

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(94) 399 final
Brussels, 26.09.1994

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL
AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

ON COORDINATION BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY
AND THE MEMBER STATES ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING
SCHEMES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Following a request made at the Council meeting on development in May last year, this communication outlines proposals for the Community and Member States to coordinate action on education and training in developing countries. The main aim is to strengthen their action in this area by coordinating it within a framework of principles, priorities, strategies and resources which will make aid operations in developing countries more effective and useful.

The communication gives a qualitative overview of education and training systems in the developing world. It highlights the role of education in human development. In line with internationally agreed principles, it stresses the top priority to be accorded to basic schooling, the value of long-term backing for education in the relevant countries and the need to support educational planning, administration and reform.

Support strategies have to be country specific and development cooperation can only help if each nation is dealt with in its own right.

Turning more specifically to the practicalities of coordination (Article 130x of the Union Treaty), the communication places special emphasis on the following: information exchanges in all areas; operational coordination for each individual country on the basis of a complementary approach between the Community and Member States; regular experts' meetings; an annual coordination progress report; and greater consultation with other major donors in education and training.

June 1994

Communication from the Commission
to the Council and Parliament
on coordination between the Community and its Member States
on education and training schemes in developing countries.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Articles 126,3 and 127,3 of the Union Treaty state that the Community and Member States shall foster cooperation with non-member countries and international organizations in the fields of education and vocational training.

In addition, Articles 130u and x stipulate that the Community's development cooperation policy shall be complementary to those of the Member States and that the Community and Member States shall coordinate their policies and consult each other on their aid programmes.

On the basis of the Commission's communication "Development cooperation policy in the run-up to 2000", the Council adopted a declaration in November 1992 inviting the Commission to put forward proposals on improving policy coordination procedures, both operationally and in international fora.

In its conclusions of May 1993, the Council took the view that, of those areas where coordination should be strengthened, education and training should be treated as a priority.

2. In its communication on "Development cooperation policy in the run-up to 2000", the Commission was at pains to stress that education had a greater correlation with the level of development than any other factor.

Education and training policies are, therefore, central to the development strategies of the developing countries (DC's). Such policies derive, in fact, from the more general framework of an overall strategy for Human Development whose principles are fully endorsed by the international donors and which identifies education as a basic human right.

In last November's communication to the Council regarding the policy of the Community and Member States on the campaign against poverty in developing countries, the Commission also highlighted the role of social service provision, including education, in combating poverty. The struggle against poverty in the DC's is a common goal of the Community and the Member states.

3. For many of the DCs, the existing systems of education and training, both formal and non-formal, are unable to meet the human resources needs of those countries' economies. It is clear too, that the gap between "needs" and "provision" is increasing rather than shrinking with time, even though it is important to distinguish between the situation of the poorest countries and those that are somewhat more affluent.

The gap between needs and provision now poses an important challenge for the international donor community. This challenge consists of two main elements:

- the reform of the DCs' systems of education and training is no longer something that can be achieved by interventions "at the margin". It is essential that assistance to the education and training sectors reach a "critical mass" if the interventions are to be both effective and sustainable;
- the sustainability of measures to support the education and training sectors can no longer be regarded as being achievable within the time frame of the conventional project. Only within the framework of a properly conceived "programme approach" can the necessary long-term assistance be provided.

But if the present situation of the education and training sectors in the LDCs poses a challenge to the European donors, it also presents European donors with a unique opportunity.

The challenge consists of how best to strengthen the complementarities between European aid programmes within the framework of greater total assistance to education and training. This can only be achieved by promoting increased coordination between the Member States and the Union with the aim of improving the overall quality and effectiveness of European aid in the field of human resources and by utilizing the other kinds of coordination that already exist between donors, especially Community experience with cooperative education and training programmes.

4. However, more efficient coordination can only be achieved on the basis of a common understanding of the problems confronting education and training in the DCs and on the basis of an agreed framework of principles and priorities applicable to all interventions in this field by the Community and the Member States. Accordingly, the aim of this present communication is to present such an analysis applicable to all the DC's.

