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**Costs and Financing of Basic Education and Participation of
Rural Families and Communities in Third-World Countries**

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Introduction

The original version of this paper was first published in French by the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) at UNESCO (Assié-Lumumba, 1993). The focus of this study was global rather than exclusively African, as it critically examined the costs and financing of basic education, specifically the participation of families and communities in Third-World countries. Furthermore, the data and socio-political contexts of some of the countries included in the study have changed. However, the issues addressed and the analysis can make a contribution to the discourses and policy exploration and implementation for educational development. Indeed, the new wave of the various forms of community schools in the beginning of the twenty-first century, the issues explored are relevant. Therefore, it is with a genuine expression of appreciation to IIEP that this English version of the article is made available.

This work provides conceptual clarifications about various forms of costs, expenses, and financing and the nature of the contributions of the families and communities to education. Furthermore, it was articulated that the participation of the communities in the educational process must be refined to include non-material contribution. The concrete case of Côte d'Ivoire was used as an illustration. This paper emphasizes community participation in school development and community schools in the period preceding the 1990 Jomtien Conference at which world states adopted a common agenda for universal primary enrollment at the global level.

An ongoing study sponsored by SAGA on Senegal¹ focuses on the more recent period of community school development from the post-Jomtien to Dakar 2000 and the resolution

¹ N'Dri Assié-Lumumba, Mamadou Mara, Birahim Bouna Niang, and Marieme Lo "Les écoles communautaires de base au Sénégal: Contribution à la scolarisation universelle, l'éradication de la pauvreté, et la mise en place d'un programme national pour le développement durable." This study was initially conceived as one of two studies designed in a comparative framework. The other case study for the comparative analysis was Côte d'Ivoire. In Côte d'Ivoire there are several types or generations of community schools. The oldest type of community schools include the types that is presented in this paper. The more recent ones such as those referred to as *écoles BAD* (Banque Africaine de Développement) and those supported by UNICEF were expected to be included in the SAGA study. A project on the newest type of community schools called "Non Formal Education" was being designed by the Ivorian Ministry of Education when the SAGA project started. This project aimed at creating six experimental schools for the next school 2002/2003 school year. The ground for collaboration with SAGA was initiated. The early stage of the project provided a great opportunity for the SAGA research to undertake an in-depth study of the process from the first year of the experimental stage to the planned extension of the program and diffusion. The SAGA research was being designed to provide a more comprehensive assessment including academic/critical analysis with policy implications and recommendation. A comparative study including Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire was full of promise. Another high-level staff trip was also organized to Senegal to observe and learn from the Senegalese experience. However, following the September 2002 armed conflict, after several

for Education For All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of universal enrollment by 2015. In a sense, this study can serve as a background for the study in Senegal.

Bray and Lillis (1988, p. 6) argued that it is difficult to make precise estimates of the share of educational costs assumed by communities, on the one hand because very little research has been done on this topic, and on the other hand because the relevant data do not exist and also because it is very difficult to convert the value of the contributions of these communities into monetary terms. The question is how can families be asked to contribute more if there is no appropriate information on their past and present contributions in relation to the resources that are really available to them? As questions that served as guideline for the analysis included the following: What are the different forms of costs that are actually borne by families and communities in villages, with or without the intervention of government authorities? Does there exist a sense that voluntary contributions, whether organized and structured or ad hoc, have been maximized? Can we conceive of a better use of the resources already supplied by individuals, families, and communities in rural areas without asking them for more, keeping clearly in mind that if these populations feel overwhelmed, their reaction is manifested in a decreased demand for education? Do families and communities that have similar material and financial means have the same inclination, or disinclination, to contribute voluntarily to establishing and running schools? If behavioral differences exist in this area, what are the explanatory factors? Can these factors be modified in order to encourage and stimulate the participation of families and communities? How can families and communities be spurred on to explore the use of resources other than those that are obvious and/or already in use?

In this study (Assié-Lumumba, op cit), the questions that guide the analysis include the following: What are the various forms of costs that are usually considered important by the central authorities? Are the actual contributions of rural communities taken into account by the authorities in the construction of educational budgets, or are these contributions left out in the counting without regard for their importance in the development of the educational system? Through a better knowledge of the actual and potential local contributions, how can planners be helped to carry out their fundamental task of producing an inventory of available resources? What measures can be adopted to make information available on past and current practices that might help the central decision-makers as well as the families and communities that are looking for solutions?

As indicated earlier, these questions were asked and the analysis undertaken in the early 1990s, at a time when following the 1990 Jomtien Conference, there was expectation—though unrealistic—that the target of universal enrolment in basic/primary education by 2000 would be reached. Ten years later, at the Dakar Conference of 2000, there was a realization that the targeted enrollment goal was not reachable. Furthermore, even if this goal had been reached, given various African experiences—especially in the 1980s—of stagnation and even

postponements to undertake the comparative study, it was decided to proceed with the single case study of Senegal

decline of enrollment rates in at least one-third of African countries, it would have been necessary to remain vigilant to avoid any new the setbacks. Thus, the issue of finding ways and means to recapture earlier post-independence patterns of steady increase, until universal attendance at the first levels in each country, is still crucial.

This paper is divided into four sections followed by the conclusion. The first section focuses on the various types of educational costs, expenses, and financing and the roles of families and communities. The second section deals with a case study of educational costs and financing in rural communities in countries around the world. The third section focuses on the case of Côte d'Ivoire before the December 1999 Military coup followed by armed conflicts that started in 2002 leading to the de facto division of the country². The fourth section is a reflection on the substantive and more general family and community participation in the educational process beyond material support. The conclusion summarizes the main findings and points to new areas of research using comparative approach.

² It is however likely that, while the political configuration may change, the administrative structure that constitutes the framework for educational policy will remain the same. Therefore this analysis has relevance even for the post-conflict reconstruction and implementation of education policy implementation including past and new types of community schools.

1. Educational Costs, Expenses, and Financing and the Roles of Families and Communities

Taken as a whole, basic education is of concern to several types of target populations, including illiterate adults and all young people of school age, whether they are dropouts, still in the system, or outside the system without ever having been to school. In developing countries where the illiteracy level is relatively high, unschooled adults and young people make up important groups to which basic education is addressed. Similarly, with the relatively high rates of voluntary and forced dropouts, especially in countries where school attendance is not compulsory at any level and where moreover the law authorizes the dismissal of students who do not fulfill certain conditions, dropouts constitute an important group. Although several countries have tried out various educational programs aimed at one of these target populations or another, the focus of the present study is on the basic education of young people within the formal institutional framework of schools at the primary level.

The costs, expenses, and financing of education as they are customarily envisaged by the central governmental authorities that establish the budgets reflect in a general way the classic concern of institutions that control the funds and emphasize the importance of their own contribution, without reference to the role of the local populations. For example, when the high unit cost of higher education in relation to primary education is stressed, only the state's point of view is taken into account. If rural families are considered, on the other hand, then the unit cost is higher for the primary-school pupil than for the student engaged in higher education, who, granted a scholarship, is thus independent and can even make a financial contribution to his or her family, for example by taking responsibility for some of the costs involved in the schooling of younger siblings.

As far as the sources of educational financing are concerned, several can be identified:

- the state (in countries with a decentralized political and administrative system, this means the federal government and the state or the province);
- local communities, in particular towns and districts;
- families, that is, parents and/or the pupils themselves;
- businesses;
- external sources, including other states, in the context of
bilateral or multilateral agreements, international organizations,
governmental and non-governmental organizations.

In the context of particular projects, the external contribution may be relatively significant, at least in appearance. But by and large, the state is viewed as the agent that takes responsibility for the major portion of the costs of education, whether investments or operations are at stake. If this view can be verified in the framework of operational costs, especially where teachers' salaries are concerned, the same is not necessarily true of

investment costs.³ Yet in categorizing the costs, the contributions of rural communities, if they are recognized at all, are presented as incidental, and in many cases they are scarcely mentioned.

