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Cross country (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Tanzania) case study

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Summary

The four countries in this cross-country case study, namely Eritrea, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Tanzania, illustrate the range of provision and achievements within East Africa as a whole, as identified in a recent UNESCO report on education in Africa. Challenges across the region include high levels of poverty, inequities of access to and completion of education, poor levels of quality and the need to improve system management (UNESCO, 2006).

All the countries are committed to universal primary education and the growth of post-primary education opportunities. All still have some equity issues to be resolved and all have experienced a growth in enrolment, with consequences for quality.

Of the four countries, Tanzania and Ethiopia are considered to have the commonest context and features, as larger countries in both spatial and population terms, with a low level of urbanisation and industrialisation, and remote pastoralist areas. In relation to *access*, both have made substantial progress in relation to enrolling children in primary school, though Tanzania has made most progress over a longer period of time and has almost achieved both universal primary education and gender parity. Both have experience of the impact on education quality of rapid expansion of primary education, including high class sizes and shortages of textbooks. They both also have low levels of transition to secondary, technical/vocational and higher education.

Both Eritrea and Rwanda are smaller in size, and both have experienced conflict, the former a war of independence and an unresolved border conflict with Ethiopia, and the latter the war and genocide of the early 1990s. However their past levels and current trajectories in relation to education are very different. Whereas in Eritrea many children remain out of elementary (primary) school, with a NER of just over 50% in 2005, figures for Rwanda in 2006 indicate a primary NER of 94% in 2006, with gender parity.

In relation to *equity*, girls' education is a priority in all the countries. Other aspects of equity such as spatial inequality, particularly remote rural areas, are recognised as an issue but are being tackled in a more uneven way, not least because of the impact of decentralisation. There are also different levels of priority given to other equity issues such as disability, and it can be suggested that in Eritrea and Ethiopia, there is a need for more targeted incentives for groups of children still out of school.

All the countries face *quality* issues. It has been challenging in every country to manage the impact of increased enrolment and both maintain and develop quality. The main impact of increases in enrolment has been increases in class size, due to insufficient classrooms and teachers. Double shifting is currently being used but has an impact on quality. There have also been difficulties with the distribution of sufficient textbooks in three of the countries.

In all the countries, there does not seem yet to be a co-ordinated approach to reform of the curriculum, teaching and assessment. For example, in Tanzania, curriculum reform has not been accompanied by teacher training reform, whilst in Ethiopia, links seem to be weak and in Rwanda, teacher training has been neglected. Spending on

non-salary budgets continues to be constrained. Examinations have not been re-aligned to reforms of curriculum and pedagogy and the use of a variety of approaches to assessment of learning needs to be developed. The commitment to curriculum modernisation and teaching has not yet been translated into practice. The reality in most schools continues to be the use of didactic methods in large classes with little variety in instructional materials by teachers who have not been exposed for sufficient time, if at all, to the teaching methods required to accommodate a diversity of learners in a universal education system. There is a need for synergy in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment reform, with more and better learning materials and a better balance between salary/non-salary budgets to free up more funding for instructional materials and other school-based spending.

All the countries need to consider how to produce more *teachers* at less cost without having an impact on quality, how to effectively deploy teachers, especially to rural areas, and how to manage more effectively in-service training for large numbers of teachers.

In relation to system *governance and management*, although all the countries have decentralised systems, none has to date focused sufficiently on making schools better managed at local level, including head-teacher training and school development planning, supported by school grants (though Rwanda has implemented grants). However civil society involvement is being developed, through school management committees/parents teacher associations at school level, and partnerships with NGOs, particularly in relation to non-formal education.

All four countries are rightly committed to expanding access to post-primary education to support economic growth and high level capacity development but need a better balance of unit costs and resource allocations across the whole sector

All will require continuing external financing, which needs to increase to meet financing gaps, be used more effectively and be available long-term to sustain long-term planning. All but Eritrea have made significant progress in managing their education sectors on a sector-wide basis, with clear links to their overall government fiscal systems, careful forward planning in line with national goals and policies, and donor harmonisation and support of the programme, including robust annual joint reviews and other evaluation exercises.

