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What is This?
Chapter 5

Policies on Free Primary and Secondary Education in East Africa: Retrospect and Prospect

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This chapter reviews the evolution of education policies in the East African region in a historical context. The focus is on the formulation of policies for access to primary and secondary education in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania since their independence in the 1960s. We ask the following questions: What led to those policies and how were they funded? What was the role, if any, of the international community? What were the politics and underpinning philosophy surrounding the formulation of those policies and have the policies changed over time, and if so why?

In recent years, several countries in sub-Saharan Africa have (re)introduced the Free Primary Education (FPE) policy in line with both Education For All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) international agendas. Three East African countries—Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania—are among them. All three countries are often held up as success stories in the implementation of FPE policies and in all of them, implementation of FPE policies is already leading to new policies for access to secondary education. But the idea of a universal primary education system is not new to these countries. Efforts have been made to expand access to education ever since they gained their independence from British colonial rule in the early part of the 1960s. Yet, still, there are those with no access, those who are excluded after initial entry, those at risk of dropout, and a majority excluded from any form of secondary education.

The three countries have common characteristics and historical backgrounds. For example, few of their population had access to education at all levels in the past, and hence, each faced similar educational and literacy challenges at the time of their political independence in the 1960s. Kenya declared a campaign for Universal Primary Education (UPE) free of charge as a long-term objective in 1963. Tanzania followed in 1967, and Uganda, although lukewarm in its desire to expand primary education, nonetheless experienced improved access from the time of independence in 1962 until the late 1970s when internal political conflict and war caused serious
disruption (Bogonko, 1992; Ssekamwa & Lugumba, 2001). All three have over time been characterized by Consortium for Research on Education Access, Transition and Equity (CREATE) zones of exclusion (i.e., those with no access, those who are excluded after initial entry, those at risk of dropout, and those excluded from secondary education). They have similarly announced and implemented new policies for FPE following the international and internal pressure leading to the reintroduction of multiparty politics in the late 1990s (Stasavage, 2005). However, the three countries have had different experiences with the implementation of both UPE in the 1960s and FPE in the 1990s and have differed in the philosophies underpinning their education expansion more generally.

Sharing common borders, the three countries came together to form the East African Community (EAC), a loose federation as a political vehicle to pursue common goals in the 1960s. The community broke down in 1977 following philosophical differences in their development strategies. Tanzania and Uganda followed a socialist model of development, symbolized by the late President Nyerere’s “Ujamaa” model, whereas Kenya adhered to capitalism in practice (although referred to “African socialism” in development strategy policy documents). Faced with similar challenges, partly as a result of policies of economic liberalization under Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), the EAC was revived in the 1990s to provide a common platform from which to address common problems.

The rest of this chapter is organized as follows: First, we discuss policies and action taken by governments of the three countries in the immediate post-independence era in relation to expanding access to those who had been excluded by the colonial education policies. Second, we present the formulation of those policies again in relation to how and whom they benefited. Third, we discuss implementation strategies and processes of those policies. Fourth, we discuss their institutionalization, replicability, and financial sustainability. Fifth, we outline the implications of these policies for the poorest groups. Sixth, we provide an overview of recent policies on access to secondary education and ask whom they have benefited and how the excluded groups can be reached. The conclusion follows.

IMMEDIATE POSTINDEPENDENCE POLICIES ON ACCESS

Independence and education were intertwined in all three East African countries. Tanzania was the first to attain independence in 1961 and Julius Nyerere, the founding president, having been a teacher himself, placed emphasis on secondary education for the nation’s development. Uganda followed in 1962 and there too Milton Obote, the founding president, immediately emphasized the need to expand education to meet national development needs, although priority was given to secondary education. Kenya gained independence a year after Uganda in 1963 and Jomo Kenyatta’s Kenya African National Union (KANU) Government did not hesitate to declare education one of its key priorities for national development, with emphasis placed on the development of secondary and tertiary education (Bogonko, 1992). The three countries adhered to a 1961 agreed framework at a conference held in
Addis Ababa and sponsored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The conference had set the tone and prioritized the expansion of secondary and tertiary education. This was for the key practical reason of meeting human resource requirements at that time.

Although prioritization of education policy driven by labor force needs immediately followed independence, the three governments identified ignorance and illiteracy as two of the problems they needed to tackle through education. This essentially implied expanding primary education. Consequently, access to education immediately became synonymous with development and its provision preoccupied the three governments. Moreover, access had been problematic during colonial administration because there were many Africans who were simply denied entry to education both for practical and political reasons. Practically, the rural subsistence economy may not have required much education. Politically, an educated population may not have served the interests of the colonial system. A few who managed to gain entry to primary education could not go beyond 4 years of education because access was controlled through the Grade IV examination. Access to secondary education was extremely limited and those who managed to reach it regarded themselves the cream of the African population. Often they were rewarded with immediate employment in the civil service, an opportunity that immediately set them apart from the rest of the population.

Given the obvious benefits that accrued to those who had accessed secondary education, the demand for it became very high. However, access to secondary education required that one had to access primary education first. Thus, the demand for primary education was driven by the benefits attached to secondary education. Education immediately became an issue of disagreement between the Africans and the colonial governments and was used as a theme to fight for political independence. Once independence was attained, expanding access to those who had been excluded by the colonial administration became an important means of gaining full legitimacy and of reassuring the people that political independence was not a sham (Bogonko, 1992). A number of policies were pursued to facilitate rapid access.

An immediate policy initiative in the three countries toward expanding access for Africans was to abolish racial school systems that had existed during the colonial period and to integrate them into one national education system. However, this action did not expand access for the majority who had been excluded because fees remained a barrier. What it did was to open access to the emerging African political elites who could afford to pay the fees charged in what had been well-equipped, formerly Europeans-only schools. The next step that improved access in Kenya and Tanzania was the abolition of the Grade IV examination, although fees remained a barrier to many poor households. In Uganda, the situation was already better because there was a policy of 6 years of uninterrupted primary education and of 2 years at junior secondary, which was open to all who could pay for it. This had placed Uganda ahead of both Kenya and Tanzania in terms of transition to some form of secondary education, although in reality very few managed to go beyond primary education (Bogonko, 1992).
Tanzania championed the idea of a federal East African country and her leader Julius Nyerere had been willing to delay Tanzania’s attainment of independence by 1 year if this would facilitate the formation of such a community. Kenya and Uganda were, however, lukewarm to the idea and, hence, independence was ultimately attained by each country separately (Southall, 1974). Still, the spirit of an East African Community remained and the leaders of the newly independent countries felt that a common education would be instrumental to the achievement of this goal. Moreover, by the time of independence, the only university available in the region and shared by the three countries was the University of East Africa at Makerere in Uganda. The need to have a uniform education system was therefore one of practical necessity if the countries were to share the university in an effort to quickly meet their labor needs. Admission to the university had to be based on some agreed uniform or equivalent years of primary and secondary education. To deal with this problem, Nyerere, Kenyatta, and Obote, as heads of state in each of the three countries, called for a common 7-year primary education cycle. Consequently, by 1964, Kenya had scrapped the Grade IV examination and the former primary and intermediate courses were replaced by one consolidated 7-year primary course that was fully implemented in 1966 (Bogonko, 1992). This resulted in a rapid increase in the number of children proceeding to the Kenya Preliminary Examination (KPE) taken at the end of the primary cycle from 62,000 in 1964 to 133,000 in 1966 (Kenya, MEARS, 1964–1966, cited in Bogonko, 1992). Uganda also introduced changes leading to the merging of the 6-year primary education and the 2-year junior secondary into one 7-year primary education system by 1967. This had a significant impact on access because “formerly only about one out of three or four primary-school pupils obtained places in junior secondary school” (Bogonko, 1992).