As Hallak and Pognant emphasize, in the case of Côte d'Ivoire where communities were involved early on, the absence of a precise estimation of the "monies and contributions in kind produced in villages for the construction of primary schools . . . is regrettable, for the expenses in question are certainly non-negligible"; for the first post-independence decade, that is 1960-1970, they were estimated at 4.5 billion francs CFA (1966a, p. 22). There are many reasons to believe that even this estimate is lower than the real expenses incurred by rural populations for school construction. In fact, this estimate is based on investment costs and even, in this case, by and large only the expenses incurred by the village communities whose schools have been recognized by the state were taken into account. For these recognized schools, the state agrees to assign the number of teachers needed and to supply equipment such as desks, blackboards, and the supplies that are distributed to public schools. However, the direct expenses incurred by some village communities also involve operating costs, including the salaries of certain types of teachers.

To the costs of infrastructure and operations that fall to the community, it is necessary to add the direct costs and the costs incurred on an individual basis, that is, the costs generated when a child actually attends school, which are costs borne by each family in private. These costs include, in particular, school supplies, uniforms, and various fees levied in the form of dues or disguised tuition charges. To be sure, in many cases the actual expenses are lower than the estimated cost, when the parents do not manage to buy all the supplies, or when these supplies are not all available. When school attendance, even at the primary level, is not compulsory, the parents who decide to enroll their children generally make an effort to provide what their children need in order to work. However, there are as yet no precise data about the overall or unit costs at the level of the experience of a community.

The term "community," as well as others used in this study, deserves to be clarified. In certain third-world countries, and more specifically in the case of Africa, the family is not the nuclear unit classically consisting of two parents and their children. What is involved is rather the extended family, within which roles considered in some countries, especially in the West, as belonging to biological (or adoptive) parents are played by uncles, aunts, and so on. Thus the private expenses for a child's education can be met entirely or partially by an uncle, an aunt, or an older brother or sister who is working or benefiting from a scholarship while pursuing higher education.

Bray and Lillis (1988) point out that the concept of community covers a gamut of groupings of individuals having common social, economic, and cultural interests. Thus the community can be constituted around such diverse bases as geographical location,

³ In budgetary classifications, we normally find two categories of costs that include investments in infrastructure and operating expenses. Investment costs pertain to one-time projects or projects that are supposed to last for several years: for example, the cost of building a school (classrooms, teachers' housing). In contrast, operating costs are included in every new budget (teachers' salaries, building maintenance).

membership in an ethnic group, in a race, or a particular religion. The characteristics and interests that constitute the foundation of a community's ties can also have to do with age, sex, profession, and family. Concerning the financing of education at the local level, however, the contributions made in the context of collective action on the part of a given community as a whole must be differentiated from those that constitute practices that are characteristic of all the members of the community but that are carried out on an individual basis; in the latter case we are dealing with contributions made by individuals or families.

2. Educational Costs and Financing in Rural Communities: Some Experiences

The experiences presented below are quite heterogeneous both in terms of the historical period and in terms of the sociopolitical and economic contexts. However, they all took place even before the 1990 Jomtien conference where represented states made a commitment to adopt policies that would help reach the goal of universal primary enrollment by 2000. The main purpose in presenting these experiences is to show how and why families and communities are led to give their support to schools in various contexts

Among the efforts that have been made to help publicize cases in which local communities have contributed to financing primary schools in third-world communities, it is important to point out the workshop that was organized in 1985 in Botswana by the Secretariat of the Commonwealth to facilitate discussion of questions concerning the financing of education by rural communities. In the text published after that meeting (Bray and Lillis, 1988), questions of a conceptual order were addressed and case studies presented.

Kenya's experience with community support for education is among the best-known cases. Reports on the "harambee" movements focus on the secondary level. In reality, the history of primary instruction in Kenya is also firmly anchored in community support. On the whole, up to the 1980s, Kenya's primary schools were public in terms of their status, the nature and governance of their teaching programs, and the certification, hiring, and remuneration of the personnel, including teachers. The community's contribution is mainly devoted to the construction of school buildings and housing for teachers, as well as to development and maintenance costs. Lillis and Ayot (in Bray and Lillis, 1988) recall that before Kenya's independence in 1963, communities and churches played a vital role in the financing and general organization of schools on the primary level. It was during the 1960s and especially from the 1970s onward that the central government provided the largest source of financing for primary schools. Starting in the mid-1970s, especially with the presidential decree of 1974, families were legally exempted from paying tuition and from all direct or disguised forms of forced contribution to school funds.

While the government encourages the collective and voluntary approach of the "harambee," school authorities, who believe that coercion vis-à-vis parents who have children in the schools is a more effective approach, tend to ignore the legal provisions that are designed to protect parents. Lillis and Ayot mention the results of a study that indicates that the amount of money collected by the schools in the category of "gifts" varies from 150 KShs to 500 KShs per person. Despite the intention of public policy-makers to relieve the masses of certain financial burdens, according to the recommendations of international organizations in the aftermath of the economic crisis of the 1980s, the central authorities are gradually returning to the pre-independence situation: namely, the acceptance of a major portion of the cost of primary education by communities.

African countries in general have relatively old traditions—dating back to the latter period of colonial period and generally when the African populations embraced European education—of support for primary education by communities at the local level. Cases cited include Botswana (Swartland and Taylor, in Bray and Lillis, 1988), Zambia, Kaluba (in Bray and Lillis, 1988).

In Egypt, there is no policy that makes communities' contributions an obligation. The masses may participate in the task of school construction though assessments to be matched by contributions sought by the Governor from the Ministry of National Education, taking into account the Ministry's overall priorities and plans for schools. Teachers' salaries are the responsibility of the central government.⁴

In the case of Sudan (El Haggaz and Garvey-Williams, 1978) there is a tradition of collective work at the community level, the importance parents place on their children's education motivates them to mobilize for the construction and maintenance of school buildings. Thus for example when the new reform extending primary schooling from four to six years was adopted, and the central authorities appealed to local communities to help set up infrastructures in the form of buildings, the results were very encouraging. The central government was to take responsibility for operating costs, in particular teachers' salaries. In Sudan, too, overall community support for schools goes back to the eighteenth century, when the teacher ("feki") taught all subjects to all village children between the ages of four and eleven. The school ("khalwa") was integrated into the village. The "feki" was a socio-religious authority and the children participated in socioeconomic activities (field work) and socio-cultural activities (marriages, baptisms, funerals). Parents and the entire community provided the means of subsistence. This tradition was disrupted during the colonial period. However, the notion of self-help did not disappear. Thus communities, especially those with adequate resources, have the responsibility for the construction of schools, whereas operating costs are borne by the central government. In the current context of economic crisis, other sources of community support have been contemplated, especially above the primary level, as with the payment of 10£ as a contribution toward building maintenance. Parent-teacher associations are very active in finding sources of support for the schools: operating lunch-rooms and grocery shops, raising poultry, baking, sewing, and embroidery, renting premises to shopkeepers, organizing recreational outings (plays), and so on. Parent-teacher associations offer textbooks to needy children (15-20% in some schools), and wealthy citizens offer gifts in the context of the "zaaka" (1/14 of the annual profits⁵).

In Zimbabwe, government policy had been encouraging self-help at the community level. Within this framework, the responsibility for the construction of new schools and for the extension of existing schools has been transferred to communities, that is, to parents. In cities, municipal authorities impose special taxes to collect enough funds for school buildings. However, given the constant excessive demand, the number of schools does not meet the needs. As a result, a system of double shifts is used to increase the number of available seats. In rural areas, where district councils are supposed to offer support to parents for building and expanding schools, 80% of the time parents find themselves facing the same situation: lack of money on the councils' part. Occasionally, however, district council

⁴ Interview, November 26, 1990, with Madame Sawsan Korra, Vice-Secretary of State for Education, Egypt.