II. THE STATE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN THE DCs

1. Definitions

It is important to start by defining the concepts used throughout the present communication. These definitions take account of other existing definitions used by international organisations.

Basic education: comprises any form of educational delivery which provides basic knowledge and skills. Used in this way, "basic education" becomes a flexible concept depending on the circumstances and needs of a particular context. Literacy and numeracy remain clear targets for all basic education programmes.

Primary schools constitute the first channel of basic education for the school-age population.

Formal education: is used in the sense of courses offered in recognized schools or institutes leading to the award, on successful completion, of a final qualification which is either awarded or accepted by the national administration. Technical education may also be an element within the formal education system.

Non-formal education: is used to refer to any organized education activity outside the formal system. As such it includes literacy training for adults, agricultural extension training for farmers, job-related skills imparted by employers to new recruits, enterprise and business management and cooperative training offered by NGOs plus a whole range of activities in the field of family planning and health.

Training: the function of the training system is to provide instruction in job-related skills designed to prepare the student either for direct entry into a trade or occupation or to provide him with the additional certification needed for progression within his employment from one skilled area to another. Training can take place at training centres, through apprenticeships or directly at the place of the trainee's employment.

2. Education and training goals

Education and training systems in the LDCs are required to address a range of objectives.

These objectives fall into two categories: on the one hand are the objectives of society (social objectives). On the other hand are the objectives of the individuals who utilize education services (private objectives).

From the point of view of society, education systems are needed:

- 1) to promote social cohesion and to transmit the values of the society;

- 2) to realise the benefits of the increased potential for democratic participation that stem from an educated population;
- 3) to meet the requirements of the various sections of the labour market for educated and trained manpower.

From the point of view of the private individual and his family, education systems:

- 1) provide increased lifetime choices of employment with the possibilities of higher standards of living and provide access to channels of upward social mobility;
- 2) provide access to greater security of employment and to greater choices regarding its physical location;
- 3) provide certification of academic ability and skills which gives access to higher levels of education;

There is a real possibility of a contradiction, existing between the achievement of social and private objectives. To take one example, an economy's demand for manpower with a particular level of education or with a specific kind of training is finite and is determined by the needs of employers and managers of enterprises for educated and skilled staff.

There is, thus, an optimal size for the education facilities for these skills which will allow an adequate number of individuals to be produced with the necessary qualifications to meet the expected labour market demand.

Social criteria, therefore, provide a rationale for restricting the size of the facilities dedicated to producing qualified personnel.

From the private point of view, however, the signals transmitted by the labour market lead to an entirely different conclusion. The student and his family perceive that the returns from educational certification are very significant.

The logical response of the individual to this situation is to seek to maximize access to all levels of education.

Private criteria, therefore, provide a rationale for expanding the size of facilities dedicated to producing qualified personnel for reasons which are not necessarily related to the extent of social needs.

This analysis of the goals of education systems in DCs highlights the difficulty of balancing two alternative perspectives.

First, donors are faced with real difficulties when seeking to assist the education sector because of its political and social importance and because of its complexity.

Second, the DCs are under considerable pressure to expand all types of education. But expansion may not really help to tailor education to meet the DC's social and economic needs.

3. Progress made in recent decades

- 1) Education and training in the developing world has made considerable progress for over the past four decades.

Despite very real problems, the low-income countries too, have made substantial advances : increasing the number of classrooms, providing places for more children in school, and, training more teachers. Up to the end of the seventies, enrolment levels rose faster than the population.

- 2) At the primary level, the global total of children enrolled rose by 328 million between 1970 and 1988, with the sharpest increases being in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Of countries with a primary school enrolment rate well below 100 %, those in sub-Saharan Africa undertook proportionately the biggest drive to expand the primary sector followed by the Arab countries and those in South Asia.

