AREAS OF *EDDATA II* ASSISTANCE

This brochure was prepared in response to requests for supplemental information about areas in which EdData II can assist a USAID Mission, a government, or another donor. These additional areas of support can be combined, or others not listed here can be proposed for consideration. A separate brochure that describes the EdData II task-order contract can be downloaded from http://www.eddataglobal.org/index.cfm.

CAN DECENTRALIZATION SUCCEED? ASSESSING CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT

Many countries are decentralizing their education systems, sometimes radically, as they seek to improve cost-effectiveness and service to clients. South Africa, Pakistan, and Indonesia, for example, are countries with important USAID activity in which decentralization is proceeding. Other countries, such as Peru, are proceeding more cautiously. Still others, such as Kenya, are just starting.

In only a few cases, however, has there been a serious analysis of whether districts or other subnational units charged with providing education actually have the capacity to carry out the duties and exercise the powers being devolved to them. Likewise, it is unknown which districts most need training. If investments are made in capacity building anyway, the resulting programs often offer generic, untargeted training, or the selection of training topics is based on casual judgment. Either approach can be wasteful.

A survey that assesses capacities of subnational-level officials against a set of specific duties and performance goals can be of great value in optimizing training and capacity building. Census-based data can be used to target districts that need support. Sample-based information can be used to target training needs

EDUCATION AND THE WORLD OF WORK

In some countries, the urgent education problems are not basic competencies such as literacy. Instead, they are whether schools are producing graduates with skills that make them useful in the labor force or in society. If a school system's graduates cannot find jobs and lack the skills needed to participate peacefully in politics, that system is undeniably inefficient.

A survey of firms and communities can assess whether the society sees the output of the education sector as useful

and, if not, why not. This information can serve as feedback to curriculum and program designers. If the curriculum is appropriate but schools are not delivering to the labor market, the results can motivate an interest in improving accountability. Furthermore, EdData II can help pilot the development of data-driven accountability systems, so as to improve the cost-effectiveness of workforce and youth development.

RESOURCE FLOWS AND DISTRIBUTION

In some countries, it has been found that as little as 15% of the intended resources actually reaches schools. This creates a major problem not only for transparency but also for service delivery. For example, if funds with which to buy books are not reaching schools, learning will greatly suffer.

Several countries are carrying out resource-flow studies to document this problem. One reason is that for corrective steps to be taken, civil society and the Ministry of Finance, among others, must become aware of the issues. EdData II can conduct studies and use the results to start the policy dialogue.

Even more importantly, studies can underpin pilot experiments to make the flow of funds more transparent to the public, so that citizen pressure can serve as a corrective measure. This approach has yielded fruit in countries such as Uganda. Data-driven experiments that EdData II can help implement to build transparency in funding include formulas for financial transfers, school posting of funds, and school financial report cards.

ORPHANS AND OTHER VULNERABLE CHILDREN: HIV/AIDS, CONFLICT, AND DISASTER

The problems of orphanhood and vulnerability are especially prevalent in countries facing one or more devastating situations: widespread fatal illness, such as HIV/AIDS; conflict and post-conflict; and natural disasters such as the Asian tsunami of 2004 or the Pakistan earthquake of 2005. EdData II can be used to carry out various types of analyses related to orphans and other vulnerable children in these settings.

School attendance. Much is known about how orphanhood affects school attendance. However, in areas riven by ethnic and military conflict, or those affected by natural disasters, patterns of attendance and nonattendance, and the direct causes of nonattendance, often are not understood. EdData II research can help distinguish the additional barriers to attendance introduced by these layers of distress.

Program cost-effectiveness. Many countries have a plethora of programs led by the government and/or nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), but little is known about which are the most cost-effective. As a result, much donor money is wasted. Survey work can uncover this information and guide donors to the programs that are the most effective.

Cognitive development. Not much is known about how orphanhood affects cognitive development of children. Basic analysis can be done in this area so that funders can underwrite programs aimed specifically at helping orphans not fall behind.

Children's treatment in school. Similarly, little is known for certain about the effects of orphanhood and HIV/AIDS status on the way children are treated in school. Data-based programs can be designed to prevent children from being abused and stigmatized if they have HIV/AIDS or are in AIDS-affected families. Interviews with street children, households with orphans, and orphanages (or other institutions) can make it possible to explore alternative programs that can be applied to improve orphans' attendance, persistence, and cognitive achievement in school.

Reconstruction and school achievement. The patterns of resettlement that emerge after a disaster frequently are not understood, so the basis for reconstruction is flimsy and the reconstruction itself is wasted. Proper survey work among disaster survivors can improve the cost-effectiveness of reconstruction.

EDUCATION-SECTOR SCANS: COST-EFFECTIVE DATA GATHERING

EdData II can greatly improve the knowledge base by scanning the education sector, using techniques that are multifaceted, rigorous, rapid, and inexpensive. This type of effort can help prepare for a new project, reactivate USAID programming in a particular country, draw up assistance plans, assess what progress a country has made after a period of assistance, or generally take stock.

For example, a simple survey instrument can be prepared that covers learner development, teacher needs, school management, input supplies, and parental participation. To save money, it can then be applied by one person in one school per day. In addition, enough schools and district offices can be sampled to yield a more solid perspective than could be achieved by a few donor visits, yet the cost will remain very low.

The resulting data and analysis can be more telling than that from the usual administrative sources, such as an education management information system. Issues such as whether books are arriving on time, whether teachers find their in-service training useful, whether use of classroom time is appropriate, and whether children are achieving the minimum expected competencies in the early grades can be quickly assessed.

GETTING TO THE FACTS: SURVEYS FOR PROGRAM DESIGN AND MONITORING

The education sector—as opposed to the health sector—has very little monitoring output to show, a fact that eventually will threaten funding. There are several factors impeding monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities:

- Monitoring can be very expensive, especially if done in the traditional way (for example, tracking whether every school is teaching in a child-centered manner). The belief that monitoring requires census-type information, and therefore is extremely costly, tends to result in M&E being left out of program design.

- Few ministries know how to carry out such studies.

- Few donor contractors evaluate progress based on sampling.

In response, EdData II offers sample-based techniques—in particular, techniques borrowed from the health field such as Lot Quality Assurance Sampling—that can be very powerful yet inexpensive ways to assess progress or even to draw baselines.

In terms of direct capacity building, EdData II is developing courseware in how to use surveys to carry out monitoring and evaluation. Project staff also can lead courses and provide shoulder-to-shoulder training for Ministry officials, NGOs, or other interested parties in how to use sample surveys for program design and M&E.