⁵ This information on the case of Sudan was gathered during two interviews, one with Leyla Taha Saleh, a student at the University of Loughborough in the United Kingdom, who was writing a doctoral thesis on the financing of education in Sudan, the other with Habib Hajjar, a Program Specialist for IPE, who has organized a number of activities in Sudan.

officials assist families by helping them take the necessary steps to seek support from funding agencies. The absence or inadequacy of funds means that authorizations to build schools are not followed by immediate action. As a direct consequence of this situation, many children must still walk seven to twelve kilometers to attend the nearest school. In many cases, children do not go to school at all, though this is not what the government wants. In rural areas of commercial farms, the situation is different. The owner of a large farm may agree to build a school for the workers' children. If he does not do so, these children have no chance of going to school, on the one hand because their parents do not have the means to have one built, and on the other hand because even if they had the means, they would not be permitted to build on the farmer's land.⁶

By emphasizing the overall education of individuals who are well anchored in their own environment and in national society, in Congo the central government has asked all strata of society to participate at the local level in establishing the infrastructures required for a basic education for all. The central government and local communities collaborate to achieve that goal. And since the authorities decided, in the 1960s, to assume more responsibility on the secondary level, the municipalities and the local communities have had to gather the resources necessary to construct and furnish school buildings (Milongo and Rouag, 1978).

In Nigeria, Igwe (1988) report on a regional undertaking in the eastern part of the country where people are using the traditional social organization, characterized by a certain spirit of initiative and enterprise fed in part by competition, to promote the necessary services in various areas such as the provision of drinking water, medical services, electricity, and so on. In the specific area of education, following a tradition dating back to the colonial era, the cost of school buildings and tuition is borne by local communities under the leadership of local chiefs. In spite of certain ephemeral policy changes at the state level toward the end of the 1950s and at the level of the federal government in the 1970s tending toward a total acceptance of investment and operating costs by the public authorities, in reality local populations have taken charge of the development of their own educational infrastructures. The phenomenon has grown so significantly that the communities that have provided their own primary schools are now actively working on developing secondary schools. Indeed, as Igwe (*ibid*) points out, villages that do not have their own secondary schools, generally built through their own means, are now rare. Various techniques have been used to raise the necessary funds: fund-raising at regular ceremonies, or at special ceremonies held for the purpose; voluntary contributions by wealthy individuals and/or former students of the school; taxes imposed on the parent-teacher association; and the assessment levied on those who use the services of the schools.

In the case of Madagascar, the central government seeks to control the expansion of school construction by rural communities which, in their determination to establish schools in their localities, commit themselves, at the time classroom buildings and teachers' quarters are built, to assume all costs, including teachers' salaries. But quite often the means at their disposal are not sufficient to allow them to assume that responsibility for more than two or

⁶ Case presented by M. T. Machingaidze, an intern in 1990-91 of the IIEP Annual Training Program.

three years. They then turn to the central government, with a *fait accompli*—the existence of a school—and ask the authorities to take over the operating costs, in particular the teachers' salaries. As these requests are numerous and as the central government has not provided for them in its budget, a situation of crisis results in which the measures taken by the state tend to discourage communities from undertaking, on their own, the construction of schools that are not included in the central plan for school construction or in the national budget, even though, in the context of economic constraints, the central government seeks a more active participation on the part of citizens. Planning departments seek the means to coordinate the enterprises of communities that are motivated and that have the means to build schools with the overall central plan for school construction in keeping with the means available to cover operating costs on the national level, especially the cost of teachers' salaries.⁷

Several Asian countries have had significant experience with local community financing of some types of educational costs. The best-known case, reported by Robinson (in Bray and Lillis) is that of China, with its "minban xuexiao," schools organized by local populations. Although the broad guidelines and the governance of these schools have been the province either of Communist Party cadres or of those responsible for educational services at the provincial as well as central levels, financing has been provided at the local level. This practice has developed in particular in the context of the revolutionary change that has taken place in China. The participation of local populations in educational matters did not have at its fundamental purpose the advocacy of a policy of cost recovery or of assigning responsibility for educational financing to communities in order to reduce the burden on the central government. At stake was the whole concept of education in its relevance to society; the philosophical question of the social model reflected in that concept was what inspired the overall organization and the financing of schools at the local level. The profile of most teachers, ordinary citizens with skills relevant to the socioeconomic life of the milieu, indicates the concern for making the school capable of responding to the actual needs of the locality and integrating it into the economy.

In Myanmar (formerly Burma), all types of schools are strongly supported from below by communities, from support for public schools in the form of joint contributions to the "affiliated" schools, which are entirely a local responsibility. Several formulas, somewhat similar to the Nigerian ones described above (although the sociopolitical context is not the same) are used to pull together the necessary resources. In 1982-83, about 8 out of every 100 primary schools were classified as "assisted." Although this figure may appear relatively modest, we have to take into account the fact that state schools are also partially supported by local communities. In the wake of the economic difficulties of the 1980s, the central government has encouraged an even more systematic and significant participation on the part of communities, in particular with the assistance of UNICEF in the context of the Program for the Improvement of Primary Education in the 1982-86 Plan. Even teachers' salaries are a local responsibility, a situation that is rather rare (Biak and Scandlen in Bray and Lillis, 1988).

⁷ The case of Madagascar was presented during a discussion in November, 1990, by M. G. Gniarck, an intern in 1990-91 of the IIEP Annual Training Program.

In New Guinea, decisions about key aspects of the educational system, including teacher certification and hiring, the curriculum, the calendar, and so on, are taken at the national or provincial level (Bray in Bray and Lillis, 1988). However, local communities play an important role in some areas. An eloquent indication of the importance of local community participation in building and operating primary schools is found in the name itself: “community schools.” Through the administrative council, which includes among others representatives of the teaching staff and of the citizenry, on the one hand, and the institution called Parent-Citizen Association (of which the customary Parent-Teacher Association is a subgroup), on the other hand, local citizens are actively involved in various areas, including the construction of school buildings, enrollments, discipline, and certain subsidiary or optional areas such as crafts, religion, and so forth. Although the coexistence of these two institutions, given their sometimes overlapping prerogatives and degrees of dynamism that vary from community to community, occasionally leads to confusion, the important point here is that local citizens are recognized as partners not only for the purpose of supporting the costs of education, but for the overall development of the school conceived as a local institution.

In Nepal, communities share in the various costs of education at the primary level (Padhye, 1976). As in most of the cases presented up to now, the area of school building construction is the one in which community responsibility is greatest. However, in this case, as in Myanmar, community contributions are related not only to investment costs, but also to operating costs, including teachers’ salaries. Community responsibility for part or all of teachers’ salaries depends on the status of the school in question. For example, while the teachers who teach in government schools receive all of their salaries from the public budget, those in the non-assisted schools have their salaries set and paid by the schools’ own governance committees. In other words, salary levels vary according to the financial capabilities of communities.

Owing to its weak economic resources coupled with a high rate of population growth, Bangladesh has encountered enormous problems with the distribution of education to the school-age population as a whole. The country had a tradition of community participation in educational services. In spite of certain disruptions in the wake of the introduction of a centralized administration in the colonial period, this tradition survives. Even though, with the nationalization of primary schools in 1974, the charges levied on communities have become relatively lighter, the central government still asks communities to take on the cost of school buildings, in other words, the construction of new buildings and the maintenance of old ones (Selim and Bolton-Maggs, 1978).

After running into difficulties in the introduction and use of modern construction materials, the central authorities in Iran “rediscovered” “traditional” construction techniques (Kowsar and Dupety, 1978). In this way rural communities have been associated with the construction of school buildings. But in order for the norms established or desired by the Ministry of Education to be respected, it has turned out to be necessary for the appropriate ministerial services to collaborate closely with the rural groups participating in the building projects. The authors suggest that the populations of urban centers are also involved in school construction projects. It must be emphasized that in the case of Iran there is a focus on the

problems of adapting construction materials and on the need for a work force competent to do the work rather than on financial constraints.

In Guyana, several types of communities share in various aspects of education. For example, parent-teacher associations as well as parents' action committees, among others, work to collect funds and materials for school construction and maintenance. Paul et al. (in Bray and Lillis, 1988) provide a list of seven nursery schools and ten primary schools among those that were constructed between 1979 and 1985 with the support of communities. The Ministry of Education encourages collaboration between communities and the central administration. For example, the need to build a school in a specific locality can be expressed by a community, which must then work with the appropriate department of the Ministry to get approval for the construction project, instructions about building standards, and so on. Depending upon the Ministry's arrangements, communities may, if their material and monetary resources are inadequate, request subsidies from international, governmental, and non-governmental organizations. Schools' accounts must be kept in such a way that all funds received, including outside contributions, are recorded, along with indications of how they are actually spent.