Tanzania followed in 1966 when the Grade IV examination was scrapped in towns and then in rural areas in 1973 (Morrison, 1976, cited in Bogonko, 1992). Bogonko (1992) argues that Tanzania’s separate treatment of rural and urban education reflected the scant attention paid to the expansion of primary education for the masses. The policy that was openly supported in Tanzania was the expansion of secondary and tertiary education believed to have been more useful for economic development than primary education. Tanzania’s behavior also seems to have been in line with the recommendations reached at the 1961 Addis Ababa Conference where expansion of secondary education to meet “manpower” needs was prioritized over access to primary education.

The uniform system of education continued in the three countries until Kenya changed its education system to an 8-year primary, 4-year secondary, and 4-year university education (8 + 4 + 4) system in 1984 (Bogonko, 1992).

In terms of impact on access and in relation to CREATE zones, the integration of racial schools into one national education system and the elimination of the Grade IV examination led to improvements in access to primary education for Africans who had been excluded during the colonial period. Although government policy placed emphasis on the expansion of secondary education for manpower purposes, it was at the primary level “where education experienced the most tremendous and
most unprecedented growth of all in terms of both the number of schools and of pupils” (Bogonko, 1992, p. 25).

In Kenya, enrollment at primary level increased by 23.3% between 1964 and 1968 from 980,849 to 1,209,680. This rose even further such that by 1983 nearly 93% of school-age pupils were enrolled, up from less than 60% in 1963. Enrollment in 1983 stood at 4.3 million pupils. The highest rates of growth were witnessed between 1970 and 1974 following the announcement that school fees had been abolished, first in semiarid areas and for needy cases throughout the country and second for the first 4 years in 1974 throughout the country (Bogonko, 1992; Buchmann, 2001).

Tanzania followed suit in 1969 in response to the pressure from local and Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) leaders to expand access. Expansion of government-aided schools had been restricted by government policy, which placed emphasis on secondary education. The only significant expansion of access that was allowed, following pressure by political and community leaders, was that of unaided schools. The decision to restrict government expansion of primary education seriously affected access. It was Nyerere’s speech during the launch of the second National Development Plan (1969–1974) in which he lamented low levels of primary enrollment in Tanzania as “unacceptable to a country which claims to be building socialism” that triggered a change in policy that saw Tanzania achieve universal primary education in 1977 (Bogonko, 1992).

Uganda also attempted to expand access to education for her citizens, but achievements were fewer than in Kenya and Tanzania. Between 1964 and 1982, primary-school enrollment in Uganda rose by only 166%. During the same period, the corresponding increases in Kenya and Tanzania were 327% (from 980,849 to 4,184,602) and 523% (from 633,678 to 3,312,799), respectively. In the 1970s, the annual average growth of primary-school pupils was 6% for Uganda, 12% for Kenya, and 16% for Tanzania (Bogonko, 1992; also see Ssekamwa & Lugumba, 2001).

Further analysis of expansion of access after independence based on gender indicates that the three countries considered the issue of gender seriously in their plans for educational expansion. At independence in each of the three countries, girls’ share in total enrollment was less than 40%. This was low in relation to female proportion of the total population in each of the three countries, which stood at more that 50%. According to Bogonko (1992), progress was made in enrolling girls. For instance, in Kenya, girls’ share of total enrollment rose from 34% in 1963 to 46% and 48% in 1975 and 1986, respectively. In Tanzania, it increased from 36% of the total primary school enrollment in 1962 to 42% and 50% in 1974 and 1986, respectively. In Uganda, enrollment of girls increased from 37% of total enrollment in 1965 to 40% and 44% in 1974 and 1983, respectively. Bogonko (1992) attributes progress to constant appeals to parents by the government in each of the three countries to disengage in cultural beliefs that acted as barriers for girls.

Although each of the three countries attempted to encourage equal access for both girls and boys, Tanzania moved fastest. By 1986, Tanzania had more girls than
boys enrolled at the primary level by .05%. Kenya closely followed Tanzania with 48% of her primary enrollment being girls. Uganda lagged behind both Tanzania and Kenya. However, in spite of these gains, girls were still underrepresented at the primary level. Figure 1 shows the progress made in bridging the gender gap in primary enrollment in Kenya between 1964 and 1995. Plotted on the vertical axis is the Gender Parity Index (GPI). At independence in 1963, there were only 55 girls for every 100 boys enrolled. This has since improved tremendously throughout the years. Somerset (2006) attributes improvements in the GPI during the first decade of independence to changing parental attitudes toward the education of daughters rather than overt government policy targeting girls. The abolition of formal school fees in 1974 accelerated what had already been a steady social trend such that between 1973 and 1975, the GPI went up from 77 to nearly 85. Where fees had been a barrier to access, girls were the most affected (Somerset, 2006). The abolition of the building levy in 1979 also gave a boost to the GPI, although this was much smaller compared to the 1974 government policy to abolish formal fees. The (re)introduction of the FPE policy in 2003 may have improved the GPI but the figures were not available to the authors at the time of this review.

Although there was tremendous growth in education in Tanzania and Kenya in the 1960s and 1970s, economic growth in the late 1970s was less positive. This affected the government’s ability to successfully sustain a policy of universal and free primary education. Uganda had already experienced turbulent political leadership following coups and countercoups that affected its education system in the early part of the 1970s. The mid-1980s into the 1990s featured little in terms of expansion of access to primary education. The gains that had been made in the 1960s and 1970s were eroded following the implementation of economic SAPs promoted by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF; Galabawa, 2001; Mukudi, 2004; Vavrus, 2005). The World Bank and IMF had considered SAPs as a necessary policy for readjusting and revitalizing African economies. SAPs were to achieve this by reducing the role of the state and improving that of the market in determining economic activities and policies. In the social sectors such as health and education, SAPs introduced demand management policy (Oketch, 2003). Consequently, the education sector was seriously affected when cost-sharing was introduced and parents were asked to carry some of the burden of educating their children. Enrollment declined and only picked up again following a new drive to achieve EFA by 2015 and the announcement of FPE was by each of the three countries. Uganda was the first to declare and implement FPE in 1997. Tanzania followed in 1999, and Kenya in 2002.

**FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF UPE POLICIES**

**Kenya**

The KANU campaign in the 1960s and its manifesto included the provision of universal primary education upon attainment of independence (Bogonko, 1992). The First National Development Plan (1964–1969) highlighted the need to expand education and noted that “education and national development are so closely related
in a developing country that it is almost impossible to speak of one without the other” (Republic of Kenya, 1964, p. 305; Republic of Kenya’s National Development Plan [DP], 1964–1969). Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 also included education as an instrumental part of Kenya’s development strategy but pointed out that emphasis should be placed on the economic value rather than social value of education. Education was to be “regarded as the principal means of relieving the shortage of skilled manpower and equalizing economic opportunities among all citizens” (Republic of Kenya, 1964, p. 305; Republic of Kenya’s DP, 1964–1969). Provision of universal primary education was nonetheless identified as the first of the three long-range objectives for Kenya’s educational program. The other two were to ensure availability of enough places at the secondary and higher levels to educate those with recognized abilities and to organize the educational system to meet the manpower needs of the country (Republic of Kenya, 1964; Republic of Kenya’s DP, 1964–1969). The government in its first 5-year National Development Plan (1964–1969) noted that the movement toward universal primary education would not only satisfy the demand by the wananchi (citizens) for this level of education but was instrumental for unity and cohesion of the nation. UPE was associated with widespread literacy, which the government linked to overall development and national stability. The following statement in the National Development Plan (1964–1969) sums up the government’s view:
Widespread literacy opens up many avenues of mass communication as an effective means of keeping people well informed on national, African and world problems, as well as on local affairs. An informed citizenry is necessary if a democratic African socialist state is to develop. (p. 305)

Although the government recognized the importance of primary education along these lines, it was not ready to create any illusion that it would provide it free of charge in the short term. It is clearly stated in the National Development Plan (1964–1969) that “primary education is largely a local responsibility” (p. 306) and that although the achievement of universal primary education remained the policy of the government, for purely economic reasons, the development of primary education could not be given “as high priority as secondary, technical and higher education” (p. 306). This continued as the official government policy during the second 5-year National Development Plan (1970–1974) but it was made clear that it remained impossible to provide free primary education for all. To signal the priority placed on secondary education, the government scrapped fees for advanced secondary education, otherwise known as Forms V and VI, in low-cost schools and reduced them in what were high-cost, formerly purely European schools. This was aimed at increasing the supply of middle-level and high-level manpower but in itself also fueled the demand for the lower levels of education (Republic of Kenya, 1964, p. 307; Republic of Kenya’s DP, 1964–1969).