1. Introduction

1.1 As noted in UNESCO's summary of Education in Africa, 2006 (UNESCO, 2006), East Africa, which includes all the four countries reported in this cross-country case study, is the least developed of the five regions in Africa, with many countries having both a low human development index and a high primary age population. Access to the first grade of primary education is high but survival to higher grades, and to post-primary education, tends to be lower. The number of higher level students is very limited, although compatible with the number of job opportunities in modern employment sectors given the relatively low levels of economic development. As in the rest of Africa, a large proportion of public resources is spent on those who study longest.

1.2 At the same time, the region is very heterogeneous, with some countries having almost universal primary education and growing post-primary education but others with continuing high numbers of children out of school at primary level and very limited access to secondary, technical/vocational and higher education. Early childhood education is embryonic in a number of countries and adult literacy varies from 42% to 92%. Gender parity ranges from 79% to 100%. Other disparities, particularly enrolment related to family socio-economic level and an urban-rural divide in relation to participation in school, are high in a number of countries.

1.3 Challenges include the need to improve student flows, enhance quality and make more progress in relation to system management, with, in some countries, a substantial increase in enrolment of children still out of school (UNESCO, 2006).

1.4 The four countries in this cross-country case study reflect the above features, and range of provision and achievements, within East Africa as a whole. They also present both similarities and differences in relation to size, geography and history. Ethiopia is the largest country, with a population of 60 million, followed by Tanzania with a population of 41 million. Eritrea has 4.2 million people. Each of these countries has some urban centres but is mostly rural, with dispersed nomadic populations in more remote rural areas. Rwanda, with a population of 8.9 million people, is also largely rural. All four countries depend primarily on agriculture. Eritrea and Rwanda have also been affected by conflict; Eritrea by a war of independence and an unresolved border dispute with Ethiopia, and Rwanda by the war and genocide of the early 1990s.

2. Methodology

2.1 This cross-country case study is based on four individual case studies of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Tanzania carried out for the Global Monitoring Report, 2008. Each of these studies drew on a range of education sector documentation and also included contact with government officials and with donors giving support to these particular countries.

3. Policy environments

3.1 All four countries are committed to the MDGs and EFA goals, including achievement of universal primary education, gender parity, and an increase in post-primary education opportunities.

3.2 Their policies also reflect trends in Africa more generally towards extending the period of basic education. In Ethiopia, this basic entitlement has been developed through extension of the primary cycle to eight years, while in Rwanda basic education comprises six years of primary education followed by three years lower secondary education. In Tanzania, the primary cycle is seven years and is followed by four years in lower secondary education whereas in Eritrea the restructuring of the system has resulted in five years of elementary and three years of middle education as the basic/compulsory entitlement, followed by two years of secondary education.

3.3 All four countries have fee-free primary education and partly as a result, have had to manage significant increases in primary enrolment and the concomitant need for more schools and classrooms, an expansion in teacher supply, and more textbooks. All are attempting to address repetition and drop out, increase transition from the first cycle of education and improve completion rates and learning achievements despite the impact on quality, particularly class size, of recent increases in enrolment.

3.4 All the countries are committed to developing education as part of their poverty reduction strategies. This commitment includes universal primary education but also the expansion of secondary, technical/vocational and higher education to promote economic growth. However there are different emphases in types of investment and their purposes. In Ethiopia, extension of the primary education cycle to eight years is linked to agricultural reform as part of the government's agricultural development-led industrialisation strategy (ADLI) and the expansion of TVET is also linked to economic growth. In Rwanda, the emphasis is on a technology-led economy, with concomitant investment in mathematics, science and technology. Tanzania intends in particular to expand access to secondary education, which is currently very limited. Eritrea is developing technical schools and skills development centres. All the countries have also made some investment in adult literacy and skills development.