In Peru, the experience of rural school centers, first, and then the experience that grew out of the 1972 reform, that is, the "Nucleo de Educación de la Comunidad" (NEC) were based on an overall conception of the organization and integration of education within communities (Malpica, 1980). From this perspective, local resources are viewed as means that make it possible to bring about this integration of the population. At the level of every NEC, a community council for education made up of teachers (40%), parents (30%), and other local institutions (30%) deal with problems of education not in immediate, simple terms of financing or material resources for schools, but rather in global terms.

In Mexico, the contribution of communities has been formalized, especially starting in the mid-1970s. The "cursos comunitarios" were created in 1974 by the CONAFE (Comision Nacional de Fomento Educativo). CONAFE is an organization created by the state; however, the educational resources for whose coordination it is responsible are provided by communities. These communities build schools, that is, supply the land, the funds, the materials, and the work force. They also take responsibility for meeting the teacher's needs, in particular by providing housing and food. The teacher is a former pupil who has reached the level of the first cycle of secondary school. The state's recognition of the contribution of these teachers consists in giving them the opportunity to finish secondary school on condition that they enroll in a terminal cycle. The schools in question underwent rapid expansion starting in 1976 in the framework of a program of basic education for all. Enrollments reached 250,000 pupils before they started to drop. In fact, given the current economic crisis, local populations no longer have the motivation to carry on with the experiment. Thus enrollments have gone down to a current figure of 160,000.⁸

The participation of communities and families in Haiti has grown in unprecedented fashion since the early 1970s. Contrary to several of the situations described in this chapter, in Haiti the construction of public schools is a responsibility of the central government.

⁸ Blanca Margarita Noriega Chavez, intern in 1990-91 in the IIEP Annual Training Program, graciously provided this information on one of Mexico's programs.

However, it must be stressed that the role of the central government in providing basic education at the primary level is becoming less and less significant. In reality, private schools are predominant today in the educational system; at the primary level, they take in 78-80% of the student population.

Tibi (1989b) presents a topology of private schools and ends up categorizing them in five major groups:

- non-profit religious schools;
- non-profit lay institutions organized in response to the demands of the poorest sectors; this is the case of Kenya's "harambee" schools;
- schools created to absorb the part of the population whose needs are not met because of the limited offerings of the public authorities;
- high-quality profit-making or non-profit religious or lay schools that serve the most affluent families of the region;
- schools whose owners are motivated by the desire for profit and whose clientele is made up of those who do not have access to the various types of schools already mentioned.

In order to understand the participation of communities in basic education in Haiti, it is necessary to adopt the perspective of the context of privatization of almost all of the educational system, given the increasingly reduced contribution of the central government. Most private schools in Haiti fall in the fifth category of Tibi's typology. They are viewed by their owners as a business like any other, one whose goal is to supply goods and services in a maximally profitable way.

At all social levels, parents have strong motivations to send their children to school. Those who live in rural zones also have a positive attitude toward school. The inadequacy of resources is the true obstacle to the education of children. To have access to the private schools that are run like businesses, one has to pay tuition and meet other school expenses as well. These expenses are paid in cash, which is a handicap for families in rural zones who have no economic activities that can bring in sufficient resources to pay all the expenses involved in sending a child to school.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a major role in the organization of basic education in Haiti. In an effort to adapt school expenses to the resources available at the community level, a Belgian institution has undertaken an experiment at the heart of the country. Families that have children in school pay tuition and fees in kind, according to the agricultural products of the region and the season. These products are sold by the school, which uses the revenues obtained to help pay the teachers and to cover the other operating expenses. As for building new schools, local populations make their contributions in terms of locally available materials (sand, stone) and specialized (mason, carpenter) and non-specialized laborers.⁹

As I emphasized at the beginning of this section, the experiences presented here are somewhat diverse. For example, there is an enormous philosophical and socio-historical

⁹ The case of Haiti was presented by M. G. G. Mérisier, an intern in 1990-91 in the Annual Training Program of IPE during an interview in December 1990.

difference between the “minban xuexiao” developed during the revolution in China and the “harambee schools” in Kenya. The factors that led the Iranian government to call for the systematic participation of the public at the moment when the price of oil was up and the appeal of the government in Bangladesh or Sudan are different. These differences bring out more clearly the widespread nature of the participation of families and communities in rural environments in establishing and operating schools. In fact there are few countries in which citizens at the local level, beyond their contribution to public funds through various forms of taxation, do not share actively in other types of educational costs. The main problem that is raised here is rather the lack of data and information about local participation, data that could be of use in efforts to extend educational services in view of contributing to a basic education for all; a related problem is the tendency to underestimate these contributions.

A remarkable constant in these very diverse experiences is the participation of communities in the construction of school buildings. As Hallak (1990) emphasizes, considerable efforts were made by many developing countries during the 1960s and 1970s. However, because of population pressures and the great demand for education, these construction projects are not sufficient to meet the needs. The economic crisis has further exacerbated the problem of the imbalance between supply and demand. Several countries have turned to a variety of methods, such as double shifts, to allow a greater number of children to have access to schooling. The participation of local communities in the construction of school buildings falls within the framework of solutions that are being contemplated by local populations on the one hand and the central authorities on the other to help solve the problem of the inadequacy of the infrastructure.

3. The Case of Côte d'Ivoire

In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, cacao and coffee provide the main source of funding for education. From the 1950s to 1989-90, the number of growers and the production of these two agricultural crops increased continuously. Concerning cacao, for example, as the Director of the Caisse de Stabilisation et de Soutien des Productions Agricoles (CSSPPA: Office of Stabilization and Support for Agricultural Production) emphasized, speaking on September 24, 1990, about the 1990-91 season (which began in October, 1990), this was the first time that Côte d'Ivoire experienced a decrease in production (Reuters, September 24, 1990). About two-thirds of the resources of the central government come from coffee and cacao.

Despite the relatively high number of large landowners,¹⁰ most of the country's agricultural production depends on small landowners who live in villages, camps, and hamlets. If we look at the coffee- and cacao-producing regions such as the central eastern zone, where for the last ten or twenty years the lands have been losing their fertility, the average size of plantations has tended to remain the same or to shrink. This situation explains, in part, the migratory movements of growers through the cacao belt, for example, toward the western and southwestern regions of the country, where the process of land exploitation began more recently (Assié-Lumumba and Lumumba-Kasongo, 1990).

The government revenues used to finance education are derived chiefly from the same source, although the funds ultimately used to finance education are provided via through two different channels (Bourgoin and Builhaume, 1979; Assié, 1982; Assié-Lumumba, 1983b). The two institutions involved in educational financing are the Budget Spécial d'Investissement et d'Équipement (BSIE: Special Budget for Investment and Equipment), which is overseen by the Caisse Autonome d'Amortissement (Autonomous Office of Amortization), and the CSSPPA, mentioned above.

Whether funding comes through the BSIE or the CSSPPA, the sources of the budget allocated to education are essentially agricultural. Thus small farmers turn out to be the main providers of government resources (Assié-Lumumba, 1983b). These funds are used not only for public schools, but also for the private schools that receive state subsidies. These private schools, especially at the secondary level, are located in cities, which means that the clientele is de facto biased in favor of urban populations.

In all countries, adults, especially parents, participate as a general rule in public financing of education as taxpayers, through various forms of taxation (on income and consumer goods) and, on an individual basis, when they have children in the educational system. In this sense, rural populations cannot be viewed as exceptional in helping to supply the central government with funds that make it possible to ensure the financing of public programs such as education. But in developing countries, especially in Africa, income taxes constitute a very small fraction of state revenues. An analysis of the sources of government revenues makes it clear that the exceptional participation of small growers in the production of the principal export crops such as cacao and coffee, which in the case of Côte d'Ivoire

¹⁰ City-dwellers in general, and especially those of the well-to-do socioprofessional classes, own plantations.

constitute the backbone of the country's economy, give an exceptional dimension to the contribution of rural communities, especially those with plantation-based economies, to the resources of the central government.

