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Education for All 2000-2015: achievements and challenges

GMR Background Paper on Demand for Literacy

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1. Introduction

This paper addresses issues posed for full achievement of EFA goals by *the demand for literacy, basic education and primary schooling*; particularly in regions of the world where we are furthest from universal coverage in those regards. The three terms for learning outcomes italicized in the last sentence -- literacy, basic education and primary schooling -- are only a few, of course, among the many currently used, even at lower levels of attainment, and they are neither identical nor unequivocal. "Literacy" may be of many types and, in its simplest connotations, generally includes mastery of numeracy as well, though the two kinds of record-keeping and communication skills may have different uses and different consequences. The term "primary schooling" potentially introduces a new factor into the mix: formal certification of learning, which has effects of its own. And "basic education," as an attempt to be more broad and encompassing, is usually taken to cover capacities and attitudes that go well beyond either the content of literacy instruction or the curriculum of primary schooling and may be delivered by other means. What is more, the boundaries among the three overlapping domains are constantly shifting.

The anatomy of demand

The *demand* for literacy has not often been seen as a pressing issue. Given the lack of school enrollment capacity in so many countries and the relative unavailability of structured learning opportunities for adults and youth dropouts, the focus has traditionally been put on the

[1] The author wishes to acknowledge the collaboration and support of Haddy Njie

quantitative insufficiencies of educational supply. Even on that side, it is only in the last decade or so that increased attention has been given to problems with the *quality* of supply (e.g. Chapman & Adams, 2002; Hanuschek, 2005). For the most part, on the other hand, educational demand tends to be assumed: of course people want their children to get into school or they want additional training; there just aren't enough places or programs to accommodate them.

But this can be misleading, and it is therefore worth going a bit further into "the anatomy of demand," while avoiding the steeper technical aspects, which really aren't relevant at this point. The type of demand discussed in the paragraph above is what economists would call "notional" or "latent" demand (Latent demand, 2014) – i.e., what consumers of educational services would procure *if they were under no resource constraints* and had few immediate or prohibitive livelihood tradeoffs to consider. Or it might be what others think they *should* want. Consumers, though, are always constrained, particularly in circumstances of poverty, and have to make their own assessments and rough calculations, or trust those of people who have proved reliable. What counts therefore in such cases is *effective demand* (Godfrey, 1987), defined in the economic lexicon as "the quantity that consumers are able and willing to purchase at each conceivable price." (Effective demand, 2014) -- or, in layman's terms, what relevant groups both desire and can actually afford to procure. And effective demand depends in good part on what people are able to *do* with the actual outcomes of the type of education offered in environments accessible to them.

From this point of view, desires for education are therefore in good part an instance of "derived demand," meaning that motivation for it "results from demand for an intermediate good or service for which it is necessary" (Derived demand, 2014) In everyday language, people desire to become educated or literate and are prompted to devote resources of time,

energy and income to that end to the extent that they are convinced it offers them more than compensating chances of a better life and livelihood. As a Hausa proverb from West Africa holds, with typical ellipsis, *Magana ba ta kai tsohuwa kasuwa* – "[Nice] talk [alone] isn't enough to get the old lady to the market."

Varied sources

Of course, the demand for literacy does not stem *solely* from material incentives or their likelihood, as Bartlett (2008**)** and Trudell (2010) point out. The desire for education of various types has always been understood to bear a direct connection to the possibilities it offers for cultural enrichment and personal fulfillment as well. If one takes the example of motivation for formal schooling as a medium for acquiring literacy of different types, some simple but useful distinctions among those sources of attraction can be made – on one axis, between internal motivations (promotion within the system to higher levels, certificates or diplomas) and external ones (application and use of what one has already acquired); and, on the other axis, between material/financial motivations and cultural/psychological ones. Crossing those two axes yields the sort of grid portrayed in Figure 1 hereafter.

		Type of motivation	
		A. Material/Financial	B. Cultural/Psychological
Locus of Motivation	I. Internal	IA. Prospects of enhanced reward from higher levels or diplomas… modified by the estimated likelihood of attaining them	IB. Prospects of enhanced socio-cultural status from higher levels or diplomas… modified by the estimated likelihood of attaining them
	II. External	IIA. Potential material benefits from shorter term and local application of likely attainable competence.	IIB. Anticipated increases in personal satisfactions and cultural enrichment from local use of attainable competence.

Figure 1: Simplified grid of literacy motivation

This rough conceptual scheme of course undergoes significant modifications when applied to the realms of nonformal education and informal learning as opposed to the formal school system, because for the most part the first two do not have an "internal" hierarchical structure that is as organized or socially sanctioned as formal schooling. The differences, however, may not be as great as they initially appear, particularly in impoverished environments, simply because the current likelihood of reaching schooling levels that guarantee much of a material reward or status boost, given existing dropout rates and limited employment opportunities[2], largely wipes out the top row of the table and relegates the comparison among educational delivery modalities to the second one. In short, it is evident in all three realms that the bulk of motivation – once again within the impoverished areas that fall furthest short of EFA or widespread literacy – must come, at least in the short-to-medium term, from the second row: i.e., the practical applications and usages of literacy in contexts accessible to those concerned.