The belief in a link between education and economic development, as evident in the first 5-year National Development Plan (1964–1969) and in subsequent National Development Plans (1970–1974; 1974–1978; 1979–1983; 1984–1988; 1989–1993; 1997–2001; 2002–2008) as well as in the Sessional Paper No. 10 is another factor that triggered policies of Universal Primary Education. Although it was believed that true economic value of education could only be realized through the expansion of secondary education, the government was sympathetic to the view of the Kenya Education Commission Report of 1964–1965 (Republic of Kenya, 1964: Ominde Commission Report) that primary education was fast becoming a minimum basic educational requirement. The Kenya Education Commission (Ominde Commission) had also recommended the abolition of racially segregated schools and strongly advised that the government should take full charge in the formulation of education policies. The Commission’s views were taken on board and were reflected in the emphasis that the government placed on the expansion of primary education in practice (although in policy terms, priority was on the expansion of secondary and tertiary education to meet manpower needs).

The government believed that education could be a means to mitigate the inequalities that had existed during the colonial period (Republic of Kenya, 1964; Republic of Kenya’s DP, 1964–1969). The colonial government had not provided education to regions that were of low potential such as semiarid areas. Neither did Christian missionaries provide or build schools in regions that had already experienced Arabic and/or Islamic influence such as the coastal parts of Kenya. These regions therefore had lower access to all levels of formal Western education at the
time of independence in the 1960s. Education in the postcolonial era, then, was to be a tool for inculcating loyalty to the state, a sense of national unity, and a means of teaching African values (Republic of Kenya, 1964; Republic of Kenya’s DP, 1964-1969). Its access by all citizens was important if these goals were to be achieved. The disparities between regions also necessitated the need to formulate policies for universal education.

The ruling KANU party had committed itself to free primary education by the end of the decade and in 1971 a presidential decree had abolished tuition fees in the most geographically disadvantaged areas and, in 1973, in all areas for Grades I to IV with a uniform fee of Sh.60 (US$80 pence) imposed for Grades V, VI, and VII throughout the country (Republic of Kenya, 1964; Republic of Kenya’s DP, 1974–1978). It was anticipated that these measures would result in a significant increase in enrollment in primary education. However, the financial and logistical implications of these policies had not been subjected to close scrutiny, leading to a priorities rethink by the Ministry of Education in 1974 owing to a staggering rise in pupil enrollment. Although school fees had been abolished, no countermeasures were put in place to replace lost revenue, and consequently, primary schools resorted to the use of a building levy that in most cases turned out to be higher than the school fees charged previously. Enrollments initially doubled in most districts but fell back to their original levels following the introduction of the building levy (Muthwii, 2004).

The fourth National Development Plan (1979–1983) was released under new political leadership. Jomo Kenyatta, Kenya’s founding President, died in August 1978 and was replaced by Daniel Arap Moi, his Vice President. Moi continued in the steps of his predecessor under the KANU banner of Fuata Nyayo (follow the footsteps) by maintaining universal primary education as a standing educational objective of his new government. Although UPE had not been achieved, enrollment had grown from less than 50% in 1963, the year Kenya gained independence, to more than 85% by 1978 (Republic of Kenya, 1979; Republic of Kenya’s DP, 1979-1983). However, the language had shifted from that of emphasizing secondary education to that of recognizing primary education as the foundation of economic and national development. The following statement illustrates this, “The primary stage of education is the most important for any child since it is here that basic knowledge is given to the child and foundations for an economically productive and satisfying life are laid” (Republic of Kenya, 1979, p. 154; Republic of Kenya’s DP, 1979-1983). For once, the national education policy was in agreement with the international goal. The Plan brought forward what had been steady UPE progress by stating the government’s objective to provide universal primary education of 7 years, free of charge to all children of primary-school age. The government also aimed to abolish building and other school funds in primary schools and to provide free milk to primary school children throughout the country (Republic of Kenya, 1979; Republic of Kenya’s DP, 1979–1983). Enrollment patterns in Figure 2 illustrate alternate periods of relative stability and those of sudden change. Sudden change reflects response to
government initiatives such as the abolition of formal school fees in 1974, the scrapping of the building levy in 1979, and the reintroduction of free primary education policy in 2003 (Somerset, 2006).

Similar to Kenyatta, who had used the UPE campaign as a means of assuring the citizens that independence was not a sham, Moi also seemingly used UPE as a way of reassuring the people of Kenya that he would continue along the steps of the founding president and that people should not panic at the change of leadership. There was a shift in policy however in the way secondary education was to be organized. The government announced that it would only allow modest expansion in secondary education to correct the imbalance between districts and between boys and girls (Republic of Kenya, 1979; Republic of Kenya’s DP, 1979–1983).

During Moi’s leadership, primary education continued to experience rapid growth, with Kenya achieving near universal primary education by the 1990s. Kenya’s achievement in the development of basic education was a showcase among Sub-Saharan African countries at the World Conference on Education for All in 1990. However, in the years that followed, many of the gains made were lost or reversed for a number of reasons, including economic decline and the introduction of “cost-sharing.” Enrollment and participation rates at the primary level declined between 1990 and 2000 and transition and completion rates stagnated. Gross enrollment at the secondary level also declined and gender and regional disparities widened,
whereas children with special needs remained underenrolled. With this background, the National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC) Government, which was elected in 2002, pledged to provide free primary education for all in its 2002 manifesto (OWN and Associates, 2004).

Consequently, Kenya (re)introduced free primary education in 2003 with a view to establishing “universal primary education” and meeting the EFA and MDG target of universal access by 2015. An interim target of a net enrollment rate of 85% was established for 2005 (Vos, Bedi, Kimalu, Manda, & Nafula, 2004). Free primary education again became an election pledge and was launched as a policy in 2003 when tuition fees and levies were abolished (Muthwii, 2004). Throughout the 1990s, enrollment had already increased by more than 27% and gender parity in enrollment had almost been attained (Vos et al., 2004). Stasavage (2005) argues that rapid expansion in access to primary education in recent years in Kenya as in Uganda and Tanzania are linked to the (re)introduction of democratic elections in these countries, his point being that when leaders are subjected to competitive politics they tend to initiate policies that are popular with the electorate. Such was the case in the 1960s when independence was achieved in the three countries under multiparty politics. However, the newly elected leaders moved quickly to amend the constitution to outlaw multiparty politics within the first decade of independence in a bid to curb any opposition to their leadership and dictatorship. The cold war is said to have helped this scenario to sustain itself for decades. However, with the end of the cold war, internal as well as international pressure gained momentum and these constitutions were repealed. Stasavage (2005) argues that it is possible that causation flows between school enrollment and democratization in both directions owing to the increased incentive for democratic governments to expand education for a population to which they are accountable and to the possibility that democracy is more sustainable in countries with a better-educated population. Indirect effects of education such as income redistributive effects also may be associated with enabling democracy. Presidential popularity is also said to be higher in countries with a recent significant increase in primary school attendance, and attendance rates have been found to be significant in explaining a proportion of cross-national variation in presidential popularity levels. The conclusion may be that African democracies provide more primary education than nondemocracies (Stasavage, 2005).