In addition to the contribution of small farmers to public funds for educational financing, there is a whole gamut of direct and opportunity costs that are borne by families and communities, either collectively or individually.

3.1 Investment costs

Where investment costs are concerned, the two principal necessary conditions that must be met before villages make a commitment to provide significant funding to share in or even take over altogether the costs of school construction are the following:

a very strong demand for education;

financial and non-monetary means to bear the construction costs.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the plantation economy and schools constitute two variables of a single equation. Other things being equal, the rural populations that have relatively high annual incomes are more likely to take over the costs of school construction. In the 1960s, an increasing number of schools were built by villagers; this corresponds to the period during which income from cacao and coffee reached a very high level. This was a period of great confidence in the theory of human capital, which, with its renewed popularity, seemed to indicate the path to follow, in the eyes of many third-world leaders who were proclaiming their intention to look for the most effective ways to improve living conditions for populations as a whole.

In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, education was declared the number-one priority. Mechanisms were set up in the 1960s to make people aware of the importance of schools.¹¹ This was in fact a euphoric period, a period of extraordinary expectation regarding the capacity of education to lead to socioeconomic progress.

School construction involves both classroom buildings and housing for teachers. The total number of buildings, their size, and their cost vary according to a certain number of factors, including the villagers' economic resources, their determination to develop schools, the number of school-age children, and so on. The application of the government policy favoring the creation of center-villages had an impact on the means and the size of the schools financed by villagers. This policy was developed within the framework of the Development Plan and the creation of Fonds Régionaux d'aménagement Rural (FRAR: Regional Funds for Rural Development). Depending on the goals, the FRAR were to allow

¹¹ For example, in the mid-1970s, contests were organized at the national level to determine which among a series of programs would be the most vital for the country's development. The programs included "school enrollment at 100%," "enough doctors for the entire population," and so on. The winner not only had to choose "school enrollment at 100%," but also had to indicate the exact number—or come closest to the exact number—of respondents who chose "school enrollment at 100%." These contests were part of an effort to raise public awareness of the fact that, even if one were to choose other items, such as an adequate supply of doctors, schooling was indispensable.

the establishment of social and community infrastructures such as markets, cooperatives, means of communication, civil service centers, medical centers, women's centers, schools, and so on. The central government's financial contribution to the construction of these infrastructures is inversely proportional to the income of the population. In order to define the role of the central government and the share to be borne by communities, the national territory was divided into four large zones (Trouchaud, 1974, p. 69):

Zone 1: the entire northern half of the country, and the savanna district;

Zone 2: the forested region of the west, with its coffee monoculture;

Zone 3: the central western region;

Zone 4: the forested regions of the south and the east, with a high density of industrial crops. The annual rural income per person in these four zones was, respectively, in 1970 for example, 3,200, 6,400, 13,400, and 22,000 FCFA (Trouchaud, *ibid.*). Significant variations within each region existed and continue to exist. However, the situation has changed over the last few decades, with the development of the western regions and the massive migration of populations from certain zones of the central eastern region toward the central western region, and the west; these were becoming the regions that produced the greatest quantity of products for export, in particular cacao and coffee, and, increasingly, rubber, which was concentrated for a long time in the central lower coastlands. The point to be emphasized here is that the central government established a policy of helping populations in the achievement of community infrastructures such as schools, according to the capacity of these populations defined in financial terms. Thus, according to the estimated income of the rural populations of these four major zones, the responsibilities are as follows, in percentage terms:

	Government Share	Local Share
Zone 1	85%	15%
Zone 2	70%	30%
Zone 3	35%	65%
Zone 4	15%	85%

According to the FRAR project, the policy of planned school constructions in the country as a whole was to be based on the principle of efficiency and economy of scale. Even if the central government does not participate in the construction of buildings, these criteria of efficiency count in principle in the official recognition of the schools built by village communities and in the responsibility for operating costs, especially teachers' salaries. In rural areas, expenses for land acquisition are trivial. However, the cost of construction materials (cement or wood) and of some of the specialized labor force (masons, carpenters) is paid by the local villagers.

3.2. Operating costs

For a series of reasons, including budgetary constraints, certain schools constructed by village communities are not recognized by the central government. In their determination to send their children to school, and preferably to a school in their own village, some communities decide to operate their school despite the lack of official recognition, and to

meet all the associated costs. Under these conditions, the villagers generally hire a former student who left school at the end of the primary cycle or after the first cycle at the secondary level. The costs associated with this teacher are the responsibility of the community, which provides housing and pays part of the salary in cash, part in kind (subsistence products, in particular, for meals). In general, this teacher is assigned several classes grouped together; they most often include the first two years (first and second grade) and the third year, less often the fourth year. The goal of these villagers is to be able to send more and more of the graduates of their own school on to official schools for the higher grades, in order to give them the opportunity to take courses offered by qualified teachers and especially to allow them to take the official examination for the primary-school diploma and the competitive examination for entrance into secondary school. In their determination to have schools in their villages, village communities that have almost no Christian population have not hesitated to call upon missionaries to operate their schools. Missionaries, for their part, hoping to provide a service and to be rewarded by making new converts, have willingly operated such schools.

Whether schools built by village communities are recognized by the central government or not, as soon as they begin to operate, they need to be maintained for the protection of the buildings. The ministerial services that establish the budget do not take the maintenance needs of rural school buildings into account. Only urban schools, especially those at the secondary and higher levels, really have a place in the budget. However, no service is free. If the central government does not pay, someone else does, and in the case of rural schools, the costs become the responsibility of the local community.

The tendency to take the contribution of rural communities for granted is widespread, whether these contributions are in cash, in kind, or in human resources. This is a mistake that can have serious consequences for educational planning. Without regular maintenance, buildings can no longer properly be classified in the category of investment property. If rural citizens do not say in so many words that "time is money," they nevertheless are acutely aware of the value of their own time. Farmers have their work calendar, which becomes extremely rigid and demanding during the major work periods, involving both plantations and farms where food crops are raised. As rains have become rarer, farmers are more anxious than ever to work when the rains do come. One has to be in these zones during full days of fieldwork, especially after long-awaited rains, to realize to what extent farmers insist on respecting their work calendar. Days off when they can work on building maintenance, including their homes and schools, become rare during these periods. Yet it is precisely during the rainy season that the question of maintenance becomes crucial.

Indeed, during the rainy season it frequently happens that roofs are torn off by tornados. And when the roof of a school building is damaged, apart from any considerations of the comfort and immediate safety of the pupils and teachers, the other parts of the building may be damaged and quickly destroyed, either owing to erosion or because the foundations give way. In fact, in order to guarantee that the buildings will last a long time, repairs cannot be made only when people have time; they must be made at precise times, beyond which the effects of the damages inflicted become irreversible.

This situation currently prevails in several localities in the cacao belt, especially around Bocanda and Ouellé. The cacao belt was a relatively prosperous region between the

1950s and the mid-1970s. This was the period when the price of coffee and cacao was fairly high, which allowed growers to have reliable, regular incomes each year, part of which was used for school construction, and some of the schools that were built operated entirely at the expense of the local communities. Under demographic pressure, with the exhaustion of lands and the decrease in the prices of agricultural commodities, which meant that larger land areas were necessary in order to maintain or increase revenues, residents of this region began to emigrate toward the western central region, then toward the west. Since the departure of the young people, and given the lack of means, the schools that were maintained with meticulous care fifteen to twenty years earlier are now in a precarious state. To be sure, the age of the buildings is an important factor, but personal observation and discussion with villagers who stayed on the land and with teachers confirm that lack of maintenance is what had led to the process of generalized deterioration. And yet, according to the central planners, these buildings are supposed to last a certain number of years. According to the national plan for school construction, buildings that have been prematurely damaged are reported as being in good condition; such reports do not represent the actual number of school buildings. This case is just one example that illustrates the argument according to which the cost of education borne by rural communities is significant and deserves to be taken seriously toward the end of a better utilization of resources.