The challenge for educators is that most such usages, when present, *lie outside of the realm education itself*, in socio-economic and political domains with which most have little professional familiarity, as they themselves followed the formal school hierarchy to their jobs. Moreover, those domains may not be organized in a way to make optimal use of local literate competencies and may need some readjustment, precisely because they have heretofore been built on the premise that local actors are illiterate... and incapable. Thanks, however, to recent trends toward decentralization of development operations, transfer of increased responsibility for their execution to ground-level actors and provision of substantial "local capacity building"

[2] In Ethiopia, for example, by 6th grade fully 45% of those initially enrolled in primary school no longer attend (Easton & Cobb, 2013):

– a principal topic of this paper discussed in greater detail below – that worm has begun to turn. It remains to take advantage of the opportunity.

In fact the entire grid of motivations portrayed in Figure 1 above describes one important facet of what has recently been dubbed the "literacy" or "literate environment" (e.g. UIE, 2007; Shiohata, 2010; Easton, 2014) – i.e. the characteristics of any setting or living context that offer truly beneficial uses for literate and numerate competence -- though until recently this term was used in a rather restricted fashion. "Literacy environment" was initially used to refer to the density and availability in a given setting of written media in some accessible language or script: documents, newspapers, books, journals, instructional materials and other forms of written communication (including potentially cellphones) with which people of a given social group might regularly interact. On the face of it, the problem here is one of the *supply* of relevant printed media, which is generally threadbare in the poorer environments of developing countries.[3] But that diagnosis leaves out the critical substratum of economic, social and cultural activities that *create* requirements and opportunities for such communication or knowledge transfer and generate resources for their conduct – demand-side factors that are the focus of this paper and that are often subsumed under the broader notion of a "literate environment".

Key factor: Local management of collective resources

A central trigger for literacy acquisition in environments of poverty and a key element in the demand side of the equation turns out to be collective management of enhanced local resources, whether in the private sector (e.g. small business, microfinance) or the pubic one (e.g. decentralized governance or development projects). In fact, a good argument has been

[3] It is nonetheless being modified in fundamental ways by the spread of cellphones, whose numbers massively surpass those of landlines in the same regions – even if not yet by computer access.

made by Glassner et al. (2003) that the first appearance of writing in Bronze Age Mesopotamia was essentially triggered by the need to manage the large-scale irrigation projects that sprang up in the Fertile Crescent around 2500 BCE and to keep track of who had drawn how much water and what portion of their harvest they owed. Spring forward nearly 4000 years and a similar phenomenon is evident, Graaf (1987) points out, in 16th-17th century England, where the frenzy of market development and early industrialization spurred by the triangular trade between Africa, the Caribbean and Europe created needs for literacy and promoted its rapid spread well before the Common School was put in place. One can hypothesize, Graaf remarks, that under such circumstances schooling was established more to *control* and regulate the unchecked spread of literacy among merchant and lower classes than to promote it.

In any case, responsibility for the management of collective resources – more, therefore, than the threadbare amount at the disposal of most families in impoverished areas – typically creates the need for literacy, numeracy and information systems that facilitate essential tasks of accounting, communication and social coordination. Moreover, systems of accountability and elements of democratic governance intensify and multiply those demands, because in order to satisfy their requirements a larger group of stakeholders must have the skills necessary to carry out or at least monitor operations and to replace the "operators" in cases of malfeasance. In the absence of such initiatives, which serve in effect to "capitalize" local resources, resource accumulation is too attenuated to serve as a basis – and a field of application – for new learning. As the Bambara-speaking farmers of the *boucle du Niger* region of Mali were wont to reply to agricultural extension agents proposing new farm machinery to them, *Kolongosi be dlòn fè, sen t'a la:* "The tortoise loves to dance, [but] he just doesn't have the legs."

Demand for literacy is therefore obviously a joint and additive phenomenon, and its components interact with each other. But in areas where upward mobility into regional or national labor markets is still limited, it arguably depends to a considerable extent on the *local* usages that new economic and social activity – particularly of the management variety – create. If the flow of resources through 17th century England at the height of its colonial expansion fueled, as Graaf says, not just new businesses and trade but a rapid expansion of literacy as well, the same result cannot be attained in exactly the same way by regions of the world that were the victims of that expansion and now deal with an environment that does not offer those particular opportunities. Other strategies must be used and likely involve a savvy mixture of new ways to capitalize resources and new ways to acquire the needed skills – an inter-sectoral hybrid, one might say, of pedagogy, business development and public planning. Adult educators should, in principle, be naturally inclined to such efforts. An old principle of adult instruction holds that "teaching is the art of putting people into situations from which they cannot escape without learning" (Easton, 2014b: 226) – which can also mean helping to craft settings and initiatives that create both opportunities to assume new socio-economic functions and the instructional tools needed to master them.

It is therefore the roots of effective demand in the resource-deprived environments where literacy levels are lowest that have been the least directly addressed, in part because they lie for the most part in realms outside of the educational system itself; and it is those that I will try to analyze in this paper.