- 3) Throughout the world, the growth rate of secondary education has been much higher than that for primary schooling.
- 4) Similarly, the growth rate of higher education across the globe has been greater than for secondary education, particularly in the seventies and more so in sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia and Oceania. Everywhere, growth has been accompanied by the diversification of post-secondary and higher education establishments.
- 5) Education expansion in DCs has mostly been the result of government policy: the majority of schools and training establishments are either wholly or partially funded by the state.
- 6) However, the expansion of education has been very unevenly spread: three quarters of illiterate adults are concentrated in ten countries (including China and India) and illiteracy is worst in the poorest countries. By 2000, UNESCO reckons that the overwhelming majority of countries where less than half the people can read and write, will be in the poorest parts of Africa and Asia.

4. Progress has not been consolidated, especially in the least advanced countries and the past ten or so years have seen a deterioration in education systems

Economic and population trends in the DCs have impacted so severely on the education sector that the situation in many places is now one of deep crisis.

Education systems in many countries are hampered by external and internal constraints.

1) External constraints

- a) Population growth has been a major factor in hampering moves to improve education. In particular, the demographic explosion in the towns has made it very difficult to provide the necessary school places.
- b) The external economic climate, which has been extremely unfavourable for the DCs, has also had a generally adverse effect on the resources allocated to education, especially in Africa.
- c) The biggest external constraint is the resulting gross under-funding of education in the DC's.

Per capita public expenditure on education in Africa has fallen sharply and is lower than in all the other continents.

The reduction of the financial resources available for education has made it more difficult to continue expanding and improving education.

2) In addition to these external constraints, there are other, internal factors.

- a) Apart from specific national and regional problems, in many DC's the management and information systems for planning and administering schools are extremely weak.

This has led to an element of chaos in the development of education systems, where the real situation is no longer reflected clearly in public expenditure figures because budgets do not correspond to reality and because statistics are unreliable.

As a result, certain imbalances have occurred : such as the hugely disproportionate size of running costs to investment, and of salaries to other running costs.

Similarly, higher education often receives a disproportionate percentage of the available resources than either primary schooling or basic education.

- b) With notable national and regional exceptions, education in DCs is generally of a low quality, with poor teacher training, no clearly defined educational roles, staff disenchantment, unsuitable curricula, a shortage of materials, and poor quality control systems.

With the expansion of enrolment, quality has suffered and although school failure rates have fallen overall in the developing world, they remain very high, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean.

- c) The education system is also not integrated with the needs of the economy in many DCs where there is an increasing mis-match between school-leavers and jobs available in the public or private sector. Such distortions are both quantitative and qualitative (under- and over-skilling).

- d) This gives rise to a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, DCs remain **under-educated** (not all school-age children have been through school), a phenomenon which started in the mid-eighties. They are also **poorly schooled**: expansion has been at the expense of quality. On the other hand, they are **over-educated** when set against the economy's ability to absorb school-leavers.

Falling primary school enrolment affects different countries in different ways, with the biggest drop being in the poorest countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa, between 1975 and 1988 the number of primary pupils enrolled rose from 40 million to 70 million. At the same time the rate of enrolment fell from 79 % in 1980 to 72 % in 1988. The same trend, albeit to a lesser extent, can be observed in Latin America and Asia.

- e) Similarly, unit costs are high with big differences from one level of schooling to another. For example, in Africa, the ratio between the annual cost of teaching a university student and that of teaching a primary school child is 15:1 in Niger; 26:1 in Kenya and 62:1 in Uganda. In the Caribbean, the ratio varies from 12:1 to 51:1. In the main, the gap is wider in Africa than in other developing regions.
- f) Access to education is also tending to become more unequal, with girls suffering the most. This phenomenon is clearly exacerbated by the way structural adjustment policies have often been implemented, causing families already on the breadline to be unable to pay for their childrens' schooling.

5. Donor policies: their influence on financing and education priorities in DCs

Donor policies have determined the total amount of aid for education as well as influencing the way in which aid has been distributed within this sector.

