful learning experiences and to produce desired learning outcomes that are of use in society and economy.

A major challenge in this component is to develop adequate sets of indicators associated with those ingredients of 'good quality education provision' that together provide the explanation of what accounts for meaningful and effective learning. Here much work is still to be done, as research on educational quality still has to yield more evidence on which ingredients constitute major leverages of such learning.

Indicators for quality in basic education

- If the education system can be seen as a form of 'production' then indicators can be grouped under three categories: inputs, processes and outputs (or outcomes)
- If the system can be viewed as a 'basic social service' then indicators can be grouped under other categories: access and participation (such as progression, survival rates), quality and equity, and management
- The above yields a range of 'performance indicators'; though they all constitute measurements of quality, learning achievement is the most significant one of all
- Indicators seen as showing more direct information on quality are those like: class sizes, and pupil-teacher ratios, percentages of trained teachers, number of pupils per book - but also measurement of learning achievement
- For the purpose of measuring quality in integrated but diversified basic education, additional indicators may need to be developed, such as for: 'target group-friendliness', 'transfer rates (e.g. from NFE to regular schools), and the 'added value' provided by the programme of learning
- Very helpful for monitoring participation and outcomes / impact of basic education are household surveys, and demographic and health surveys
- Indicators should provide feedback to decision-makers on education, implementers of education (school heads, teachers, PTAs) and the users of education. For this reason frameworks for assessing quality in education more and more is carried out in the form of both school self-evaluation and external evaluation.

4.7 Governance and management

The BEAP process and the reforms it aims to achieve place heavy demands on both governance and management. This is as true for the oversight and steering of the national process of reform as it is for working with new principles and practices at the local level and in education institutions. At all levels, a premium is put on bringing key stakeholders together, establishing forms of collaboration and devising mechanisms for effective communication and coordination. Moreover, such collaboration needs to follow democratic procedures for reflection, decision-making and action. Thus, in many ways new cultures of governance and management will have to be promoted.

This brings along the following **challenges**:

- Linking all BEAP initiatives to simultaneous capacity development activities, both at the levels of human development and organisational development (reviewing structures, mechanisms, relationships, procedures, etc.)
- Reviewing responsibilities of the ministry of education, other ministries and non-government partners, while adhering to the constitutional mandates of the state
- Incorporating specific measures to promote cultures of democratic participation, transparency and accountability
- Examining pros and cons of types of partnerships in basic education development work and in actual implementation
- Exploring the spaces for partnerships at local level, for purposes of policy re-interpretation and discretionary implementation, with national quality control
- Developing meaningful and effective mechanisms for continuous monitoring and evaluation, while creating more opportunities for relevant research work.

4.8 Linkages with community and labour market

An essential feature of the proposed basic education reform, in particular of the need for re-conceptualising the curriculum, is its enhanced and open interaction between quality learning and the needs of society and the labour market. The responsiveness to the socio-economic environment must be reflected in the manner in which learning needs and a range of appropriate learning outcomes are identified, debated, incorporated into a new curriculum framework, and ultimately realised in the practice of education. Fundamentally, this invites the 'business of education' to come out of its traditional supply-oriented way of thinking and to become much more demand-oriented and thus more able to flexibly respond to changing needs and conditions.

Apart from the importance of setting norms and standards as part of the curriculum framework (mentioned under 1 above), there are other **challenges** here:

- Involving key socio-economic partners in the process of curriculum reform (including assessment and certification)
- Integrating life and work relevant issues in curricula and teacher training, from generic skills to specific life skills, peace education, learning to live together, and pre- and vocational skills
- Creating permanent mechanisms for social partners at all levels to engage with the education and training provided under the direct supervision of the state
- Creating opportunities for specific external bodies to be directly involved in technical work on curriculum development, materials design, the training of teachers and (vocational) trainers, the provision of professional support to schools, and the design and implementation of national qualification frameworks
- Finding ways to dovetail learning in schools with learning that is ongoing or can be organised within communities and in the workplace

4.9 Entrepreneurship education

Entrepreneurship education is conceived in a broad sense, as a pedagogic approach to fostering self-esteem and self-confidence by stimulating and nurturing the talents and creativity of the individual. At the same time, it helps build the relevant skills and values that will assist learners in expanding their perspectives on schooling and future opportunities.

It is important to promote entrepreneurship education at all levels and in all types of education and training through advocacy, networking, research and the sharing of knowledge, materials and good practice, to contribute to the achievement of EFA and the MDGs.