3.5 In relation to the governance and management of service delivery, both Ethiopia and Tanzania have decentralised systems, with central ministries overseeing policy and local government delivering education. They also have school management committees/parent teacher associations at school level. Rwanda also has a decentralised system, now with 30 districts, including the development of school-based funding grants. Eritrea is also decentralising, with the six regions having a number of smaller local government administrative units. This change has placed heavy demands on capacity at local level. Community involvement through school management committees or parent teacher associations is being developed in all four countries as an important aspect of decentralisation.

3.6 Primary education in all the countries is funded and provided largely by the state. This is also the case for post-primary education in Ethiopia, though there are private universities and some private providers of the one year pre-service teacher training for primary education. Early childhood education is largely private. NGOs have a limited role in Ethiopia though their contribution is now being encouraged more by the government and they are involved in non-formal education. Non-formal education is provided by a variety of providers in Tanzania including both government and NGOs, and there is also some private secondary provision. Community-based provision for early childhood education and for youth and adult skills development is being

encouraged in Eritrea. In Rwanda, schemes have been established to train young people in small scale commercial, industrial and entrepreneurial activity.

3.7 All the countries face challenges beyond the education sector which have an impact on demand, supply and system management. Some of these are common but others differ from country to country, due to geographical, historical, policy and other factors. All have a largely agricultural economy and face the challenge of poverty, with levels of poverty and food insecurity being particularly high in Ethiopia but remaining a significant factor in the others. This continues to affect demand for, and/or completion of, education. This change has affected capacity at local level. As a result of conflict, Eritrea has also had to manage the re-integration of displaced people, and Rwanda, both the political and social consequences, and educational needs, arising from the genocide, such as caring for OVCs, catch up programmes for over-age children and the need to invest in technical and higher education to replace higher levels of human capital.

4. Progress, policies and strategies on equity

4.1 All four countries are committed to ensuring that children currently out of school have access to primary education and an increasing number of all children progress to post-primary education.

4.2 Progress on *enrolment* has been good in three of the countries. Both Tanzania and Rwanda have virtually achieved universal primary education, though not yet universal primary completion due to drop out. Despite increases in enrolment, a large number of children (estimated up to 5 million) remain out of school in Ethiopia. Progress in Eritrea has been impeded by conflict. Key figures are summarised below.

| Country | Enrolment 2000/1 | Enrolment 2005/6 | Comments |
|----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Eritrea | GER:61% NER: 42% | GER: 71% NER: 52% | 2004/5 figures for current enrolment |
| Ethiopia | GER: 70 NER:n/a | GER:80% NER:58% | Primary grades 1-4 |
| Rwanda | GER n/a ?? NER:73% | GER: 136% NER: 94% | High GER due to continuing high overage enrolment |
| Tanzania | GER: 77% NER: 58% | GER: 117% NER: 96% | |

4.3 *Gender parity* at primary level has been achieved for some time in Rwanda. In Tanzania, a high degree of equity since 2000 has been maintained, with a GPI of 0.99 in 2006. Ethiopia has increased substantially the enrolment of girls in lower primary education (GPI is now 0.87) since 2000. Progress in Eritrea has been slower, due to both economic and social factors such as domestic work, early marriage and pastoral life styles. Gender parity at secondary level in each country remains significantly lower than at primary level, except in Rwanda, which is also particularly committed to increasing female participation in upper secondary and higher education.

4.4 In Tanzania, Ethiopia and Eritrea there remain some wide *differences between regions*, with enrolment lower in remote rural regions in particular. Tanzania has

invested in non-formal education, especially for remote rural and nomadic children. This strategy is now being adopted increasingly in Ethiopia as well, for both remoter rural areas and other disadvantaged groups. Children living in remote areas, and in nomadic groups, are more of a problem in terms of being disadvantaged and hard to reach than urban slum and street children in some other countries in Africa. However some provision is made for *street children* in both Ethiopia and Tanzania, mainly through NGOs and faith-based organisations, and for both street children and displaced young people without a job, or family or community roots, in Rwanda

4.5 Ethiopia has now developed a policy on *disability*, inclusion and special needs education. Despite a history of conflict, neither Rwanda nor Eritrea have such explicit policies on disability as Ethiopia, though Rwanda does intend shortly to develop a policy on special educational needs.