Policy at different levels counts among the important factors that shape demand for literacy. It is, after all, to cite the old system theory maxim, the flow of energy through a system that "serves to organize [and re-organize] the system" (Morowitz, 1968, p 2); and it is

the business of policy to tend to the generation, regulation and flow of social and financial energies. In a report like this that is addressed to the institutional stakeholders of EFA – e.g., governments, NGOs, international donors – we have a particular interest in "policy" because those actors are typically responsible for it or well placed to influence it. However, in an inter-sectoral domain like demand for literacy, there is scant documented country-wide experience with effective policies and procedures on which to draw and one must rather descend closer to ground-level, considering the policies implicit in successful local practice. We will therefore be obligated to do considerable ferreting in the record of ground-level experience in order to derive insight, with implications for methodology and sampling to be discussed below.

The next section of the paper will be devoted to the methods used in assembling and analyzing data on these phenomena. The empirical material of the study itself is contained in Section Three, followed by Analysis and then a final section on Conclusions and Recommendations.

Methods

Given strict limitations on the time and resources available, this study is essentially based on secondary research, though it is inevitably influenced by the authors' related first-hand experience in the field. The pertinent instructions were to adopt a case-study format – preferably from four countries, amply grounded in recent empirical evidence and bearing clear implications for national and international policy. For the reasons just described, however, it is difficult to find anything resembling country-wide data on the sources of literacy demand. As a consequence, in order to have any hope of understanding these dynamics, one must look through available case studies across a number of technical fields. Sampling will therefore be by sector of literacy use and so source of demand, rather than by country. Four sectors have

been chosen – from a much larger number of candidates and possibilities -- on the basis of an extensive literature search and the following criteria: (a) quantity of available and recent empirical studies of local capacity building in developing countries; (b) degree of instructive detail within them regarding the learning requirements of the new responsibilities, the ways in which they were met, the degree and type of competence required and the range of actors involved; and (c) variety of sectors and situations represented, including both productive and service activities, as well as both public and private entities. The four domains chosen on this basis were the following:

1. Agricultural marketing and livelihood development
2. Public health extension
3. Microfinance and banking
4. Water and natural resource management

A fifth domain – educational decentralization – is briefly visited in conclusion to the data section of this paper since it concerns similar dynamics within the educational system itself, which unfortunately but turns out to be a bit deficient in this regard.

The actual sampling of studies, books and articles was more difficult. We are seeking data on the factors that intensify both needs and uses for literacy in low-resource environments, where most of those still insufficiently benefiting from Education For All reside – and in particular uses that are accessible to or incumbent on the less-schooled and less-literate majority of both genders and all ages. The educational literature contains little in this regard, with the partial exception of studies on technical and vocational education, themselves infrequently dealing with rural contexts and basic literacy. That scarcely means that such forces are not at work, however: they lie rather in the areas where members of the poor

majority are challenged -- or discover opportunity -- to take over and run viable economic and social activities on their own, since such ventures almost inevitably require that a growing number of stakeholders acquire different levels of literacy. Microfinance, public health, water management and agricultural marketing are examples of such domains, though there are plentiful others: livestock enterprises, horticultural research, local administration and natural resource management, to mention only those.

Data

The data for this paper consist of a synthesis of recent case studies on needs and uses for literacy in developing countries within the realms of local socio-economic and political activity within developing countries just enumerated. Over the last two decades, issues of local capacity building and training have been the subject of much debate and discussion in all of these realms, and the first four in particular. It should be remembered, though, as remarked above, that educators, with the partial exception of those employed in vocational-technical training, have gotten little involved in these latter domains and done less research concerning them. As a natural consequence, though there is an increasing amount of refereed literature on phenomena of decentralization, local assumption of management responsibility and related types of capacity building or empowerment, little of it goes into detail on the learning needs that these activities create or the varied ways in which they are met: the second criterion of sampling cited above. One is therefore often reduced to reading between the lines of available sources.

Agricultural marketing and livelihood development

Agricultural marketing and small business development are presented first in the series because they offer in particularly prototypical form the management challenges that may

rapidly intensify demand for literacy and the sort of mutual adjustment that must be worked out between work and learning in order to sustain that momentum. As the historical examples from Mesopotamia and Britain offered above suggest and as details from some of the case studies summarized hereafter confirm, the effort to accumulate, husband, invest and account for shared or collective resources that is inherent in small business and livelihood development of any scale almost automatically creates needs for numeracy, literacy, archivable information and communications among the varying strata of people involved. The functions may for a time be monopolized by a literate elite, where such exists, but a variety of pressures for decentralization and broader participation are at the same time born and may be brought to fruition with policy.

Bingen and colleagues (2003) offer examples of three African countries where cooperative strategies have been employed with success to "develop… community-level management skills and [the] human capacity" necessary for "increasing opportunities for small farmers to benefit from market participation," which they too often have experienced as primarily a source of exploitation. Comparing such local management schemes with more top-down or business system approaches, they conclude that strategies involving acquisition of literacy and transfer of management authorities take a bit longer to develop but are noticeably more successful in ensuring farmer access to inputs and markets beyond the life of any given project. Ashby *et al.* (2009) and Johnson *et al.* (2003), on the other hand, document the use of participatory action research as a tool for helping Latin American farmers to grasp the entire system that stretches from their fields to consumers' tables, to identify opportunities for more instrumental intervention along with related learning needs and to find ways to satisfy the latter; and they highlight the advantages of grafting enhanced literacy skills onto the effort.