3.3 Individual Costs Related to School Attendance

The private individual and collective costs of school attendance include several factors that were mentioned in Part One. Direct costs involve school supplies, in particular, including, among other things, textbooks; within the family, the cost of textbooks may be viewed as an investment to the extent that several children may be able to use them during the same year or in successive years. Other supplies have to be renewed several times a year: for example, notebooks, ballpoint pens, pencils,¹² and so on. The purchase of uniforms and also of any other clothing (for example, special outfits for gymnastics) is a source of real problems for which families have to find concrete answers at specific points in time that do not necessarily correspond to their financial capabilities. Food, transportation, and housing if the school is located outside the village, are also concerns for pupils and their parents.

The various elements of these indirect costs show that this aspect of educational financing, even at the primary level, weighs heavily on rural communities. The overall structure of the system, the administrative organization, the division of the academic year, and so on, do not take into account the realities of rural life, so that direct and indirect costs are becoming heavier and heavier for these populations. To illustrate this argument, let us look at the period when classes start up for the year, and note how the fact that this happens at a prescribed moment can actually increase the costs of education and lessen the chance that some children will be able to go to school.

¹² It seems to be the case that, probably because of the heat in certain regions and at certain times of year, ballpoint pens, for example, have a tendency to “run,” often to the despair of parents who may find themselves virtually without money at certain periods of the year.

At the primary level, schools begin for the year in September. The return to classes coincides with one of the most difficult work periods in rural areas in general, and especially in regions where the economy depends on cacao and coffee plantations. The introduction of the plantation economy has not led to the disappearance of food crops such as yams, even if, in terms of the utilization of arable lands, export crops take precedence over crops intended for local consumption. All growers cultivate some food crops, which require annual plantings. Their growth cycle follows the rhythm of the seasons. The technology used is not advanced enough to allow for intensive cultivation or for the use of irrigation, for example, in order to produce crops at various times of year without regard to the natural rhythm of the seasons. If we look at regions where yams are grown, such as the eastern and eastern central regions in the cacao belt, the year can be divided up as follows: from January to June or July, field work consists essentially in clearing lands to prepare a new field, followed by the task of making the yam mounds after the first rains in March or April. Between July and November or December, work in the fields involves both the new fields for food crops and the cacao or coffee plantations. One of the periods of hardest work for the growers coincides precisely with the opening of school starting in September. The difficulties encountered are of several sorts. September falls right between two periods when crops are sold. This means that parents have very few financial resources with which to meet expenses for school supplies and the required uniforms.

One very important aspect of the cost of education involves food. During the periods when there is no school, children share in the family meals, both in the morning and at other times of day. But when children go to school, they follow a particular schedule, which has implications in all areas, including the providing of meals. The amounts required for breakfast vary from 5 to 25 FCFA per child, depending upon the parents' means and the nature of the meal. These sums may seem modest, but only parents with adequate means can give their children money for a breakfast consisting of fritters, bread, rice, or other fried food.¹³

According to the custom of village communities, especially when the fields are located far away from the villages, those who go to the fields do not come back to the village for midday meals. This means that the fact that schoolchildren remain in the village raises problems about how they get their meals during the day. This problem of pupils' meals is a general one, but it arises with particular acuteness during periods between harvests. Within the logic of economies of scale, it is less costly and simpler to have the entire family share the same meal, either in the village or in the field. It often turns out to be necessary for the parents, or more precisely the mother, to make sometimes costly special arrangements so the child can have a decent meal, if not in terms of quality (in terms of the nutritional value of the meal), at least in terms of quantity, so the child will have enough calories for the afternoon classes. Afternoon work becomes all the more difficult if the child has not had an adequate meal in the morning and/or at noon. While it is relatively easy to leave food for children's meals during and after the new harvests, it is difficult or even impossible to do so in the period between harvests.

¹³ Vendors seated along the roadside on the way to school or near the school courtyard are part of the everyday landscape of village schools.

In fact, many of the dishes prepared during that period are out of the ordinary, and require a generally longer and more complicated preparation and cooking process for the famished, inexperienced child who has to return to school for afternoon classes.¹⁴

As for the problem of distances, we should note that, as in the 1960s in the cacao belt, the west central and south central regions where the cultivation of crops for export has grown rapidly in recent years, growers built schools some of which were official. But problems arise when growers, especially new ones, live in small villages, camps, and hamlets that are scattered according to the site of their plantations, and there is often no school close enough so that school-age children could get there on foot. The solution of providing host families for these children is suitable only if just a few children are in this situation. But the capacity of the host villages to take such children in is quickly saturated.

The problem of saturation concerns the food supply, on the one hand, even though the parents contribute as much as possible to the food budget of the families that take in their children, by bringing in farm produce, for example. On the other hand, the capacity to take in children and to give them enough space to study and to sleep is quite limited. The generous families that agree to take in a large number of children often find themselves with overcrowded bedrooms. Even if, in general, shuttered windows with air holes allow for air circulation and avoid the risk of asphyxiation, the children who are crammed into a bedroom are not comfortable enough to get adequate rest and thus to be in good condition to do their schoolwork the next day.¹⁵ Under these conditions, growers who have relatively adequate means contemplate building small schools for the younger classes, for which they would hire and pay teachers themselves. The problems for which these populations are trying to find solutions are very real, and widespread.

How can the central government and rural communities work together to find satisfactory solutions? A systematic survey of the capacity to open small primary schools at the local level would be the beginning of a concrete understanding of the situation. Clearly, it would be important to avoid a system that could work spontaneously into a formal and bureaucratic one, and to avoid compromising the system's effectiveness. But the problem is precisely that relatively little information on this system is available, so it is hard to determine what would reduce or what would improve its efficiency. The important first step

¹⁴ This is one of the rare cases in which, in the current context, the fact that girls participate in household chores, especially the preparation of meals, gives them an advantage. Thus it is even more complicated for boys, who, according to the sexual division of labor, are not very familiar with cooking techniques, even relatively simple ones. Often, when a given family has both girls and boys in school, the girls do the cooking for themselves and for the boys.

¹⁵ In several localities, pupils stay with host families when their parents live in hamlets and camps near their plantations, particularly during the periods of most difficult work—which correspond precisely, in part, to the period when school starts in September. In these cases, many children stay with host families. Their parents contribute systematically and often in a formal way to their children's subsistence costs by taking food they have grown to the host families. During the period between harvests, many parents are unable to honor their commitments, precisely at the time when the host families most need the contributions of the children they have taken in.

here would be to find out how many localities could accommodate schools for the first two or three grades. There would then be a more systematic organization for distributing pupils among schools located in the central villages. To be sure, a certain number of problems might remain, but if the distances are not too great, it would be relatively easy for somewhat older children to go back and forth between home and school on a daily, weekly, or occasional basis. Similarly, for those who have to live with host families, the emotional cost of separation from their families and the sometimes difficult living conditions can be a little less harsh if this separation occurs when they are somewhat older, for example when they are nine or ten years old rather than six or seven.

As far opportunity costs are concerned, it can be affirmed that parents of modest socioeconomic means pay more for the education of their children than those who have greater financial means. At the level of primary school, these costs have a negative correlation with socioeconomic origin. This means that the more modest the social origin of the parents, the more they lose, in the short run, by allowing their children to go to school, whereas, for well-to-do parents, sending their children to school represents an immediate gain apart from any considerations of long-term investment.

For city-dwelling families, there is really no equivalent to the extended family structure characteristic of village life, in which for example grandparents or other family members can help with childcare. When both parents work in the so-called “modern” sector, with hours that do not allow them to be with their children during the day, the school clearly plays the role of babysitter. To be sure, urban families often have household help, employees who can look after some of the children’s needs, but the requirements of the parents’ jobs do not allow them, for example, to take the children to work with them.¹⁶ Under these conditions, either there is no loss to the family or else the family gains on several levels by using the services of the school. Thus, thanks to the schools, those parents who do not want their children to be looked after by housemaids do not have to make special arrangements to have their children cared for during working hours.