Methodologies are based on the use of personal, behavioral, motivational, attitudinal and career planning activities. It should be included in national curricula through addressing competencies for life and work, and be linked to the labour market, focusing on generic competencies and including crosscutting issues. Furthermore it need to be integrated into school activities, training centers and non-formal education approaches through e.g. creative activities, problem-based learning, hands-on learning approaches, project-based learning, opening of school to real life and work situations and broadening the scope to include out-of-school youth.

Major **challenges** are:

- Fostering societal development, stimulating economic growth and innovation
- Creating a culture of critical and innovative thinking
- Preparing young women and men for life, society and work
- Possibilities of including out-of-school youth
- Making children more proactive and independent of patriarchal structures
- Acquirement of self-confidence and motivation

4.10 Inter-sectoral collaboration

The importance of collaboration and responsiveness in basic education has major repercussions for linkages between education, and policies and programmes in other sectors of socio-economic development. In particular, this relates to economic development and labour / employment, health and other social services, regional / rural development planning, and agencies dealing with post-conflict re-construction and rehabilitation.

Special **challenges** here are:

- Creating mechanisms for inter-ministerial cooperation in child and youth development
- Promoting close inter-departmental cooperation at local level leading to joint initiatives affecting the personal development and futures of young people

5 How far the BEAP has come

5.1 Progress since Kigali

At the regional workshop in Kigali (November 2007) participating countries were already invited to indicate their interest in participating in follow-up work, to be organised by UNESCO through BREDA and IBE, geared to assist countries in reviewing the ongoing process of expanding basic education and implementing and enhancing basic education reforms.

The BEAP process was initiated in The Gambia in April 2008; in Ethiopia in October 2008; in Cote d'Ivoire in December 2008; and in Tanzania in April 2009. Currently, there are plans to launch the BEAP in other countries (such as Benin, Togo, Burkina Faso and Senegal in West Africa, as well as Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Djibouti and Seychelles.)

In the Pilot Phase, the priority focus areas have been the following:

- (1) The development of an overall curriculum framework for basic education, agreed upon by all stakeholders.
- (2) Curriculum and syllabus development for 9-10 years of seamless basic education, including at least one year of early childhood education.
- (3) Capacity development for curriculum developers, teacher trainers, head teachers, monitors and teachers.
- (4) Designing and applying a communication strategy aimed at sensitising all national stakeholders.

Thus, the approach of the BEAP has been to follow a two-track path, by combining actual work on the most central component of basic education reform, the curriculum, with human resource development through capacity development and sensitisation.

Expected **intermediate outcomes** have been:

- A re-definition of the purpose and process of education
- An new overall and integrated curriculum framework for basic education
- Revised assessment tools and methodology for monitoring learning outcomes
- A competency-based curriculum with syllabi embedding a revised set of essential leaning outcomes, including entrepreneurship
- Recognition of multiple entry-points to the common and inclusive curriculum through formal, non-formal and informal learning pathways
- A methodology to start basic education in the mother tongue
- Established basis for linking expanded basic education, in processes and outcomes, with reform of further and higher education and training
- Established basis for linking basic education with entry into the world of work
- Integration of BEAP work into the country's education sector plans
- A trained core team of curriculum developers and teacher trainers

5.2 Experiences in The Gambia

The BEAP programme started in this country, which thus provides the longest experience of BEAP implementation to-date. This preliminary review of developments and experiences focuses on the key events in this process, the provisional outcomes of developments thus far, and issues that seem to emerge from the experience thus far.

Key events in BEAP development

Meetings of members of BEAP Steering Committee with the Gambia BEAP Steering Committee on needs for capacity building in curriculum development and gaps remaining in the country education sector plan (April 2008).

First regional meeting of BEAP, held in Banjul and hosted by the Gambia National Commission for UNESCO (April 2008). This meeting was held between the BEAP Steering Committee and the representatives of The Gambia and Ethiopia, and focussed on the substance and procedures regarding the Stakeholders' Conference.

The Gambia Stakeholders' Conference (April 2008). This conference was attended by representatives of the Gambian and Ethiopian ministries of education, Gambian education institutions and organisations, the Gambia National Commission, relevant UNESCO entities and sister agencies as well as identified international experts. It aimed at reviewing developments and challenges in Gambian basic education, aligning visions on the BEAP, agreeing on the components to be prioritised in The Gambia, and defining actions to be taken as well as resource mobilisation. There was agreement that BEAP would focus on (competency-based) curriculum development and capacity development.