King (2005) discusses a number of trade-offs that are emerging between basic and postbasic educational provision in the context of Kenya. These relate to issues of quality, access, and inequality; the provision of other social services; the development of productive employment opportunities; and the evolution of international and donor development policy alongside that of the Kenyan government. He notes that despite a shift in international development thinking toward poverty reduction and Universal Primary Education in the 1990s and a heavy reliance by Kenya on donor assistance for recurrent education expenditure, Kenya retains its commitment to a broad-based educational strategy that makes reference to links with the labor market, economic growth and wealth creation, and the informal employment sector.
From the 1980s, Kenya’s support for diversified schools and their work orientation had been at odds with international thinking that emphasized high returns to primary education and basic education expansion. The poverty perspective has become evident in Kenyan policy, particularly since the externally driven Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), which focuses on the provision of essential social services for low-income groups, including primary education. This agenda has encouraged the identification of inequities in the Kenyan education system, particularly concerning cost-sharing, and measures such as bursaries for the most disadvantaged in the education system have been put in place. However, moves in the international agenda more recently for education and development toward more comprehensive approaches have brought international and Kenyan policy into greater coincidence. Kenya continues to emphasize wealth creation, the micro and small enterprise sectors, skills, and technology. But the 2004 and 2005 sectorwide approaches (SWAPs) developed in conjunction with external partners also make reference to these aspects of a more comprehensive approach and King suggests that the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP) may represent a strategic compromise between external and internal development priorities in Kenya (King, 2005).

Uganda

Uganda did not have as successful an experience with the expansion of primary education as Kenya and Tanzania. For example, enrollments in public primary schools rose from 524,867 in 1964 to 720,127 in 1970 and then to 1,036,920 and 1,582,009 in 1976 and 1982, respectively (Bogonko, 1992). A number of factors are associated with Uganda’s less impressive performance. They include a lack of funds, long distances from schools in the sparsely populated areas, a substantial proportion of unqualified teachers, and the military rule of Idi Ami (1971–1979). However, Bogonko (1992) argues that these issues were equally prevalent in both Kenya and Tanzania, especially the first three setbacks, leaving it only possible therefore to suggest that the main reason lay in Ugandan leadership’s lack of commitment to expand free primary education. Furthermore, Uganda devoted less of her budget toward primary education in comparison with Kenya and Tanzania.

Castle Education Commission, the first commission established by the newly independent government of Uganda, debated a range of issues affecting the education system and made its recommendations to the government in 1963, but nothing on the list of changes that were recommended reflected even vaguely the idea of universal primary education free of charge. Apart from suggesting that primary education should last 7 years instead of 6, the Commission dwelled mostly on the curriculum and the quality of education. This has prompted Ssekamwa and Lugumba (2001) to note that “the Commission’s suggestion that concentration be on increasing the quality of primary education, in circumstances where many primary school-age pupils had no opportunity to go to school, just could not be accepted” (p. 149).

In the early years following independence, Ugandan education devoted a large proportion of expenditure to the postprimary stages of education serving manpower
requirements of the administration. Despite attempts to introduce reforms aimed toward UPE, this situation continued into the 1980s, resulting from negative political and economic climates (Avenstrup, Liang, & Nellemann, 2004). Under the leadership of President Yoweri Museveni, who came to power in 1986 after waging a bloody civil war against the government of Milton Obote, the Education Policy Review Commission (EPRC) was established in 1987 and, following consultations, recommended implementing UPE in 1989. A government White Paper followed in 1992 and reforms in preparation for UPE began in 1993, including teacher and management development, curriculum and assessment reform, development of instructional materials, and new arrangements for progress monitoring. Enrollment figures did not grow substantially until 1996 when the first direct presidential election was held in Uganda.

Museveni campaigned on a UPE platform, pledging primary education for the first four children in every family. On being elected, he began the implementation of UPE in 1997. A nationwide enumeration exercise was undertaken and the government committed itself to providing tuition fees for four children per family, instructional materials, basic physical facilities, and teachers’ salaries and training. Gross enrollment rates (GERs) rose from 77% in 1996 to 137% in 1997, and net enrollment rose from 57% to 85%. Enrollment in Grade 1 increased threefold and girls accounted for 47% of enrollments by 1999. Growth in the number of schools was not so rapid and average numbers of pupils per school doubled between 1980 and 1999. The pupil:teacher ratio rose from 37.62 pupils per teacher in 1996 to 51.83 in 1997 and 63.63 in 1999. The percentage of trained teachers, however, increased. Teachers’ pay increased between 1989 and 1999, although it remained difficult for them to make ends meet. In 1997, the drop-out rate was reported to be 6% and the repetition rate 11% (Avenstrup et al., 2004).

It appears, and as argued by Stasavage (2005), that free primary education was a result of the transition to democratic politics. Political demand rather than rational planning seemingly triggered UPE in Uganda and the policy was consequently implemented without time for detailed planning and in the absence of sufficient data. Skepticism was prevalent and pointed to potential problems of finance, sustainability, and educational quality. There was little time to mobilize funding and make adequate budgetary preparations or to undertake necessary structural and organizational reforms to develop capacity for massive expansion. Avenstrup et al. (2004) have described the results as “access shock.” The burden of large increases in enrollment resulted in overcrowding, multiple shifts, teacher and material shortages, and a rise in overage students. For example, the GER rose from 68% to 123% in the 1st year of UPE and enrollment rose 240% in 6 years. In spite of these shortcomings, access improved considerably and the effect on the poor was particularly marked. Access among the poorest quintile was almost as high as that of the richest quintile (Avenstrup et al., 2004; Deininger, 2003). Confidence in the government’s ability to provide education rose and some private resources were freed up with the abolition of fees. But access shock also resulted in worsening of many other indicators,
including the student:teacher ratio and the ratio of resources including classrooms to students. Drop-out rates increased and the survival rate fell from 59% to 37%. Dropout is explained by factors such as early marriage or pregnancy, the need to work, disability or illness, failure, repetition, and lack of interest. Avenstrup et al. (2004) suggest that where these factors are student related they may indicate falling educational quality, which also may result from such factors as increasing teacher absenteeism due to stress.

UPE presented considerable challenges in Uganda in 1999, where approximately 19% of the population was of primary school age. The existing education system had not undergone fundamental change since independence in 1962 and remained highly selective with respect to progression. War and civil strife, poor facilities and resources, a lack of planning, urban–rural disparities, poor teacher training, high user costs, overemphasis of academic examinations, lack of data, inefficiency of management, lack of relevance in curricula, and a limited government budget were identified as key difficulties of the existing system (Ministry of Education and Sports, Uganda, 1999).

Since 1962, enrollments had been expanding, although the number of schools was not correspondingly increased and both gross domestic product (GDP) and education spending as a proportion of the national budget declined in the period 1971–1985. Primary education at this time reached approximately 50% of Ugandan children in the age group. Financially, the bulk of the burden was met by parents, indicating strong demand but also excluding the poor who frequently dropped out long before the end of the primary cycle if they enrolled at all. Conditions in schools were poor and often deteriorating.