According to the classic way of calculating the rate of dependency in demographic terms, children under age 15 and adults over age 65 are counted as dependents. From this viewpoint, which is based on child labor laws, whatever the social origin of children may be, they do not participate in productive activities before the age of 15. In fact, this is not the case in rural environments, or in families in urban centers who are engaged in small-scale trades or in the informal sector in general. In these environments, children are not perceived as, and do not live exclusively as, dependents and consumers. In the case of families involved in agriculture or in running small businesses in cities, for example, the children participate fully, according to their abilities, in the economic activities of the family.

In rural areas, for example, girls and boys both participate in productive activities following the sexual division of labor that applies to adults. Thus, while boys spend virtually all of their work time in the fields, girls not only participate in these activities but also do household tasks. The difference between the economic value of the two sexes explains in

¹⁶ One rarely sees doctors or judges or other professionals (men or women) taking their children to work every day, with the intention of having them help the parent with his or her work.

large part why girls attend school at a lower rate than boys. The opportunity cost for girls is greater in that their labor is needed not only in the fields but also in the village. If we compare a woman's typical workday to that of a man, the number of hours of actual work may not differ too much. But there is a big difference in the nature of the work done during the day. The man begins to work in the fields at sunrise and works there all day, often returning home only at sundown. The woman, too, devotes a major portion of her time to working in the fields. However, before going into the fields, she takes care of household tasks: cleaning the house and the courtyard, fetching water, taking care of the children, preparing the morning meal, and so on. Only after all that does she go to the fields. She returns home toward mid-afternoon to prepare the evening meal, which is often the main meal of the day.¹⁷

When they are about six or seven years old, girls help the women of the family with domestic tasks. At that age, they help in the fields by watching over their younger brothers and sisters to lighten the mother's load, for otherwise the mother would carry the youngest child on her back as she worked. At home, girls help with various household chores, and they may be given specific responsibilities, for example fetching water from the well or from the river, sweeping the courtyard, washing the dishes, bathing the smaller children, and so on. During periods of intense farm work, to allow the mother to work longer in the fields without delaying dinner preparations, the responsibility for preparing the evening meals and for other household chores may be given to a girl, who remains in the village in this case, generally with her younger brothers and sisters to look after. In financial terms, it costs about the same to send a girl to school as it does a boy. However, under the conditions that have just been described, what is lost in non-monetary terms by educating a girl is high in itself, and is generally higher than what is lost in educating a boy. This high opportunity cost of sending girls to school constitutes one of the fundamental factors behind the lower rate of education for girls than for boys in virtually all African countries.¹⁸

Schools, as educational institutions that, for each class or level, address very specific target populations and require the immobilization of these populations in a specific place according to a specific calendar, are in contradiction with the organization of the socioeconomic life of populations in which the participation of young people is vital. According to current legal and practical practices, regarding young people's use of time in terms of school attendance and participation in productive work, there are two separate groupings, one consisting of schoolchildren and the other of young people who participate, as producers, in the activities of the family and the community. Thus, while school attendance implies several types of expenses for families, the child in school no longer contributes to the activities that make it

¹⁷ This tradition is so entrenched among the Akan that, for example, when a woman dies, she is buried with her face turned toward the West (setting sun), to symbolize her daily preoccupation with returning home to prepare the evening meal, whereas the man is buried with his face toward the East (rising sun), recalling his practice of going to the fields at sunrise.

¹⁸ This is true for in certain areas of West Africa, for reasons that are quite specific to the economic and cultural situation of the country—Lesotho, Botswana, and Swaziland, for example, have the opposite situation.

possible precisely to earn the money of which part could go toward school fees. And yet, as the IIEP director says,¹⁹ instead of adapting children to schools, the schools could and should be adapted to children. Adapting schools to community life would mean that it would be necessary to create and enlarge the intersection between the two entities, while taking into account the socioeconomic calendar of the locality, in such a way that children can both participate in productive work and go to school. In the current economic context, where a policy of disengagement relative to the central authorities in matters of educational financing is being promoted, it would be paradoxical not to reinforce, or even to destroy, the practice of the participation of young people according to their capacity.²⁰ Thus the various forms of costs are all the higher in that the structure of the school year does not take into account the work calendar in rural zones.

4. Family and Community Participation in the Educational Process: Beyond Material Support

A significant danger of the way one may conceive of the participation of primary- and secondary-school pupils, families, and communities in education, especially in the current context of research on the sources of school financing, would lie in the reduction of these contributions to material and especially financial resources alone.

In most third-world countries, even those that have quite a long-standing tradition of formal education, the school as the institution with the principal responsibility for formal education was introduced by the countries of Western Europe, often in the context of colonization. Thus schools were set up, sometimes by force, as foreign institutions. In the case of several African countries, schools were built outside villages, often on an elevated site overlooking the village. The physical position of the school on a higher plane symbolized the power and superiority of everything associated with the school in relation to the rest of the village. When the school was built next to or within a village, a physical barrier—a hedgerow, a wooden or barbed wire fence—was a concrete emblem of the separation are of

¹⁹ Lecture given December 7, 1990, on the “economic and demographic context: its consequences for education and the job market” in the Annual Training Program of IIEP.

²⁰Former students, with or without diplomas, tend to look at manual labor as degrading, and to seek only office work. This attitude has been widely deplored. Along similar lines, the rural exodus is condemned, and slogans such as “back to the land” have played a role in efforts to encourage city-dwellers who came from villages to go back, and to discourage rural populations, especially primary- and secondary-school dropouts, from emigrating to urban centers. At the same time, in a typical village on a daily basis one typically sees pupils going to school while parents and other young people who are not in school go to the fields. Under these conditions, it is no longer solely through programs that young people learn to separate themselves from country life. The structure of the academic year, the use of time on a weekly or daily basis, and the values conveyed by these habits which are acquired over the years, help inculcate the separation between village life and city life, between agricultural work and manual labor on the one hand, and office work and intellectual work on the other.

course practical reasons that may explain in part the need to separate schools from villages.²¹ But philosophical reasons, more than practical questions, account for the separation between schools and their environments. To be sure, the school can no longer be viewed today as a completely foreign institution. It is known and it belongs to the everyday landscape of localities that are sometimes far apart, in hard-to-reach areas. With the extended family system, there are few families that do not have at least one member involved in the educational process, as primary pupil, secondary student, teacher, parent, and so on. But the philosophical foundations that account for the chasm still exist. In many cases, teachers live in houses built on the school grounds. Their social relations are very limited: they socialize with each other or with representatives of social services or development services: for example, with agricultural agents, medical service providers, or teachers from other villages. In this context, the children constitute the real and sometimes the only links between the school and the surrounding community.²²

As a result, there is a near-total absence of public involvement in the educational process: the management of human and material resources, the identification of alternative solutions in the quest for funds, the design of the curriculum, day-to-day operations, extracurricular activities, issues of internal regulations and discipline. Given the way curricula and criteria for teacher certification are conceived, only individuals who have undertaken studies in the formal educational system and preferably only those who have earned diplomas can teach. In this context, illiterate villagers are viewed as uneducated, and thus have no place in the school context. In many countries, there is virtually no curriculum that draws upon the knowledge or know-how of local residents. In most cases, for example in the former French colonies of Francophone Africa, French is the only language used for teaching, whereas the language of communication outside the schools is not French.²³ In very centralized systems, for example, local populations have very little room to maneuver. Even where local organizations such as parent associations exist, their role is very limited and narrowly focused, rather than extending to the whole of the educational process. It is essential for the search for solutions to the need for material resources to be an opportunity for seeking solutions in a global sense that involves local populations. If basic education is conceived in its broadest sense, with all population groups taken into account, the task of

²¹ For example, noise from the village may disturb concentration, especially if there are openings necessary for air circulation in the classrooms.