The conference produced a draft 'roadmap' for the implementation of the BEAP in The Gambia, with priority areas of focus (curriculum framework, curriculum development, capacity development and communication strategy), various types of activities and expected outcomes.

Capacity development workshop (November 2008), aiming at improving understanding of BEAP and curriculum frame, and at developing technical skills for producing such frame and finalising the roadmap.

External consultant visit (Nov.-Dec. 2008). This person consulted with stakeholders and produced a draft outline of the curriculum frame and guidelines for its elaboration.

National conference on the new curriculum framework (April 2009) on activities to be carried out in line with the 'roadmap'.

Provisional outcomes and progress made

Thus far the BEAP process in The Gambia has led to agreements on the focus of the BEAP, the production of a provisional roadmap, and the availability of an outline of a curriculum framework for the country, along with guidelines on how to proceed with its elaboration. Furthermore, it appears that a deeper understanding of the BEAP, its background and value, has been achieved among the principal stakeholders in the country. Capacity of key staff involved with curriculum development has been improved.

Issues in BEAP development in The Gambia

With reference to the goals and principles of the BEAP, several aspects of its initial development are not yet quite clear:

- The extent of full stakeholder involvement in the process
- The degree of sensitisation required to change mind-sets and prepare stakeholders for comprehensive reform
- The usefulness of a broader indicative plan that links priority areas for action with other components of basic education to be addressed (the draft roadmap largely focuses on curriculum development)
- How the BEAP is being integrated into the Sector Plan
- Which mechanisms effectively bring about country ownership as well as country-led action

5.3 Experiences in Ethiopia and Cote d'Ivoire

In the implementation of the BEAP, one important good practice has become inviting one or two other interested countries to participate in the initial stakeholders' conference of a new BEAP country. This has broadened the interest in the BEAP, brought in additional perspectives and initiated sensitisation in countries that had agreed to take up the BEAP. This was the basis for Ethiopia to participate in the Gambian stakeholders' conference, and for Cote d'Ivoire to participate in the conference held in Addis Ababa in October 2008.

Provisional outcomes and progress made

In Ethiopia, BEAP Steering Committee members and ministerial representatives of Ethiopia, The Gambia and Cote d'Ivoire agreed that revision of curriculum would be the first component to be addressed, and on technical assistance to be provided. The Stakeholders' Conference held in Ethiopia in October 2008 brought together policy-makers and curriculum specialists from the federal ministry and regional bureaus, along with representatives of The Gambia and Cote d'Ivoire and international agencies. The conference addressed the current state of basic education policies, reforms and their implementation; special strategies to improve quality in education; and major issues, such as curriculum development, inclusive education entrepreneurship education, school development, and the roles and education of teachers.

As in the case of The Gambia, a draft 'roadmap' for BEAP's implementation was developed, in line with the Ethiopian General Education Quality Improvement Package (GEQIP). The stakeholders' conference agreed on a "Final Consensus Statement", which well reflects the BEAP goals and principles:

- "There is a need for a proper needs analysis and awareness creation for inclusive education for all students, the development of a culture for inclusive education in classrooms, schools and society.
- Existing competency based curricula, the present education framework and policy documents as well as GEQIP may need to be more streamlined in light of the BEAP meeting based on competency-based approach and inclusive education provision in order to identify gaps and include identified activities into the national road map prepared.
- When necessary, there is a need to adjust policies, strategies and funding mechanisms towards competency based education provision, not limited to the elaboration of curricula, syllabi and textbooks, but encompassing the participation of all stakeholders, particularly teachers, parents, students and the community at large.
- The basic curriculum framework must reflect a vision of a unified Ethiopian society in its diversity and political decision taken through a steering committee ensuring participation of all stakeholders in further processes.
- In line with the national strategy of special needs education, education units and other strategies of inclusive education within all other departments at national, regional and district level need to be developed.
- Existing curricula and training methodologies should be supplemented by more practical examples for teaching and learning, improved methods of assessment and examination.
- Practical training modules and mechanisms to implement curricula at grass-root level and teacher training institutes need to be developed and implemented.
- Quality assurance mechanisms for all participating stakeholders including civil society need to be put in place.
- BEAP is a tool to achieve the above goals and will continue to assist Ethiopia to implement the objectives of the GEQIP in the development of contextualised curriculum materials that will empower teachers in their day to day work in the classroom"⁷.

Alongside UNESCO Addis Ababa, plans are being drawn up to carry out the identified actions in Ethiopia, starting with a capacity building workshop on Entrepreneurship Education (scheduled in June 2009).