4.6 Rwanda has made a range of provision for *OVCs*, whose position has resulted from both the genocide and from HIV/AIDS. This has included 'catch-up' programmes for young people, for which there has been substantial demand. It is not clear how many orphans there are in either Ethiopia or Eritrea. The figure for Tanzania is estimated at 2 million. HIV/AIDS is a threat but is not as devastating in Ethiopia and Eritrea as in some African countries though it has been described as a national disaster in Tanzania. In addition, some children are orphans as a result of poverty and food-insecurity (and in Eritrea, conflict). In all three countries, there is little evidence of systematic policies and provision for *OVCs*.

4.7 Both Ethiopia and Eritrea still have a substantial number of children out of school, including girls, children in rural areas and children with disabilities. Although their policies and education sector plans are committed to increasing access, there are few *targeted incentives* for families to enrol their children in school.

4.8 None of the countries has developed *early childhood care and education* as a priority strategy for increasing the enrolment and achievements of disadvantaged groups. Both Ethiopia and Rwanda have left such provision to be developed by the private sector and there are few guidelines, or resources, for this sub-sector in Tanzania. However, Eritrea is concerned to promote early childhood education, particularly through centres and communities. The medium term objective is to have 50% of children enrolled in up to two years of pre-primary education though little progress has as yet been made beyond the formulation of policy.

4.9 In all four countries, *transition* to the next cycle of education is limited by repetition and drop out. In Rwanda, the number of children enrolling in secondary education (lower secondary 'tronc commune', Grades 7-9) doubled between 1999 and 2004, to 200,000 students, with a transition rate from primary school of 46% but an NER of only 10% (and fewer girls than boys) due to drop out before completion of primary education. In Eritrea, the NER for middle level education (Grades 6-8) was 20% in 2004/5. In Ethiopia, transition to the upper primary cycle (Grades 5-8) has increased but the NER was still only 34% in 2005/6 (with a GPI of 0.69). In Tanzania, the primary cycle is seven years, with almost universal enrolment, and enrolment at secondary level doubled between 2000 and 2006, though NER is still only 13% (with fewer girls) (and with a substantial amount of private secondary provision).

5. Progress, policies and strategies on quality

5.1 All the countries have had to manage the impact of increased demand for education on quality, particularly the need for more schools and classrooms, teachers and textbooks. All the countries continue to have quite high levels of repetition and drop out, though these are decreasing now in Ethiopia, due in part to its new policy of automatic promotion.

5.2 In relation to *learning inputs*, all the countries are continuing to build additional *classrooms and schools*. School infrastructure is a challenge in Ethiopia, with many schools requiring major repair. Efforts are also being made to reduce construction costs and encourage communities to contribute to school construction and maintenance, in cash and kind. Tanzania also faces the challenge of poor school learning environments. Eritrea also had high construction costs but is now developing lower cost school buildings, with sanitation to encourage the enrolment of girls. In Rwanda, school construction has been needed to replace infrastructure destroyed during the war but it has been difficult to keep pace with demand.

5.3 As yet, none of the countries has achieved sufficient *textbooks* for every child, though average pupil-textbook ratios are not higher than 2:1 and in Eritrea they are generally approaching 1:1. In Tanzania there is a commitment to provide \$10 per capita funding for learning materials. However this target has not yet been reached due to budgetary constraints and textbook development and distribution needs to be improved. Textbook distribution is also an issue in Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, there is a very low level of spending on non-salary items, particular at individual school level. It is intended to provide enough textbooks during the current Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP 3) to achieve a student: textbook ratio of 1:1. Current reform of the curriculum in Rwanda will require a new suite of textbooks and related teachers' guides and supplementary instructional materials.