Parents in Uganda are considered to value education highly and continued to send children to school in periods of considerable hardship. There is a strong tradition of community support for schools and in 1991 parental contributions made up 90% of recurrent and capital expenditure for primary education. Lack of funds was the principal reason why out of school children were not enrolled, although in some pastoral communities UPE did not precipitate the high enrollment growth seen elsewhere owing to a greater perception of the opportunity costs. Political will was a key factor in the progress of UPE in Uganda, particularly in overcoming opposition, which focused on the inability of the educational infrastructure to cope with the burden of such a dramatic rise in numbers. UPE also was enabled by primary education reforms and projects already in progress, including the Teacher Development and Management System, Instructional Materials Unit, assessment reform, and the Improving Educational Quality research project. These initiatives provided support to UPE in terms of teacher training; school and cluster organization; teaching materials; community support; and a reorientation toward formative assessment, action research, and educational quality. In addition, decentralization policy begun in 1997 brought the administration and management of schools closer to the point of delivery by strengthening the role of the district administration with the aim of increasing accountability and responsiveness. The abolition of fees was announced
for four children per household during the first phase of UPE in Uganda and to all children in the second phase. These were implemented nationally. In the first phase, UPE resulted in access shock at the school level as enrollments increased by 58% in the 1st year of the initiative in the absence of adequate infrastructural expansion and increases in teacher and materials supply. UPE substantially increased schools’ reliance on Kampala for funds and much of the necessary funding did not reach the schools immediately (Grogan, 2006).

Tanzania

In Tanzania, the growth in primary education was outside government planning and contradicted the government stand on the expansion of primary education. It was not funded by the central TANU government. The growth was largely due to self-help efforts and pressure from the Tanganyika African Parents Association (TAPA) to the endeavors of the Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and to politicians (Bogonko, 1992). The people of Tanyanyika, having gained independence, did not want to retain anything that resembled restrictions that had been placed on African education during the colonial period. So, if the government was not going to provide education to the Africans, the people of Tanzania were going to take it upon themselves to provide it to advance their way of economic and social life. Unrelenting demand from pressure groups sterilized the government’s policy to arrest the expansion of primary education. “The outcome was the opening of many unaided primary schools by TAPA and by many LEAs, notably in Kilimanjaro, Bukoba and Rungwe” (Morrison, 1976, pp. 137, 145–155, cited in Bogonko, 1992, p. 26). Pressure against restrictions on expanding schools saw enrollment grow by 22% from 59,000 in 1965 to 72,000 in 1967, with aided schools only accounting for 6% of this growth (Bogonko, 1992). But as noted by Bogonko (1992), “admittedly, the percentage increases in the latter schools decreased from 12 in 1965 to 1 in 1969” (p. 26). Tanzania did not prioritize expansion of primary education before the Arusha Declaration (February 1967) because it was believed that “no direct economic benefits flowed from primary school development” (Bogonko, 1992, p. 26). According to Bogonko (1992), the first two Development Plans (1961–1964; 1964–1969) were aimed at restraining expansion of primary education. This, however, did not actually result in stopping expansion from taking place. Pressure from TAPA and from local TANU leaders, combined with high social status attached to education, led to a situation of contradiction between what the government policy prescribed and what was actually practiced. It therefore became “difficult to arrest expansion” (Bogonko, 1992, p. 26). The demand for education was so great that even before the 1967 Arusha Declaration, growth in primary school enrollment had superseded all previous records. For example, enrollment figures increased in the period 1956–1961 by 26%, whereas in the period 1961–1966 they increased by 54% (Morrison, 1976, cited in Bogonko, 1992).

Almost as many children in 1971 as in 1961 failed to get places in primary schools. As noted by Nyerere (1973), “this . . . infuriated President Nyerere to the extent that,
on introducing the second 5-year National Development Plan (1969–1974) on May 28, 1969, he called it ‘unacceptable to a country which claims to be building socialism’” (p. 86, cited in Bogonko, 1992, pp. 26–27). It is ironic that the same government that had placed restrictions on the expansion of primary education was now admitting failure to expand primary education and cautioned against indulging in self-congratulation about what Tanzanians had achieved in education. This presidential warning triggered a shift in policy that led to rapid expansion of aided primary schools. By 1974, aided schools registered unprecedented growth of 16.5% from 1,106,387 in 1973 to 1,288,886 in 1974 (Bogonko, 1992). This increased even further by 52.1% in 1977 when enrollment went up to 2,973,487 from 1,288,886 in 1974. By 1977, Tanzania had achieved UPE and enrollment growth continued until 1982, when for the first time since Nyerere’s warning it declined to 3,512,799 from 3,538,183 pupils in 1981 (Bogonko, 1992). As noted by Galabawa (2001), Tanzania had effectively achieved free UPE ahead of the target date agreed at the Addis Ababa Conference.

Under Nyerere’s leadership, the Musoma Resolution became the framework for a “miracle” of enrollment growth. Expansion was achieved with little donor assistance and denominational schools were nationalized, giving the government almost sole responsibility for provision. The organizational structure of the TANU Party facilitated central direction and top-down control. Fees were abolished and government spending grew as communities were mobilized in an effective drive to provide access for all.

The economic background, however, was one of little growth as Tanzania experienced a prolonged economic crisis in the 1970s and mid-1980s that, along with the associated policy responses, led to the inability to sustain progress toward EFA (Galabawa, 2001). African socialism as the development strategy pursued by Nyerere encouraged heavy state control of economic activities, which in the long-run led to the isolation of Tanzania by international investors and from Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Gross enrollment rates (GERs) rose from 39.1% in 1970 to 98.0% in 1980 and then fell to 77.7% in 2000. Rates of dropout and repetition for the same years were 0.9%, 2.0%, and 6.6%. Absolute numbers in primary education were increasing despite fluctuations in the GER, doubling between 1975 and 1990 and rising a further 38% from 1990 to 2000. Population growth remained fairly high (2.7% in 1995) and the dependency ratio also was high, with 53% of the population being younger than age 18 in 1995. Female enrollment rates fluctuated from 83.2% in 1985 to 77.6% in 1999, although the drop-out rate was higher for boys than for girls (Galabawa, 2001).

Beginning in the mid-1980s, Tanzania was increasingly affected by HIV/AIDS, which raised the dependency ratio, causing a fall in demand for education and taking the lives of many teachers (Galabawa, 2001). Internationally imposed SAPs brought wide-ranging economic and educational reforms emphasizing private sector provision and financial efficiency. The Economic Recovery Programme of 1989-1993 dismantled the central system of state control and moved toward a free-market
orientation. In education, cost-efficiency measures were introduced alongside cost-sharing initiatives and the development of nonstate provision. As a result, the balance of financial burden shifted away from the government and toward parents, which resulted in growing inequality of access at all levels along with disparities of quality (Galabawa, 2001; Vavrus, 2005).

The disenabling environment of SAPs raised the out of school numbers as costs rose and parental incomes fell. Poor macroeconomic conditions in Tanzania thwarted self-reliance and government tax revenues in Tanzania were low compared to neighboring countries throughout the period, even by 2000. Despite a similar proportion of government spending being allocated to education as in Kenya and Uganda, spending as a proportion of GNP was much lower at only 2.3% in 1990 compared to the East African average of 5.12%. Notably, Tanzania spent 5.0% of GNP on education in 1980 and devoted 19% on government spending to education—a figure that had reduced to 12.5% by 1985 and that recovered to 21.2% in 1995. Debt-servicing was a major problem for Tanzania and swallowed 23% of government expenditure in 1995/1996 (Galabawa, 2001).