- 1) Aid for education has not risen consistantly. The World Conference on Education for All in 1990 set out to reverse the downward trend in the volume of financial resources provided by both DCs themselves and by the donors.
- 2) A similar inconsistency is highlighted by the low priority given to basic education. The 1990 Conference underlined the fact that education is a right and that all parties involved, including the donors, must put basic education high on their agendas.

In reality, however, donors, including the Community and its Member States, are still a long way from giving priority to supporting basic education even though some donors are paying increasing attention to this area.

In addition to such discrepancies between principles and actions, donors' operations have affected DCs' education systems in ways which have produced a number of negative consequences. This is particularly true of the emphasis given to quantity over quality, to the results of the "project" approach and to the effects of structural adjustment programmes.

- 3) Donor interventions in the DCs' education systems have shown a clear tendency to emphasise the quantitative expansion of educational provision rather than the improvement of the quality of education. Admittedly, some relative improvements in quality have been supported but, in general, these have been too isolated to open the way for the positive, overall, sustainable development of education systems.

- 4) The "project" approach versus the "programme" approach.

The "project" has been and continue to be the form of intervention most commonly used by donors. Although useful in certain circumstances, this approach reveals its limitations when efforts need to be directed to supporting entire education policies and systems.

The "project" approach has led to donor financing of specific new investment operations, particularly in higher education; but has not always focused sufficiently on maintaining existing investments or on the key question of recurrent costs throughout the system. On occasion, it has even fostered the development of parallel financial and accounting systems which governments cannot afford. The approach also has a time-frame determined by the administrative procedures of the donors themselves and does not generally take account of the longer periods of time needed to ensure that investments remain sustainable and viable.

Obviously, this approach cannot be said to have jeopardized the many projects which have proved their usefulness and sustainability.

The advantage of the "programme" approach, however, lies in its ability to focus donors' attention on priorities deriving from an overall education sector policy. Thus, the individual actions subsumed under the programme can be targetted at the sectoral priorities of the DC itself.

- 5) Structural adjustment programmes.

Macroeconomic imbalances in the 1980's and the resulting austerity has led to many developing countries adopting stabilization and adjustment programmes in response to donors' demands that they reduce their budget deficits. As part of this process, public spending has been cut and funding levels for the social sectors, including education, have not always been maintained.

In practice, education spending per capita has fallen in real terms in many of the African and Latin American countries which underwent structural adjustment in the eighties. Conversely, spending has risen in South and South-East Asia, an area less vulnerable to such external constraints.

Over the same period, the ratio of primary to higher education spending in Africa and Latin America has tilted away from higher education, evidence of a desire to safeguard primary schooling. Again over the same period many countries have made efforts to lower the unit cost per pupil.

It is clear that the crisis in the DCs' education systems originated prior to the implementation of structural adjustment programmes. In general, structural adjustment programmes have not by themselves always helped improve access to education or made education more effective. True, this was not their aim. Yet despite the fact that in parts of Africa and Asia, they may have helped close the gap between spending on higher education students and primary school pupils, they have not necessarily opened up access to higher education.

- 6) In conclusion, there remains a continuing inconsistency between the various donors.

Access to public education, particularly to basic education, is a proven long-term weapon against poverty.

However, in the face of diminishing aid resources, pressure to make aid more effective could end up damaging the interest of the most vulnerable groups within the DCs not only in the poorest countries but also in the more affluent.

6. The importance of education and training for development in developing countries and the role of donors

- 1) Investigations over the past thirty years on human resource development and observation of trends in the developing world demonstrate the importance of education, particularly basic education, for economic progress, the reduction of income disparities and gender-based inequality, and the promotion of higher living standards.

Studies show that the level of schooling achieved by a majority of pupils is directly correlated to salary levels and to levels of economic productivity, and that the greatest returns come from primary rather than from higher education.

Education levels are also linked to a fall in infant mortality.