In Cote d'Ivoire, a Stakeholders' Conference was held in December 2008, gathering ministerial representatives of Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia and Ethiopia, as well as Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal and Togo. This conference addressed the state of basic education, current policies and strategies, and a range of themes relevant to further basic education development. Similar agreements were made concerning the priorities and modalities for follow-up work in 2009, and the technical assistance to be provided. A draft roadmap was produced, focusing on curriculum development, inclusive access and development of school quality and effectiveness, teacher training and development, and improving relevance and efficiency of a complete basic education cycle.

5.4 Experiences in Tanzania

The launch of the BEAP in Tanzania took place in April 2009, bringing together ministerial representatives from Tanzania (including Zanzibar), Ethiopia, Kenya, The Gambia, Djibouti, Seychelles and Uganda, as well as the BEAP Steering Committee and development partners. Participants from The Gambia and Ethiopia were invited to share experiences, outcomes and follow-up of the BEAP launch in their countries in 2008. The other countries participated in the conference as observers.

Similarly to the previous BEAP launches, the conference was conducted in a way to ensure the BEAP process will be owned and driven by the country. It allowed for: aligning visions of basic education; considering countries' education and training policies and reforms; as well as assessing challenges and needs for BEAP's technical assistance, in the areas of curriculum, teacher development, school development and capacity building.

BEAP main partners welcomed the proposal, presented by IBE, of piloting its newly developed draft Worldwide Resource Pack for Capacity Building in Curriculum Development (WWRP) through a sub-regional capacity building workshop for curriculum developers and teacher trainers, to be held in June/July 2009 in Dar es Salaam. It was also believed that the WWRP, when improved after the pilot period, can be adapted to different contexts and needs for training purposes within the framework of BEAP. UNESCO Dar es Salaam, with an active role in the UN "Delivering as One" pilot taking place in Tanzania, will strongly support BEAP's implementation.

5.5 Emerging lessons and challenges

Although BEAP implementation is in an initial stage and formative reviews of the pilot phase have not yet been undertaken, it is possible to identify some aspects of the BEAP processes that may yield some lessons or that may remain significant challenges for some time.

In terms of lessons, the following ones seem already relevant:

- The usefulness of inviting other countries to national stakeholders' conferences, for purposes of sharing and promoting understanding of key dimensions of basic education development, and of the possible role of BEAP.

- The attention given to country stakeholders reporting on their policies, plans and state of implementation, along with underlying visions and perspectives on issues and bottlenecks in improving quality and equity.
- The importance of focussing on improving common understanding of key concepts, such as 'basic education', 'inclusive education', curriculum versus syllabus, skills versus competencies.

As the BEAP spreads in Africa, the following pertinent **challenges** that have emerged are being addressed in each country where the BEAP becomes operational:

- The ability for the country to set its own benchmarks for basic education development, which correspond to a national vision on development and relates to the socio-economic and cultural context
- Adequate needs identification and analysis (BEAP process, step 3) informing priorities, modalities and substance of reform
- Promoting a wider national policy dialogue on basic education reform that helps to change mindsets as a basis for effective implementation
- Achieving sustained country-led action, involving national expertise, autonomous from external technical support
- Placing priority areas for action (curriculum development) within a wider frame of basic education reform, in such way that essential linkages for complementary action (in relation to other components) can be followed up
- Adopting entrepreneurship education as an overarching strategy to prepare for active citizenship and participation
- Creating a mechanism for effective coordination among departments and organisations responsible for different components of basic education development
- The operationalisation of transversal areas of attention such as inclusive education, competency-based approaches, entrepreneurship education and school re-structuring as part of national action plans
- Promoting direct collaboration between (neighbouring) countries, as a form of south-south cooperation

Acronyms and abbreviations

ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AU	African Union
BE	Basic Education
BEAP	Basic Education for Africa Programme
BREDA	UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Africa (Dakar)
ECCE	Early Childhood Education and Care
EFA	Education for All
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for Technical Cooperation)
IBE	UNESCO International Bureau of Education (Geneva)
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IIEP	UNESCO International Institute of Educational Planning (Paris)
IICBA	UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (Addis Ababa)
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NFE	Non-formal Education
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
PTA	Parent-Teachers Association
GEQIP	General Education Quality Improvement Package (Ethiopia)
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SWAp	Sector-Wide Approach
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UIL	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (Hamburg)
UNEVOC	UNESCO International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (Bonn)