Galabawa’s (2001) analysis shows that external economic factors and policies had a substantial negative effect on Tanzania’s UPE progress. Similar analysis is presented by both Maclure (2006) and Vavrus (2005), but Galabawa also identifies a number of internal weaknesses that worked to erode and reverse UPE successes. Rapid expansion in the 1970s led to a “crisis of distorted priorities” as education grew beyond the ability of the government to meet costs or maintain efficiency and effectiveness. Low relevance of curricula, classroom overcrowding, poor student nutrition, arguably inferior teacher training, and a rising student:teacher ratio were evidence of declining educational quality, and it is suggested that the pace of expansion may have resulted in the neglect of necessary structural preparations. Moreover, the links between quality and participation in education may partly explain falling enrollment. In poorer areas, these issues were exacerbated where community capacity to meet costs was low and in the absence of a strategy to invest in and manage spending by districts despite correlations between educational and regional poverty indicators (Galabawa, 2001).

Recent expansion of education in Tanzania is driven by the nation’s “Vision 2025” development plan and focused on addressing poverty to generate capacity both to provide and consume improved education. The lack of voice given to education stakeholders in the top-down approach has been addressed in part by the greater participation of the donor community and weakening of central government control (Galabawa, 2001). Galabawa argues that “empowerment” and local “ownership” have been the key to enrollment rate improvements post-SAPs. UPE objectives in Tanzania have been articulated with a host of macropolicy objectives in what Galabawa describes as a “holistic” approach. Public service reform and educational restructuring aimed at broadening the education revenue base and at decentralization and rationalization began in the mid-1990s and the Poverty Reduction Strategy (2000) organizes donor assistance to education according to the Tanzania Assistance
Strategy with the intention of distributing assistance more equitably and efficiently (Galabawa, 2001).

The trend of expansion that resulted from Nyerere’s caution in 1969 was a logical outcome of three factors. First, following the shift of emphasis to expanding primary education as expressed by the second 5-year Development Plan, in 1971, the government ordered an end to the expulsion of primary pupils for nonpayment of school fees. Second, expansion was concentrated at the upper primary school (Grades V-VIII) so that by 1974 there were enough places for Grade IV leavers at the next level. Third, primary school fees were abolished in 1973 (Bogonko, 1992).

There was little expansion at the secondary level owing to the government’s prioritization of equity goals once emphasis was shifted to primary education. There was, however, substantial expansion in adult basic education and adult literacy rose from 31% in 1967 to 85% by 1983 (Colletta & Sutton, 1989). The social infrastructure of government literacy campaigns was used to publicize the UPE drive and also enabled teacher recruitment to fill the growing demand in the primary sector. Expansion was characterized by low costs both to the government and to users. In 1969, all fees were banned and a free textbook policy was introduced (Colletta & Sutton, 1989). Although almost all recurrent costs were met by the government, per student expenditure in Tanzania remained low, at a mean annual figure of US$34 in 1981 as compared to US$71.5 across East Africa. The role of local communities in school construction alongside low teacher salaries were key explanations of low levels of costs. Tanzania instituted a successful and innovative program of distance education for in-service teacher training in the late 1970s. The lack of secondary school graduates meant that the UPE drive would depend on training primary school graduates for teaching and more than 45,000 were enrolled from 1976 to 1979 to a primary correspondence and radio-instruction-based scheme. Colleta and Sutton (1989) note that the abolition of fees contributed to growth in enrollment, indicating that costs had previously been a barrier to access. Tanzania’s “Education for Self-Reliance” is considered a successful example of an integrated approach to rapidly expanding social service provision. The elements identified in Tanzania’s successful and sustainable UPE approach include political commitment, increased social demand, meeting capital costs through community participation, increasing recurrent expenditure through intrasectoral budget shifts, microplanning for schooling at the local level, provision and motivation of sufficient competent teachers, raising educational quality and relevance through curricular and examination reform, localizing control and accountability, and promoting access for girls and marginalized groups (Colletta & Sutton, 1989).

Tanzanian policy included other redistributive measures such as concentration of primary school funding on deprived areas, positive discrimination for secondary school access on a regional basis, and the modification of assessment to broaden criteria and emphasize nonacademic factors (Court & Kinyanjui, 1980). The authors suggest that “Education for Self-Reliance” had not, at the time of writing, displaced the academic role of education in competing for places higher up the system, and
indeed, access to secondary schooling remained determined by examination performance (Court & Kinyanjui, 1980). The policy presented a number of difficulties and dilemmas, including problems of defining acceptable nonacademic selection criteria, the issue of whether to accept English as a medium of instruction, the reform of administrative structures to reflect self-reliance and local initiative, the reconciliation of national and regional education/development priorities under a decentralized system, and the development of structures of opportunity that reinforce rather than undermine educational policy (Court & Kinyanjui, 1980).

POLICY INSTITUTIONALIZATION, REPLICABILITY, AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Kenya

Following the implementation of FPE policy in 2003, the net enrollment ratio in Kenya grew by a further 22.3%. However, as in the 1970s, the implementation of free primary education was beset with difficulties. Rapid expansion in enrollment exacerbated problems of teaching and learning facilities, increased classroom congestion, and raised teacher:pupil ratios. These problems, again as in the 1970s, are leading to high drop-out rates and have affected the inflow of pupils in the 2nd year of implementation: 2004. Districts that registered a 20% increase in enrollment in 2003 hardly recorded more than 5% in 2004 (Muthwii, 2004; OWN and Associates, 2004).

Although the Kenyan government raised its education budget in 2003–2004 by 17.4% and was strongly supported by donor funding in its free primary education initiative, Muthwii raises questions about the sustainability of the policy. The cost of providing FPE is beyond the scope of the ordinary education budget, economic performance has not been strong, and donor finance tends to be temporary. She concludes that the FPE initiative of 2003, similar to interventions in the past, was pursued as a matter of political expediency and was not adequately planned and resourced with the consequences of dropout and falling educational quality. In view of these challenges, Muthwii considers the attainment of sustained FPE an illusion in the context of Kenya (Muthwii, 2004). Mukudi (2004) also addresses the issues of sustainability with regard to universal primary education in Kenya, including public resource capacity and educational quality. Economic performance in Kenya is a limiting factor and might be considered disappointing. The study uses secondary data on a variety of economic, educational, and demographic factors to explore the costs and other implications of achieving UPE in Kenya based on current per capita spending. Mukudi concludes that without adequate investment, however, the synergies between educational access, economic growth, and poverty reduction may not be capitalized on and a vicious cycle may be observed in which global competitiveness becomes elusive in the absence of investment in knowledge creation (Mukudi, 2004). Vos et al. (2004) argue that given the financial constraints that Kenya faces, meeting the EFA target will require a more efficient resource allocation within the
education sector. A number of options are examined with scenarios whereby 100% net enrollment is targeted for the bottom two quintiles and where the government meets all the costs to households of education. They show that the cost of the government bearing all household education costs would require a 91% budget increase or 0.8% of GDP and result in a net enrollment rate (NER) of 94% (Vos et al., 2004). The authors conclude that within a tight budget, cost-effectiveness considerations make a considerable difference (Vos et al., 2004).

King (2005) notes that despite targeting the achievement of UPE by 2005, as many as 1.5 million Kenyan children remain out of school, in the formal sense at least. Considerable challenges exist in schooling these children, who may prove the most expensive to reach. Difficulties also arise in monitoring what has happened with respect to the achievement of UPE; although it is claimed that millions of new children have enrolled, little data is available. There are also a number of unintended consequences of providing free primary education as Kenya has done since 2003. The author notes that although cost-sharing was excluding the poor, the advent of free education has meant that parents may now take it that they need make no financial contribution and many have moved children from low-cost informal provision to the state sector. A further corollary of rising numbers and falling quality in the state system may be that wealthier parents prefer the fee-paying private sector. Further issues of declining teacher morale and quality may exacerbate these problems and ultimately make it more difficult for bright children from poor families to succeed. The author points out that if primary education is to bring development benefits, then children must actually master the intended curriculum; he notes, however, that there is much evidence to suggest this may not happen (King, 2005).