5.4 Reform of the *curriculum* varies between countries. In Tanzania there has been a shift to a competence-based curriculum, and in Rwanda, an increasing focus on science and technology. The curriculum in Ethiopia is seen as too content-based and generally overloaded but there are no plans for radical reform even though it is questionable whether the curriculum at upper primary level is appropriate for the agricultural reform which eight years of universal primary education is designed to support. None of the countries has addressed examination reform. Ethiopia has undertaken two national sample learning assessments, both of which indicated that only half of the students at Grades 4 and 8 met the achievements expected of their grade achievement.

5.5 Both Ethiopia and Eritrea teach in local *languages of instruction* at the primary level: this is less relevant in Tanzania which instructs in KiSwahili. All three countries are increasingly using English as the medium of instruction at secondary (or equivalent) level. Rwanda uses Kinyarwanda, French and English as languages of instruction- links between Francophone and Anglophone school provision tend to be weak.

5.6 *Teacher* supply is an issue in all four countries, as is the quality of teaching. Following an increase in enrolment since 2000, the PTR in Tanzania in 2005 was 56:1

and in Ethiopia, 71:1. Both countries use double shifting, as does Eritrea where the PTR is lower at 45:1. The PTR in Rwanda is 64:1, and double shifting is also used. Such double shifting can increase access and make more use of a limited number of teachers but does reduce the hours of formal instruction.

5.7 Teacher shortage is particularly acute in Rwanda, partly as a consequence of the war and genocide. There is also teacher absenteeism. Ethiopia needs to substantially increase the number of teachers to match continuing increases in enrolment and expansion of participation in the upper primary cycle and secondary education. It has however undertaken a major programme of teacher training reform, including increasing female recruitment, more school-based experience, additional training of teacher educators and continuing professional development for all teachers in relation to English language competence. In Tanzania, more teachers are needed to remediate deterioration in pupil-teacher ratios following increases in primary and secondary enrolment. Teaching is of poor quality but teacher education reform has not accompanied school curriculum reform. In Rwanda, pre-service teacher training is too long and expensive, training curricula and approaches are out of date and major reform will be needed to support the transition to nine years of basic education. There is also very little in-service training. In Eritrea, there are now five institutions providing teacher training, with plans to both expand and train further the teaching force. Both Ethiopia and Eritrea also have school management training with the aim of certificating head teachers/school directors.

6. Post-primary education

6.1 For all the countries, achievement of the EFA goals includes the expansion of post-primary education, in part to tackle increasing demand following primary enrolment expansion, in part to improve the literacy and skills of young people and adults, and also as a strategy for economic growth and thus poverty reduction. There is in each country an intention to expand technical and vocational education from a low base in order to improve both generic and occupational skills. For Rwanda in particular, there has also been a need to provide education for those beyond primary school age affected by the war and genocide.

6.2 However the costs of post-primary education remain an issue, particularly in Rwanda but also the other countries. In common with most countries, unit costs are highest at upper levels of education and most money is spent on those who study longest. TVET can be particularly expensive due to high capital and running costs whereas adult literacy and skills centres are usually cost-effective and community based. Tanzania has tried to redress the spending balance between sub-sectors. Donor partners are working with Rwanda and Ethiopia to reduce unit costs, and balance the amounts spent on primary and post-primary education across the sector, through, for example, greater efficiency and some cost recovery. However, the expansion of tertiary education and of TVET remains a policy priority for both Ethiopia and Rwanda, as part of their strategies to increase economic growth, and for Rwanda, to become a lead country in science and technology.

7. Governance, system management and quality assurance

7.1 Post-conflict reconstruction is a critical issue in two of the countries, namely Eritrea and Rwanda. Rwanda in particular has had to face issues related to the curriculum, how to include groups affected by conflict and how to develop lost capacity.

7.2 For Ethiopia and Tanzania, as larger countries, a key issue is how to make decentralisation more effective. In Ethiopia in particular, rapid decentralisation to more than 600 districts did disrupt capacity though the system is now more settled and capacity being developed. In all the countries, there is some school-based management involving parents and communities. Rwanda is also developing school capitation grants. In Ethiopia, spending allocations remain at district level, but there is full fiscal decentralisation to regional and district level. There remain however some inequities in fiscal allocations between districts and therefore, schools, and the need for more regional management, for example of teacher deployment, is now increasingly recognised.