Many studies have also shown that fertility in women is inversely proportional to their level of education. Study delays marriage, increases women's chances of getting into the job market and makes them more aware of contraception.

- 2) Education and training are also closely bound up with the implementation and success of other public service activities, such as health campaigns and policies for family planning, employment, poverty alleviation and the promotion of women in society.

Indirectly, education and training (particularly that which leads to economic activity) can play a part in strengthening democratic forces in the DCs.

Education and training policies are also crucial to bringing about a just society, an obligatory goal of any state.

- 3) Although everyone agrees that education and training are essential, past history shows that there is a clear gulf between the actual situation and the means available to donors to improve matters.

If donors are to be able to make a useful contribution, the DCs' education systems must be susceptible to reform. This requires a willingness by the DCs themselves to undertake this task.

III. PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY AND MEMBER STATES ON AID FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1. Principles

Increased coordination between the Community and the Member States in the field of aid to education and training is possible only on the basis of a common framework of agreed principles and priorities. Only on such a basis can the aid effort be expected to respond systematically to the actual needs of the DC's rather than to current donor fashions or to other ad hoc considerations.

The principles guiding coordination in education and training are as follows :

- 1) Basic education is a fundamental human right.

It follows from this principle that the Community and the Member States in collaboration with the DC's themselves, need to give greater emphasis to the area of basic education within programmes of assistance to education. This conclusion is in line with the outcome of the "World Conference on Education for All" in 1990 and of the subsequent World Summit on Children.

As pointed out in Section II, 1, above, the concept of basic education includes, but is not identical with, the concept of formal primary schooling.

- 2) The Community and the Member States must devote more resources, in both absolute and relative terms, to supporting education and training.

Increasing access to education, whether formal or non-formal, requires an increase in the total volume of resources devoted to human development. Such an increase is needed not only to address the problem of the growing inequality of educational opportunity in many DC's but also to ensure that donor-supported activities are on a large enough scale to have a real impact on the delivery of educational services.

The appropriate level of European donor support for these areas must be determined with reference to the needs of the country concerned, to the absorptive, and managerial capacity of the local administration and to the political will to undertake reforms and to increase the efficiency of the education systems. Particular emphasis needs to be placed on assistance to the poorest of the developing countries.

Aid to education for the poorest countries should be in the form of grants and not loans.

- 3) The problems of the education sector can only be properly analyzed on a country-by-country basis.

It follows that the approach of the Community and the Member States must be to tailor their support for education and training to the specific needs of the country concerned rather than seeking to extrapolate responses which have proved appropriate in other contexts.

It is only by such an approach that the cultural diversity of the DC's can be fully respected and the differing long term political choices of the DC's taken into account.

Such an approach does not exclude support for regional cooperation in cases where countries clearly share common problems.

- 4) Aid from the Community and the Member States to education and training must support the developing countries' own efforts rather than acting as a substitute for local initiative.

Aid activities that are not "owned" by the recipients themselves are unlikely to be effective. Thus, activities that are to be funded by the European donors must involve all the relevant social actors. This can only be achieved on the basis of dialogue at all levels. It is only by such means that the real needs of each recipient can be ascertained.

Similarly, it follows that if European aid to education and training is not to be a substitute for action by the DC's themselves, each project or initiative must involve clear reciprocal commitments by the recipient state on measures to support the successful outcome of the operation.

In this context, a part of the increased financial resources for education should be provided by the DC's themselves by means of reallocations within their own budgets.

- 5) The sustainability of education and training interventions is a long-term consideration.

The concept of "sustainability" as applied to education and training activities is more complex than the allocation of a recurrent budget by the local administration. This is because the time frame needed to complete any part of the educational cycle is usually longer than the duration of the conventional project.

While limited pilot interventions or other small scale projects must continue to be supported, the Community and the Member States must accept that the expected results of most interventions in the area of education can only be achieved by adopting a "programme approach" with a firm donor commitment for the total lifetime of the programme. Only under such circumstances can the DC's themselves be expected to undertake commitments involving major changes and reforms in their education sectors.