King (2005) further discusses the importance of intersectoral factors in the success of educational investment programs such as KESSP. The need for teachers to find second incomes, the increasing importance of nonmeritocratic criteria for employment selection and issues of state capacity, good governance, and corruption are important determinants of the results of educational investment while being outside the control of the sector. The author concludes that the UPE goals will require a holistic approach, not only a focus on primary education, and indeed educational investment alone will not be enough. The importance of other sectors, including agriculture, energy, transport, and trade, is emphasized along with the need for strong national vision, good governance, and government capacity-building. The minimalist approach to development discernible in the MDGs needs to be broadened and the author sees some signs that this is already taking place. In this environment, Kenya’s own approach may not be seen as so ambitious and wide-ranging as the MDGs become just one entry point into a wider perspective on investment and organizational and institutional change (King, 2005).

Uganda

The costs of UPE to the government have been high. Primary education accounted for 30% of the education budget in 1989–1990 and 66% by 1999–2000.
The education budget rose as a percentage of all government expenditure from around 15% in 1989 to 25% in 1999. At constant prices, Uganda spent U.S.$8 per pupil in the early 1980s on primary education and U.S.$32.5 in 1997-1998. The coming of political stability in 1987 brought economic growth that has continued at around 6.5%. Along with the cancellation of foreign debt, this has helped Uganda finance UPE. International and multinational agencies also have played an important role, and in 1998–1999 they contributed around the same amount to primary education development as the Ugandan government (Ministry of Education and Sports, Uganda, 1999).

Bategeka (2005) finds that although UPE improved access indicators substantially, quality indicators worsened following the introduction of UPE and have yet to recover to pre-UPE levels. Although gender equity improved markedly, inequities in financing education remain a key challenge. Access in terms of the GER rose by 73% in the 1st year of UPE and by 2003 was 149% of the pre-UPE level. In response to increased demand as fees were eliminated, the government, private sector, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) built a large number of schools and the number of primary school teachers in service doubled. The profile of the school population shifted such that by 2003, 25% of all pupils were enrolled in Grade 1. There is evidence of significant dropout at the primary cycle, which appears to be relatively gender-neutral. Stated reasons for dropout included lack of interest, family responsibilities, sickness, and employment.

Although quality indicators suffered terribly in 1997, they have been improving steadily since. The pupil:teacher ratio, for example, has fallen from 65 to 1 in 2000 to 54 to 1 in 2003. In 2003, 37% of teachers had received no training as teachers, most of whom were deployed in UPE schools in rural areas. A large number of resources were devoted under the School Facilities Grant to procuring textbooks, building schools, purchasing furniture, and so on. Although the pupil:textbook ratio has improved, Bategeka, (2005) notes that this has not led to improved pupil performance. Indeed, the results of the National Assessment of Primary Education (NAPE) between 1996 and 2000 suggest that performance has deteriorated following the introduction of UPE.

The gender gap has closed considerably, and in 2003, girls accounted for 49% of enrollments at the primary level. The initial UPE policy had given priority to girls and to disabled children. Rural populations also have benefited from UPE and the GER in rural areas reached 140% in 2003. Threats to the gains achieved through UPE include high drop-out rates and inequalities in performance between public/private and urban/rural schools. Success has been due to government commitment and funding (see Table 1) along with donor support, including debt relief. Parents’ willingness to send their children to school also contributed (Bategeka, 2005).

Lessons from the experience of the UPE program include an indication that fees did present a serious obstacle to enrollment in Uganda, judging by the massive increase in enrollment post-UPE. Other impediments include institutional constraints that may affect quality, although the government is concentrating on improving efficiency and on increasing inputs, including teachers, classrooms, and textbooks.
Corruption also constrains the success of UPE implementation—in 1997, one study found that only 35% of allocated funds were reaching their intended beneficiaries, although this is said to have improved to more than 80% owing to greater transparency and accountability. Liberalization in the education sector has allowed parents to opt for private education, thereby reducing the burden on the state, but opportunities for targeting the poor have not in the view of the author been fully utilized. It is suggested that UPE should be focused more squarely on the poor to reduce inequality in access and in quality of education. The author concludes that the Ugandan experience shows that a poor country with a committed government can fight poverty by providing universal access to education, although the financial limitations faced by the state mean such a program will require external support (Bategeka, 2005).

Tanzania

Colleta and Sutton (1989) identify lessons to be learned from the successes of community action and involvement in education expansion in Kenya and Tanzania. They note that the abolition of fees contributed to growth in enrollment, indicating that costs had previously been a barrier to access. Tanzania’s Education for Self-Reliance is considered a successful example of an integrated approach to rapidly expanding social service provision. The elements identified through the examples of Kenya and Tanzania of a successful and sustainable UPE approach include political commitment, increased social demand, meeting capital costs through community participation, increasing recurrent expenditure through intrasectoral budget shifts, microplanning for schooling at the local level, the provision and motivation of sufficient competent teachers, raising educational quality and relevance through curricular and exam reform, localizing control and accountability, and promoting access for girls and marginalized groups (Colleta & Sutton, 1989).

### TABLE 1  Trends in Education Sector Budget as a Percentage of the Government Budget, 1992–2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Year</th>
<th>% of Government Budget</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992/1993</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993/1994</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994/1995</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995/1996</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996/1997</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>1997/1998</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998/1999</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999/2000</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000/2001</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001/2002</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Galabawa (2001) argues that Tanzania’s recent UPE drive has been implemented without careful planning or financial strategy. His main concern was that the process of financial and management decentralization as part of UPE implementation was not followed through because the process maintained a top-down approach. He notes that a “key strategy in implementing UPE is to empower and to commit communities in the development of primary education” (p. 9), much the same way as had been the case prior and following the Arusha declaration of 1967.

**POLICY IMPACT AND IMPLICATION ON THE POOREST GROUPS**

Deininger (2003) uses a range of data, including nationally representative survey data and Ministry of Education figures to examine the reorientation of public spending in Uganda toward basic education in terms of its impact on enrollment and quality of outcomes for the poor. The study finds that there is good evidence that the direct and indirect costs of schooling constituted a significant obstacle to enrollment for the poor and especially for girls prior to Uganda’s UPE program of 1997. Reducing educational costs may thus play a role in improving equity of access to education in the Ugandan context. As well as abolishing fees, however, the Ugandan UPE program involved a substantial publicity campaign and a greater degree of cost recovery at the postprimary levels of education. However, the policy has led to some of the highest teacher:pupil ratios in the world and to high rates of examination failure at the end of the primary education phase. These issues of quality are key to the sustainability of UPE. There have been considerable schooling infrastructure improvements since 1997, often resulting from community involvement, suggesting that the UPE program may have succeeded in increasing local incentives to education (Deininger, 2003).

Evidence from the very much weaker reduction in impact of parental income on secondary schooling is cited in further support for the role of the abolition of primary fees in increasing enrollment. The lack of a commensurate rise in qualified teachers and schools has meant increasing teacher:pupil ratios and a dramatic increase in the number of pupils per school, especially in rural areas. There is some evidence for a decline in educational quality following the UPE program and the author notes that despite a fall in costs, the hypothesis that in quality adjusted terms there was little real change in the cost of primary education cannot be rejected. The author suggests that the program may be considered an example of the effectiveness of a results-oriented approach to development assistance because much of the financing was obtained through budgetary support in the form of debt relief (see Table 2; Deininger, 2003).