Easton (1998; 2014a), on the other hand, details a rare educator's analysis of what it took successfully to confide large portions of the management of cooperative agricultural markets in different areas of West Africa into the hands of interested but largely illiterate users or communities – via stages in both instructional design and institutional development. Among the insights that emerge is the importance to downward accountability and thus democratic institutional health of making training available to more than current local staff, in order to ensure a knowledgeable public able to monitor cooperative affairs and replace incumbents in cases of malfeasance, which in addition creates some of the groundwork for increasingly widespread literacy. In addition, such initiatives usually bringing to light unsuspected layers of human resource in any given locality that can be drawn upon and, if necessary, "upgraded" in the effort to launch and choreograph local assumption of management responsibility. Figure 2 pictures the varied skills and competencies often lying latent in a local environment that may be mobilized by a transfer of powers and functions: from former literacy program participants to Koranic or Bible students and instructors, primary school completers or dropouts who have out-migrated to urban areas, military veterans and the "self-taught." The local training challenge then becomes less one of giving literacy instruction to a largely unschooled public than one of discovering and upgrading the existing spectrum of human resource skills. And that in turn intersts still other in developing their own capacities.

Public health extension

The public health domain in developing countries has several traits of immediate relevance to the demand for literacy and basic education – and to the need for new learning. For one thing, the natural intense human interest in safeguarding maternal, child and adult health in environments where it is often threatened ensures strong motivation. At the same time, the

existence of traditions of indigenous medicine and pharmacy rich in insights about health preservation in such environments creates a basis for comparison of outside and local bodies of knowledge, and for participatory research into their respective virtues, which can ignite an appetite for skill learning and new knowledge acquisition. Finally, local organization and management of even limited new health service delivery plus mobilization of needed resources with only periodic outside assistance are activities that require tasks of training, record-keeping and communication much facilitated by progressively broader and deeper literacy.

These factors, plus the number of government, donor and non-profit organizations interested in health improvement and the programs that they have launched explain the relative flood of literature in recent years on "decentralized health care," "health literacy" and "local health capacity building," even if available studies seldom give the level of detail about instructional design and institutional modification suggested in the agricultural marketing domain. Some examples will illustrate the link between literacy and local capacity building in health.

The title of Estacio's recent case study from the indigenous Ayta regions of Luzon, Philippines (2013) – "Health literacy and community empowerment: It is more than just reading, writing and counting" – nicely captures the fact documented in the article that genuine empowerment in health service delivery automatically creates both a demand for literacy and an impetus for critical assessment of new knowledge. New village health workers in Luzon were involved as part and parcel of their training in animated discussion of "the meanings of personal, family and community health and their socio-political implications." In the provinces of Gnagna and Koulpeologo, Burkina Faso, on the other hand, the World Neighbor-supported