7.3 In all countries, data are reasonably robust but EMIS does need further development, particularly in relation to analysis at decentralised levels.

7.4 In all countries, supervision and inspection of schools could be strengthened.

8. Finance and donor support

8.1 All the four countries require external financing. As noted earlier, some countries need to address the balance of spending across the education sector. Ethiopia in particular needs to address disparities in funding across different region, districts and schools. Sector support is provided by donors for Rwanda and a combination of budget and other support for Ethiopia and Tanzania. Each of these three countries has a range of donor partners. Support for Eritrea is largely projected based, and the main donor has been the World Bank. Both Ethiopia and Rwanda have been endorsed by the FTI though so far, because Ethiopia was considered to have sufficient donors at the time of endorsement, only Rwanda has received finance from the Catalytic Fund, though this will not meet all of the financing gap identified in the endorsed plan.

8.2 In Ethiopia, Tanzania and Rwanda, the links between the education sector and the national fiscal system continue to be strengthened through medium-term expenditure and budget planning. All three have a sector-wide approach to education and donors are collaborating with each other and with the respective governments in planning, financing, implementing and monitoring education programmes.

9. Conclusions

9.1 All the countries are committed to universal primary education and the growth of post-primary education opportunities. All have experienced a growth in enrolment, but still have some equity issues to be resolved and have experienced, but are now addressing, the impact of increased pupil numbers on the quality of education.

9.2 In relation to equity, girls' education is a priority in all the countries. Other aspects of equity such as spatial inequality, particularly lower access to, and completion of, primary education in remote rural areas, are recognised as an issue but are being tackled in a more uneven way, not least because of the impact of decentralisation. There are also different levels of priority given to other equity issues such as disability. It can also be suggested that in Eritrea and Ethiopia, there is a need for more targeted incentives for groups of children still out of school.

9.3 All the countries face quality issues. It has been challenging in every country to manage the impact of increased enrolment and both maintain and develop quality. The main impact of increases in enrolment has been increases in class size, due to insufficient classrooms and teachers. Double shifting is currently being used but has an impact on quality. There have also been difficulties with the distribution of sufficient textbooks.

9.4 There does not seem to be a co-ordinated approach to reform of the curriculum, teaching and assessment. For example, in Tanzania, curriculum reform has not been accompanied by teacher training reform, whilst in Ethiopia, links seem to be weak and in Rwanda, teacher training has been neglected. Spending on non-salary budgets continues to be constrained. Examinations have not been reformed to reflect the vision, aims and approaches of new curricula and the use of a variety of approaches to assessment of learning and learning outcomes needs to be developed.

9.5 The commitment to curriculum modernisation and teaching and management capacity development has not yet been translated into practice. The reality in most schools continues to be the widespread use of didactic methods in large classes with little variety in instructional materials by teachers who have not been exposed for sufficient time, if at all, to the teaching methods required to accommodate a diversity of learners in a universal education system.

9.6 There is a need for synergy in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment reform, with more and better learning materials and a better balance between salary/non-salary budgets to free up more funding for instructional materials and other school-based spending.

9.7 All the countries need to consider how to produce more teachers at less cost without having an impact on quality, how to effectively deploy teachers, especially to rural areas, and how to manage more effectively in-service training for large numbers of teachers.

9.8 Although all the countries have decentralised systems, none has to date focused on making schools better managed at local level, including head-teacher training and school development planning, supported by school grants (though Rwanda has implemented grants). Education in all four countries would benefit from strengthened supervision and advisory support.

9.9 All four countries are rightly committed to expanding access to post-primary education to support economic growth and high level capacity development but need a better balance of unit costs and resource allocations across the whole sector

9.10 All will require continuing external financing, which needs to increase to meet financing gaps, be used more effectively and be available long-term to sustain planning.

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Country case studies for GMR 2008:

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