²² In the context of a study of the rural habitat in Côte d'Ivoire, a research project in which the author participated, on (among other things) socio-community spaces and specifically schools, revealed the persistence of this tradition. The physical and psychological separation between school and community was one of the negative factors affecting the involvement of villagers in the television programs "Télé pour tous" (TV for everyone). And yet village residents were the target population for these programs, for example, those on agriculture, on drinking water, and so on. See Haruba, *Modernisation de l'habitat rural en Côte d'Ivoire*, Québec: Editeur Officiel du Québec, 1978.

²³ For a long time, until the 1960s, the use of African languages was forbidden within the school grounds. The pupil who, intentionally or spontaneously, spoke an African language was punished, generally by having to wear an object called the "Symbol" that drew ridicule.

extending the factors involved in the educational process to communities can be made relatively less difficult.

To be sure, broad philosophical questions are at issue, and these seem at first glance to distance us from questions in the area of financing, which is more concrete and specific. And yet it turns out to be necessary to introduce a concept of global participation on the part of local populations, which should not be perceived as sources of financing making it possible to reduce the burden on the central government, but rather as valuable partners capable of helping to improve the quality and the efficacy of the schools.

In a study undertaken in the Philippines, it became clear that the participation of communities in school financing accompanied by involvement in the overall activities of the school has positive effects in several areas (Jiminez and de Vera, 1989). According to this study, the participation of communities in the educational process has a positive impact on cost efficiency in relation to textbooks, and the quality of school buildings that have been financed by the community is higher. The authors of the study explain that pupils in these schools achieve better results than those in schools whose financing is provided by the central government. To be sure, there may be a danger of misleading relationships that can lead to erroneous conclusions, especially in the current context of pushing for private financing of education by the users. It is not impossible that another variable explaining the difference in the tendencies of communities to support education is behind the awareness and the capacity to ensure more effective management and good results in the schools. It is true that one always assumes that other things are equal, which is not really the case in the complex and shifting reality of the social context. What is important here is to avoid giving the impression that a greater contribution by local populations can be a sufficient condition for introducing better management and better results on the part of the pupils.²⁴

It is equally important to know how the contributions were raised. As has already been pointed out, populations can organize the establishment of schools and take charge of running them on their own. In such a case, one can speak of an existing demand for education and an internal motivation for creating the offer. The motivation may also be instigated from the outside and still have a positive impact. But it can happen, too, that external authorities (the central government) may ask populations to initiate new formulas of support for education and use coercive methods to get them to make more effort and actually to contribute more. Under these conditions, they can contribute without being really involved, and the contribution need not lead to better management or to more satisfactory results on the part of the pupils. Increased material participation on the part of families and communities is not a sufficient condition for making the educational system more efficient. The overall context of this participation requires study. This is why it is important that we seek to understand and to use the factors that motivate local populations spontaneously, and the factors that can trigger such motivation in such a way as to go beyond the purely material context.

²⁴ The error would be comparable to the conception, in the 1960s, that education was almost a sufficient condition leading to socioeconomic development.

Conclusion

The various cases presented here show the great diversity and significance of the costs borne by rural communities in general so that children from these communities can have access to a basic education. In fact, the participation of rural communities in the various costs involved in basic education is a worldwide phenomenon. The cases presented here illustrate that the phenomenon is virtually inherent in the nature of the interaction between education and other social realms such as the economy.

As far as collective costs are concerned, there is a tendency for the most broad-based contribution of rural communities to the costs of education to be situated in the framework of investment costs. The construction of school buildings is the significant area in which community participation is most visible and most widespread, either owing to local initiative or at the request of central authorities. Although the specific area of teachers' salaries is generally the responsibility of the central authorities, in some cases communities also share, officially or around the edges, in this cost.

When rural families make decisions about the schooling of their children, they do not raise questions about the Wall Street stock market or interest rates, even in the nearest bank. To be sure, the resources of these families are influenced directly and indirectly by the international economic context. However, the direct and concrete questions the families raise have more to do with whether the child will have to travel long distances, if there is no school in the village, and how to come up with the means to pay for supplies, uniforms, food, transportation, and the various forms of direct or hidden dues and tuition costs. The families may ask who is going to take the animals to pasture if a son goes to school, and who will fetch water and help with the housework if a daughter goes to school; they may ask how to build a school and operate it if it is not recognized by the central authorities. While these questions may seem unimportant to some researchers or consultants who spend their time in airports, hotels, and government offices, and even for decision-makers at the national level, and so on, they are real and crucial for families in rural areas. The answers these families give to such questions are translated into the demand for education. And if the goal is to encourage the masses to seek education, in the context of a sustained policy of a basic education for all, it is important for decisions pertaining to education to be reinforced by better knowledge of the various forms of contribution of local populations to education.

The complex costs and expenses involved in education are borne by the population as a whole, including even the youngest cohorts in the case of rural zones. In addition to their basic contribution to public funds, rural communities have other costs to bear. Yet the outlay in cash, the opportunity costs, and the non-monetary services that adults and children in rural areas engage in for the construction and operation of schools, as well as the enrollment of children in school, are virtually absent from the official statistics having to do with the costs and financing of education. The various contributions of rural communities, even those that may be relatively easy to discover, are not taken into account in a context in which the goal is to reduce the financial burden on the central government. Few studies have been undertaken, and the existing data have not been publicized enough to help provide information about the experiments that have been undertaken in community participation in building and operating educational structures.

There is a real need for in-depth studies of the various forms of costs and expenses and the sources of financing of educational systems as a whole, so that the data collected can be used in part by planners and decision-makers. Especially in the current context of economic crisis, a better knowledge of the sources of financing would make it possible to have a better appreciation of the possibilities and to strive for a more rational use of existing resources while taking into account the precautions needed in order to avoid triggering or exacerbating the school dropout phenomenon among certain cohorts in some countries.

The investment costs that fall to local populations in rural zones must be calculated, not necessarily with total precision but at least in the form of estimates, in an attempt to bring the real costs and the real expenditures as close together as possible. This estimate should constitute an important point in planning concerning material resources for education. In seeking to provide a survey of the overall resources available in rural communities, it will be necessary to take into account crucial aspects such as population movements that have a positive or negative impact on educational infrastructures, and the opportunities for children to have access to a basic education in the context of the formal educational system. Beyond these essentially material questions, one could address the overall involvement of populations in the educational process in order to help make the system better adapted to its users and more efficient.

It is essential that studies be undertaken not in order to find ways of transferring more financial responsibility to families, especially in rural settings, but rather in order to assess and explore the possibilities in order to maximize their benefits. Moreover, by given wider publicity to experiments that have already been undertaken or that are under way, it is possible to help the decision-makers in certain countries who could benefit from these experiences.

Several studies can be proposed, to deal with different aspects of the question. For example, it would be possible to make a retrospective estimate of past contributions and to analyze the present situation regarding the contributions of rural populations to investment and operating costs, the various forms—informal or formal, direct or disguised, voluntary or required, and so on—of fund-raising and the mobilization of various forms of resources for basic education. Some studies could seek to determine, for a given country, the cost, the age, and the condition of buildings constructed entirely by communities or with community contributions. Other studies could emphasize migratory movements and their impact on local and regional resources.

Such research will help provide crucial information for central, regional, and local planners and decision-makers, and will help families and communities themselves better utilize the resources they provide. For example, rather than deciding to apply a policy in a climate of “reproach” to the overall population that uses educational services without contributing enough to bear their costs, and transferring the costs to that population, these studies would be oriented toward acquiring better knowledge of the contributions already made, especially the voluntary ones, by families and communities, and the factors that encourage or impede the initiation and expansion of such local participation.

By using the micro approach, the choice of sample could be made in such a way that at least two countries of each of the major regions of the third world would be included. These countries should represent extreme cases: very strong and very weak community support. By following the same principle within each country, in the choice

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of regions and/or communities, a certain number of criteria must be taken into account: the richest and/or most enterprising communities, those that are the least well-endowed and/or have the least initiation and experience in organizing community support for schools. With this comparative perspective, the resulting analysis will make it possible to establish a typology of community actions fostering the development of formal basic education for all in many third-world countries, especially in Africa that is still lagging behind past internally set goals and those that were set at the global level such as the Jomtien 1990, Dakar 2000, the Millennium Development Goals for education.

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