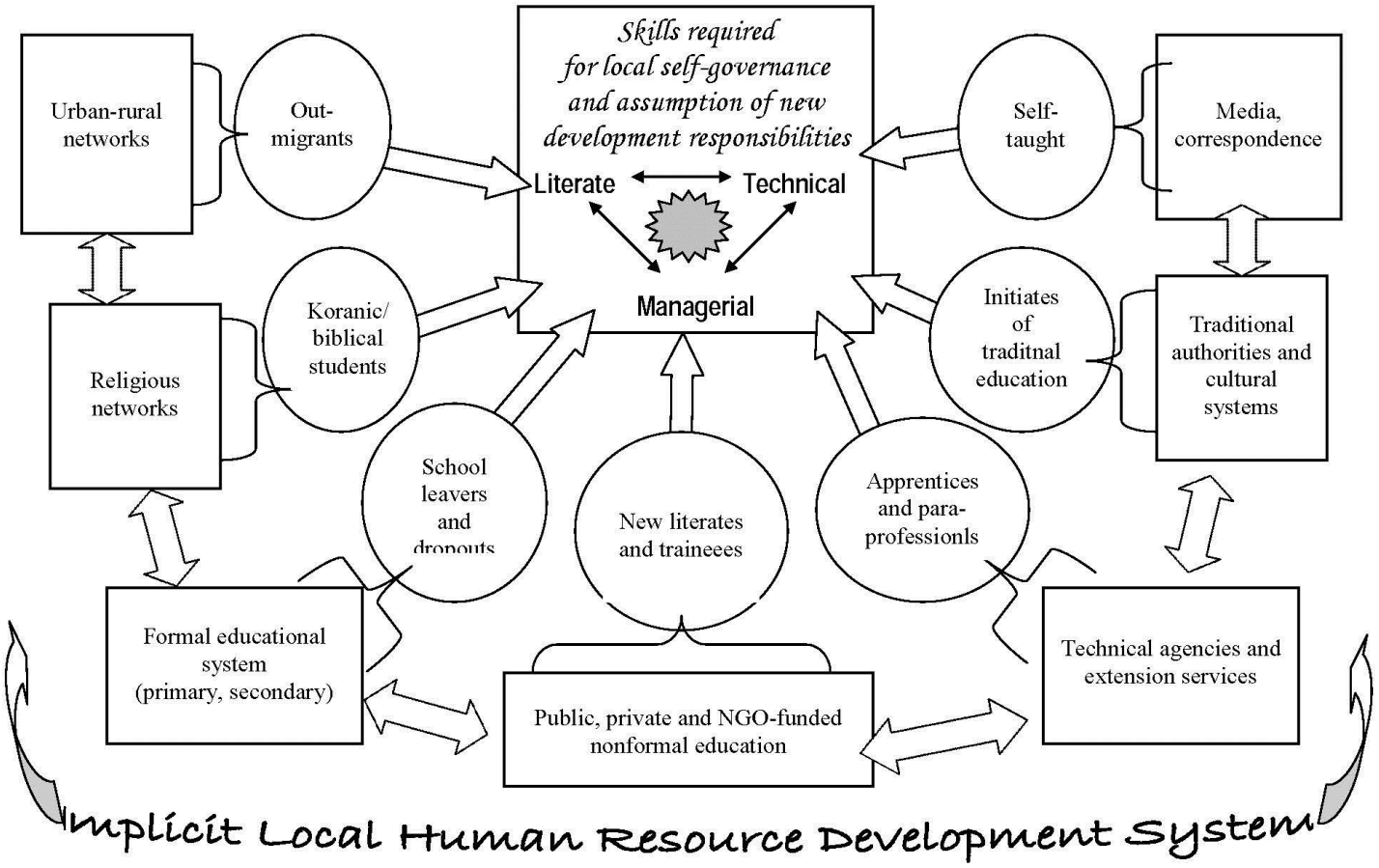

Figure 2: Sources of local competence

reproductive health initiative analyzed by Lankoande & McCraig (2005) was grounded in an initial participatory assessment of local reproductive health needs, which led in turn to literacy-incorporated training in gynecology and long-term contraceptive measures and trainee-initiated measures to coordinate intervention plans with public health facilities and village authorities.

As a third example, the well-known Tostan-supported campaign to end Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in much of West Africa was actually born from a women's nonformal education project in rural Senegal and initiated by the participants themselves (Diop & Askew, 2009; Easton & Monkman, 2003). It combined literacy with direction of a locally-led women's movement to abandon the practice of FGM throughout large portions of Senegal and other West African nations and to promote women's enhanced participation in local development. Organization of that village-to-village and region-to-region outreach effort created both logistic and learning challenges to which newly acquired literacy skills were applied. And the campaign has been followed in most sites by a further series of health and management trainings.

Microfinance and Local Banking

Like public health programs, microfinance institutions are not simply an outside invention. In most of the developing world there have been local "rotating credit and savings associations," now dubbed ROSCAs in the professional literature but referred to as *osusu* in Senegal and Gambia, *asusu* in Niger and Nigeria and *nigina* in Uganda, for example (e.g. Fielding & Etang, 2011)**.** They represent means for collectively-enforced and –secured savings where members donate a fixed amount of their income or proceeds each period (typically week or month) – a practice sometimes known as "solidarity lending" -- against the right to withdraw the entire pot when it is their turn and thereby be guaranteed of constituting a small capital. More recent microfinance institutions are in fact built on similar foundations with progressively more

elaborate accountability, capitalization and investment provisions, morphing at the top end into local banks.

The Grameen Bank (or "Bank of the villages" in Bengali), founded in Bangladesh in 1979 to extend credit to poor women in particular and the recipient of a Nobel Prize in 1994, is perhaps the most famous modern development of this principle (cf. Islam *et al*., 2012; Nawaz, 2010; and Grameen's own site: http://www.grameen-info.org/). By 2011 it had grown to 8.4 million members (97% women) who collectively "own" the Bank; and it had disbursed $10.1 billiion in small loans with more than a 96% recovery rate. Operating procedures have typically not involved training members in Bank management functions, which are handled by Grameen's own field staff – a trait that Islam *et al.* criticize – but the modest and widespread capitalization that the institution has enabled in poor Bangladesh neighborhoods has fueled establishment of multiple small enterprises, which themselves create new literacy and numeracy needs. Moreover, borrowers take collective responsibility for debt repayment by their local group members, are continually encouraged to cultivate their own financial skills and are offered special funds for their children's schooling. As one result, literacy rates among second-round borrowers from Grameen Bank approach 100%, at a time when the nationwide rate was still under 50%.

A parallel if less-publicized initiative undertaken in the village of Fandène, Senegal in the 1980s led to the creation of a local bank linking 19 neighboring communities (Bailey, 2010; Easton, 1998). The founding cell in Fandène – quite a literate community due to its roots in Catholic missions -- trained

> leaders of each… in simple accounting, credit worthiness assessment and loan management. Inhabitants of the communities involved were encouraged to make written applications for credit through their local section officials, and leadership of the

> institution gradually trained itself in carrying out formal feasibility assessment of proposed loans and providing would-be borrowers with technical assistance in ensuring the credit worthiness of their ventures (Easton, 1998, p. 3).