Based on household DHS (education supplement) survey data from 1995, Grogan (2006) illustrates the education situation pre-UPE alongside data from a similar survey conducted in 2000–2001 to test the effects of school fee elimination. Prior to the UPE initiative in Uganda, parents were meeting up to 90% of recurrent schooling costs. In 1995, 70% of boys and 67% of girls were enrolled in primary
school and 11% and 9% in secondary school. Only 32% were in the correct grade for their ages. Grogan’s study found that those who did not attend school came from poor households, that there had been historically large gender gaps, that starting school late was associated with a lower probability of completion, and that improvements in enrollment before the age of 8 were already occurring prior to UPE as a result of other education initiatives. A comparison group of private school pupils was used as a control in the study of the quality of public school education during the period. Four issues are considered by Grogan in relation to the effects of the elimination of school fees in Uganda—the differences in the effects on the optimal level of education of population subgroups, potential feedback effects of the policy on the opportunity costs of schooling and the returns to schooling, changes to the ability composition of those in schooling, and changes in the quality of schooling. The study finds that the reduction in schooling costs affect differently on different socioeconomic groups such as urban/rural and that opportunity costs may rise as large numbers move out of labor and into school, thereby reducing supply in the labor market and raising wages for child labor. Returns to education may fall as the supply of labor with a given level of education rises, which may in turn exert feedback effects on the demand for education and optimal levels of schooling. The mean ability level of pupils may decline as costs decline, thereby reducing levels of attainment and educational quality may decline if the resources available per pupil are reduced. Grogan (2006) finds that the causal effect of the introduction of UPE raises the probability of attending school before age 8 by 8% to 10% both for boys and girls. She finds some evidence that the new entrants are more likely to have come from poorer backgrounds and of a reduction in the drop-out rate, especially in the later years and particularly where boys from poor households and rural areas are concerned. She also finds some evidence of rising dropout in private schools and of a reduction in the probability that an individual can pass a standardized reading test if


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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recurrent</td>
<td>70.38</td>
<td>105.61</td>
<td>95.98</td>
<td>90.22</td>
<td>90.00</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>43.00</td>
<td>37.27</td>
<td>37.68</td>
<td>28.08</td>
<td>43.50</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>113.38</td>
<td>142.88</td>
<td>133.66</td>
<td>118.30</td>
<td>113.50</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget support</td>
<td>117.30</td>
<td>102.90</td>
<td>124.10</td>
<td>129.50</td>
<td>138.80</td>
<td>124.10</td>
<td>124.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project support</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>8.69</td>
<td>8.81</td>
<td>21.66</td>
<td>14.24</td>
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</table>

Source. Eilor (2004, Table 2.6, p. 76).
they began education in a government school after the introduction of UPE by 11%. Controls indicate that this is not a result of falling ability and so might be attributed to falling quality (Grogan, 2006). The author suggests that UPE successes so far have been achieved through top-level leadership, cabinet-level consensus, ministerial support, and stakeholder involvement, all of which are identified as strong features at the time of UPE implementation in Uganda. Institutions will need to be strong but flexible capacity will need further development if UPE progress is to be sustainable (Grogan, 2006).

**POLICIES ON SECONDARY EDUCATION ACCESS**

Knight and Sabot (1986, 1990) conducted extensive surveys in workplaces in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam to obtain evidence on ability, schooling, cognitive skills, and earnings for use in comparing the impact of secondary education policy in Kenya and Tanzania. Both countries had stated an intention to address issues of inequality through educational policy, although their approaches differed substantially. Tanzania restricted expansion in secondary education during the period in question, whereas provision in Kenya increased rapidly. This key policy difference in two countries with much in common created a natural experiment exploited in this study. The authors examined the justification for expanding secondary education in the two countries on the basis of their findings in relation to the returns to that phase of education, its role in equalizing incomes, and its potential for reducing the transmission of intergenerational inequality. Their inclusion of variables for ability and cognitive skill was intended to allow an assessment of alternative explanations of human capital relationships such as screening and signaling. At the theoretical level, they identify two distributive effects of increasing access to education that are closely linked to Kuznets’s theory—a composition effect whereby the increased relative size of the educated and more highly paid group increases income inequality and a compression effect whereby the increasing supply of educated labor reduced the wage premium for education, thereby decreasing income inequality. They suggest that if educational access expands more rapidly than labor market opportunity, then the compression effect may be likely to outweigh the composition effect.

In 1980, only 4% of the age cohort was enrolled in secondary school in Tanzania. Kenyan provision had expanded rapidly, particularly due to the growth in *harambee* (self-help) community schools, and accommodated 25% of the age group by 1980. Demand exceeded supply in both countries but restrictions in Tanzania made competition for places there much more intense. The extent of government subsidy to secondary schooling in Tanzania also was greater than in Kenya, placing significant budgetary constraints on expansion. The Tanzanian policy of education sector reform (ESR) also brought significant curriculum changes emphasizing a diversified curriculum and the use of Kiswahili, whereas Kenya’s approach largely maintained continuity with the past. Access to tertiary education remained similarly low in both countries.

The authors concluded that Tanzania’s ESR approach of limiting secondary education expansion and refocusing the curriculum has been counterproductive in terms
of equity and improvements in cognitive skill and productivity levels relative to Kenya. Competition for and rationing of secondary education appear to have served to select secondary school entrants by family background in Tanzania more than the more inclusive approach of Kenya despite its higher fees. Filtering down as education has expanded in Kenya has reduced the returns to secondary education compared to Tanzania, thereby increasing income equality, although the manpower planning approach may regard it as wasteful of resources. Given Tanzania’s small secondary school population, however, its progression rate to higher education was much higher than in Kenya, and the authors find that at this stage “selection by family background” was more prevalent in Kenya than in Tanzania, suggesting that Kenya’s expansion of secondary schooling may have postponed this form of selection.

It is two decades since Knight and Sabot’s comprehensive study comparing secondary education policies in Kenya and Tanzania and their impact on access. Kenya’s NARC government acknowledges that growth in secondary education is constrained and is likely to remain so due to lack of adequate secondary schools to match primary enrollment. Uganda, having had a near decade-long success with UPE, has now started to focus attention on transition to secondary level. In Kenya, it appears the government is banking on community partnership, which led to the establishment of harambee secondary schools in the 1970s. In all three countries, it is likely that the poor will find it difficult to access secondary education even after completing primary education. This will limit the impact of education in poverty reduction and in meeting the MDGs. Further work may be needed to establish the shift in the factors that might encourage or hinder the poorest groups’ transition to secondary level and assess whether the current policies by the government are adequate. For instance, do those policies address causes of exclusion in lower secondary among the poor? Is it lack of adequate facilities that is causing low enrollment or is it lack of interest in further education? Will FPE work for the poor in terms of helping them advance to some form of secondary education?

**CONCLUSION**

Countries that have been successful in increasing enrollment face two particular problems—enrolling the remaining 10% to 20% of the school age (at primary level) population who tend to be the poorest children and ensuring that those in school benefit by learning. Furthermore, even where fees are not a factor in preventing access they may still have a regressive impact. The greater the inequality, the harder it is for the poor to pay fees (Raja & Burnett, 2004).

The experiences of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania show that the elimination of fees at the primary level can have dramatic results. However, increased enrollment has resulted in concerns for deteriorating quality and increased demand for secondary education (Raja & Burnett, 2004).

Low enrollment among the poorest groups still presents a problem. This low enrollment may reflect a lack of supply, the opportunity cost of attending school, the perceived low returns from schooling in the labor market or other factors such as the
distance to school, and for girls, the existence of female teachers and separate toilets. Major determinants of enrollment include household income, schooling cost, presence of schools, community involvement, transportation, education quality, and relevance (Raja & Burnett, 2004). As both Vavrus (2005) and Maclure (2006) have suggested, there is need for locally initiated policies in education, and where international partners are involved, a strong local context based on endogenous research and policy is desirable in developing policies that may pay specific attention to local interpretation of education policies and how it might affect the enrollment of those who prove difficult to reach.

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