An NGO-sponsored microfinance and community mobilization initiative in six villages of the peri-urban zone of Hubli-Dharwad in Karnataka state (southern India) furnishes an example of an alternate strategy for mobilizing and promoting literacy in the micro-capitalization effort (Brook *et al.*, 2008). Rather than either seeking to enroll only educated clients or undertaking to train the poorer and less literate ones upon affiliation, the institution's officers have made a concentrated effort to create self-help groups among members that were quite socially and educationally diverse so that literate participants could help handle and explain management issues to those initially less capable. At the same time, Al-Shami et al. (2014) document the operations of microfinance institutions in Yeman and Malaysia that build enhanced financial literacy into their training programs for members and involve them in progressively more sophisticated functions. Finally, in this brief tour, Leatherman et al. (2012) describe a select series of locally-initiated experiences in linking health services and micro-finance institutions – the finance creating a resource for modest infrastructural and pharmaceutical improvements in support of community well-being and the organization serving at the same time to dispense health education, with mutually reinforcing effects on learning.

Water and natural resource management

Given the cumulative effects of climate change on already fragile environments, diminishing groundwater supplies and increasing population, the need for careful watershed, groundwater and irrigation management has become increasingly evident and programs targeting it have begun to multiply. Field evidence, however, demonstrates that such schemes have the

best chances of working well *if managed at the local level*. Local management creates needs for training, careful monitoring and – at some point – basic educational skills on the part of water users. Chavva and Smith (2012) provide a case study of the various successful uses of literacy for individual decision-making on crop-water management and crop choices among trainees from the nonformal Farmer Water School in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh, India, whereas Farrington and Lobo (1997) describe how, under a previous Indo-German Watership Project, similar needs were parlayed into a participatory watershed management plan prepared by water users in in 20 districts of Maharashtra and requiring literate and numerate contributions from local actors.

Leidel & Haggeman (2012) describe the care that has been put into local capacity building by the Western Bug River Basin Watershed program in Ukraine and the benefits it has paid; and they articulate well its underlying rationale (p.1415):

> There is growing consensus in the global water community that the concept of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) is only the starting point in the IWRM implementation process. This paper proposes that special attention should be drawn to well-elaborated and adapted Capacity Development (CD). It is argued that measures for solving existing water problems can only be sustainable and effective, if the knowledge generated about possible solutions is deeply rooted within the originating region.

. In case studies from Yogyakarta, Indonesia (Arif & Ricks, 2012) and from the Dodoma region of Tanzania (Mandara *et al.*, 2013), on the other hand, government agencies responsible did not build sufficient training into the scheme to ensure optimal take-over of local level management by users and the control positions were monopolized by a few elite.

Let's then shift illustratively to another natural resource field where local management of operations typically creates learning needs: McDougall et al. (2009) examine the case of *collaborative forest management* in Nepal, concluding that it improves the lives of both women and the poor *when it is structured as both a power transfer and a learning process*: i.e. when substantive responsibilities are transferred to local stakeholders and means for acquiring related competencies are provided**.** Constantino et al. (2012), on the other hand, study two wildlife monitoring programs in sustainable development reserves of the Amazon Basin where local communities took charge of activities, linking them to existing education programs and creating information systems. Although communities were socially and politically empowered, the monitoring systems more often promoted individual than collective capacity, because responsibility was taken over and largely monopolized by well-placed stakeholders.

Educational decentralization

We come as a coda to the field of education itself, which might seem destined by nature for prominence in the area of decentralization, capacity building and stakeholder training – and thus for major contributions to intensified demand for literacy as well. But the recent case studies reviewed for this paper were a good deal more equivocal than that. Only one (Santizo-Rodall & Martin, 2009) gave solid evidence of substantive transfer of responsibility and functions to community stakeholders and of some systematic capacity-building. In that Mexican case, community rural schools in Jalisco and the highlands of northern Puebla have been linked with regional teacher training institutes and supported by Ford Foundation funding for the improvement of education in indigenous areas. The initiatives involved community stakeholders in a wholesale effort to better ground curriculum in indigenous culture and in a series of projects for stimulating employment in the local economy in order to retain more graduates in their

homeland, while sponsoring a series of workshops and human resource development events for participants.

Elsewhere, the record is less encouraging. A few examples illustrate this paradoxical pattern of real potential but limited local management performance in cases of school decentralization.

- Chikoko (2007) writes in a multi-site study of decentralized school governance in Zimbabwe,

  > While the initiative has developed a sense of ownership of schools among stakeholders, factors such as the rigid national educational regulatory framework and the uneven distribution of power within schools hamper the decentralization process. Stakeholders seem incapable of functioning effectively in a decentralized school governance system. Findings imply a need for greater capacity building of stakeholders.

- In Nepal, Edwards (2011) notes that similar policy reforms have also led to an increased central legitimization and empowerment of school management committees, which in turn has facilitated the capture and politicization of these bodies by locally established leaders who are often not motivated to engage parents and community members in school reform.

- Parker & Raihani's (2011) research on local participation in the governance of private Islamic schools details the low level of parental and community participation in "madrasah" governance. Parents feel they have no place in school governance or in teaching and learning. There is a concentration of power in the hands of principals, teachers and school founders.

- And evidence from the Oromia region of Ethiopia (Yamada, 2014) belies the link between the School-Based Management strategy adopted there and actual stakeholder participation, despite a long history of community concern with schooling in the region.

These few cases are not necessarily representative and are included only as a counterpoint to the data presented from other social sectors. However, they do at least suggest that, paradoxically, the education sector itself is scarcely a paragon of the demand-driven policies we are investigating. Perhaps because related staff training is difficult in such a widely spread system, perhaps because educators are jealous of their undervalued skills and sparse prerogatives and so hesitant to share them, perhaps for other reasons, it is rare to find evidence of situations where local stakeholders have the level of responsibility in schools that would impel them to new learning.

Analysis

The first step in analysis of the disparate set of data presented in the foregoing pages is simply to stand back from it. The following key observations emerge:

1. The demand for literacy of many types that is growing in other sectors of developing country and in the environments that are of greatest concern to Education For All is increasingly important, but its exact nature is poorly documented. Both the experiences themselves and available research on them are principally conducted by specialists in those fields and consequently pay relatively little attention to issues of instructional design, exact learning outcomes or the detail of broader educational impact.
2. Across sectors, that demand appears most linked to local assumption of responsibility for collective productive activities of some type and size. They may involve delivery of public

services, management of viable local enterprises and markets, or preservation of important natural resources, as well as related monitoring, evaluation and research. All of these entail substantial *capacity-building* among local stakeholders and so acquisition and/or reinforcement of literate and numerate competencies along with sector-specific technical skills. As the observations made earlier about the appearance of literacy in the Fertile Crescent and its rapid spread in 17th century England suggest, this linkage between economic management and acquisition of literate skills seems a durable phenomenon. For related reasons, Alan Rogers (2000) has suggested, the most appropriate motto for adult and nonformal education, if not for EFA more generally, might be "literacy second": i.e. create the conditions that require it and it will appear.

3. Such effects are particularly pronounced in anything approximating a democratic environment, and are particularly supportive of it, due to the accompanying interest in "downward accountability" and thus the need for a body of citizens larger and broader than those vested with new functions that is sufficiently acquainted with their operation to diagnose poor performance, replace personnel in cases of malfeasance and/or recognize when and how they are being cheated in transactions. The Hausa (West African) expression for minimum competence in a foreign language of commerce or negotiation is particularly eloquent in this respect: *Ba su iya saida ni, ban sani ba!* ("At least they can't' sell me without my knowing it!")
4. New opportunities for performance and management of important social services or productive and financial activities may in fact have unanticipated results and mobilize unsuspected human resources. As noted in Easton (1998), the typical result is that

"candidates" for the new functions begin, as it were, coming out of the woodwork, even in distant or economically depressed communities, including --

- dropouts or graduates from local schools who had out-migrated to urban areas in search of employment;
- the self-taught;
- products of Koranic or religious instruction… and still others.

Figure 2 presented earlier is a related graphic from the 1998 reference that illustrates something of the varied palette of human resources potentially mobilized by new opportunities. Though this might appear to constitute a "damper" to increases in local literacy demand, it is in fact an enhancer for several reasons:

- If the new candidates enable the activity to operate effectively and grow, other related local undertakings are likely to follow.
- Returnees from the diaspora who capitalize on such opportunities represent a double resource: on the one hand, they offer models to emulate for the local population; and, on the other, successful members of the local diaspora the world over have proven to be strong moral and material supports for community education.
- The situation offers a means of solving another festering problem of EFA: the fate of school dropouts, for whom few opportunities may be available and means of second-chance schooling have rarely been developed.

The phenomenon aptly illustrates the importance of seeing EFA as essentially and ultimately an issue of "lifelong learning," not just the extension of primary education – and as a means to upgrade in feasible ways the whole local human resource base. And it

confirms the old principal of systems theory that should inform literacy demand reinforcement efforts and quoted earlier from Morowitz.

5. Of course, the promotion of such decentralization or local empowerment strategies is subject to – and requires knowledge of – risks and conditions that political scientists, planners and sociologists have extensively studied and documented and with which education is equally fraught. They include phenomena like (a) the dangers of "elite capture" inherent in any participatory initiative, where control is monopolized by a privileged minority of the target population who already have the required skills – a phenomenon already evoked in several of the case studies above (Kundi, 2011); (b) the "free rider" or "tragedy of the commons" effects much bemoaned by urban and regional planners, where local self-governance is rapidly undermined by those who benefit from it but do not contribute to it (e.g., Abásolo & Tsuchiya, 2014); and, of course, (c) the persistent dangers of corruption. In addition, there are levels and levels of decentralization itself. We have been talking in particular about the lower and community levels, but more central functions being out-sourced pass in fact through some sort or degree of administrative hierarchy and it is very difficult to empower local actors if those at an intermediate level responsible for supporting, training and/or monitoring them have not themselves been empowered, trained – and motivated – to promote local assumption of responsibility and resource management. Much of the literature on decentralization thus understandably focuses on increasing the managerial and technical competence of intermediate and supra-local staff, if not their political sensitivities as well.
6. Even the most encouraging experiences of local empowerment and capacity building launched from other sectors, though devoted to continued training of participants, tend to

be short on competent instructional design, tracking of knowledge acquisition and optimal dovetailing of learning and application – all strengths that educationally-trained personnel could potentially help to reinforce. The problem seems to be that such initiatives require *hybrid* competence in education or literacy instruction on the one hand and the practical mechanics of particular development fields on the other – and that sort of "multi-valence" remains rare.

7. In short, the field of development and Education For All continues to be afflicted by what Easton and colleagues termed in their 1998 PADLOS-Education Report – and Easton reaffirms in a recent study of similar issues within the World Bank (in press) --"the Great Divorce." As they remark (p. 102), "The gap between educational systems on the one hand and development services or programs, on the other, is still wide and deep. It represents one of the greatest obstacles to the promotion of [genuine] capitalization in the field." That divorce appears moreover to penetrate far within the halls of multi-sectoral agencies like the World Bank or the UN agencies themselves. Concluding a year of work at the World Bank on inter-sectoral opportunities for literacy promotion, Easton (in press) notes that despite the distinct emphasis on local empowerment and poverty alleviation promoted by James Wolfensohn, World Bank President from 1995 through 2005, it proved nearly impossible to engineer collaboration between the two sides in World Bank headquarters: literacy staff and educators knew little of and dealt still less with representatives of other economic and human development sectors, whereas the latter – while increasingly pledged to training and empowerment – were highly suspicious of educators as inept in practical affairs and so tended to underestimate and underplay possibilities for using the combination

of instructional and technical development expertise to "ratchet up" the level of empowerment in the field.

Conclusions and Recommendations

We come at last to a few conclusions and recommendations:

1. Education For All will never be achieved, particularly in the poor and marginalized regions where it is most substantially off-track, by the extension of primary and secondary schooling alone. Its achievement requires not just demand for literacy and the educational offerings that convey it – meaning motivation plus necessary resources to take part (the sense of the term "effective demand" explained above) – but, correlatively, multiplication of opportunities for *use, improvement and retention of literate skills in the regions concerned*, characteristics of what in recent years has come to be called a "literate environment." (e.g. Easton, 2014a; Robinson-Pant, 2010)
2. The intensity of those characteristics is determined to a great extent by policy-dependent features of the local economy and society and in particular by opportunities for beneficial assumption of new responsibilities predominantly in sectors outside of education itself, though great benefit could be reaped from their increase within the precincts of the educational system itself.
3. Such outside opportunities are growing, driven in part by increasing awareness that the productivity of enterprises, social services and local governance strategies is largely determined by the capacities and commitment of field-level actors. But the linkage of these activities with education and their instructional design remain, overall, quite poorly elaborated and their effect on demand for literacy is thus reduced to a level far below the potential. Why this persistent problem? Beside the lack of "hybrid

competence" mentioned above, two other factors might be evoked, both illustrated in the World Bank experience previously cited. The first is the lower social status of educators, whom technicians and economists generally consider to be ignorant of applied development skills and with whom they feel little motivation to affiliate; and the second may lie in the fact that the sort of genuine local capacity building and empowerment ventures that hybrid design facilitates can be messy, politically risky and distasteful to those with more of an inbred top-down orientation. In many ways it calles on the skill set of instructional system design (ISD) and human resource development (HRD) specialists, with one very critical difference: an ability to work in impoverished areas, grasp the technical components of their development requirements and help translate them into a strategy that marries level-appropriate instruction with progressive local takeover of authority.

4. Bridging this gap and capitalizing on the latent demand for literacy will require overcoming what was described above as "the Great Divorce" between educators and those responsible for socio-economic strategies in the concerned regions – and in the government, international aid and academic institutions that support the two sides. A "sadder but wiser"[4] renaissance of integrated development strategies likewise seems called for – and signaled by some of our most recent case studies (e.g. Leatherman *et al.*, 2011; Nordtveit, 2008).
5. As a policy rule, whatever promotes carefully structured decentralization, well-supported local enterprise creation and properly conceived community assumption of

[4] An ambitious form of integrated rural development was undertaken in many countries in the 1960s and 1970s, attempting to achieve full coordination and personnel transfer among related specialty areas like agriculture, community development, credit institutions and health – and it not infrequently bogged down (Cohen, J., 1987). Despite its relative demise, the fact that local development is always cross-sectoral is once again impelling responsible agencies and actors to more measured forms of integration.

political and economic responsibilities will have – in the short or medium term – multiplier effects on the demand for literacy, for it pumps new energy through the local system. Under human capital theory, policy emphasis in education has generally been given to the reverse linkage: the extent to which and the way in which education itself may create new social responsibilities and increased production. The critical complementary dimension of this fundamental "diode" deserves much more attention.

6. By the same token, oversight and policy efforts like the *Global Monitoring Report* need to "monitor" the state of the literate environment and the policy initiatives that promote or impede productive use of literacy in deprived regions much more closely, taking the occasion to pose pointed queries to their colleagues in the concerned sectors and political bodies and to lay foundations for more fruitful shared work.
7. Finally, the data and arguments presented above highlight as well a series of needs for new or redirected research and experimentation in the post-2015 period, notably to investigate more fully the nature of literacy and learning needs born of decentralization and local business creation strategies in other sectors, to experiment with different ways of meeting them, to track and map the whole fluid spectrum of local human resources and to find ways of better associating educators and development agents (and agencies) in the effort. Such research should of course double as a critical capacity building exercise for host country personnel.

To the degree that such conditions are realized, it may at last become possible to develop "Education By All" as a critical complement to EFA.

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