A key factor in ensuring sustainability is creating an appropriate local institutional capacity. Capacity building must become a focus for all Community and Member States' assistance to education and training.

- 6) Interventions funded under structural adjustment facilities must be integrated with the long term education priorities of the recipient countries.

In the context of the fight against poverty, the Commission has already highlighted the need for a closer integration of economic, social and political objectives (1).

This is particularly important in the case of structural adjustment programmes where the economic and financial logic does not always take into consideration the long-term dynamics of education systems. It follows that education priorities, especially those concerning basic education, need to be explicitly incorporated at all stages in the discussion of the social implications of the effects of adjustment programmes.

From the point of view of the Community and the Member States it is essential to ensure that there is greater congruency between the utilisation of structural adjustment funds and those projects and programmes in the education and training sectors funded from the regular aid budget.

2. Priorities

The Principles described in the preceding section constitute the basic reference points for assistance from the European Community and the Member States to education and training in the developing countries as a whole. The priorities described in the present section, however, reflect the current assessment of the needs of the DC's. Priorities are essentially medium term, are subject to periodic analysis and review, and are dependent on the actual conditions prevailing in an individual recipient country.

The priorities are :

- 1) Improving the "quality" of education as well as the "quantity".

There are two contrasting views on this issue. The first argues that the relationship between development and an educated population implies the need to increase the quantity of educational provision. Expanding existing education and training systems will provide increased access to formal education across the entire population plus a greater equality of educational opportunity.

(1) Communication of November 1993 from the Commission on the policy of the Community and its Member States on the campaign against poverty in developing countries.

The alternative view takes as its premise the argument that the majority of the DC's formal education systems are better adapted to reinforcing and maintaining existing social structures than to providing a quality of education that will enable all population groups to participate fully in the development process. This implies that the problem of educational capacity is essentially one of quality and that providing the kind of education that is relevant to the actual conditions under which most people in the developing live, requires sustained innovation and the qualitative reform of the existing education system.

But while the need to expand educational access is generally accepted, the notion that there is also a need for major qualitative changes is not a view that is automatically welcomed within the DC's themselves.

However, educational innovation and reforms focussing on the improved management of educational systems impact not only on the quality of educational delivery but also on the quantitative aspects of the system. This arises because reform and innovation leads to improvements in the productivity of resources devoted to the education sector. This frees resources to support a more significant expansion of educational opportunities than would be possible if increasing access to education is equated solely with expanding the number of schools.

It follows that aid which results in an increased access to formal education without ensuring that access is to an education that is both relevant to the real needs of students and of sufficient quality to be generally useful for their subsequent careers is unlikely to have a significant developmental impact. Similarly, aid which increases the quality and relevance of the education available but which confines this education to the few, can only serve to perpetuate the inegalitarian aspects of a society and is also unlikely to have a major impact on the development process.

Thus, the priority for the European Community and the Member states must be to maximise access to education within the limits of the available resources while, at the same time, seeking to ensure a quality of education that is genuinely relevant to the need of the majority of students. In terms of quality, such an education must be that which provides the basis for a continuous improvement in the educational level of the population.

In practice, this means support for the qualified expansion of the school system in the interests of ensuring equality of access to primary education for all school-age children, while at the same time stimulating measures to increase the productivity of the sector's resources through the processes of innovation and reform.

2) Increasing the availability of vocational training.

While there is general agreement on the importance of technical education and vocational training (TEVT), the practical consequences of policies to promote TEVT have been the subject of vigorous debate. The experience of the past 20 years has shown that the costs of adapting the school system to teach vocationally relevant skills almost always outweigh the benefits obtained.

For the DCs' national administrations, the justification for diversifying the school curriculum to include skills training lies in the realization that conventional schooling is geared to the production of aspirants for white collar and professional employment. This raises the question of the relevance of such education to the vast majority of students who are being "screened out" as they proceed through the successive stages of the system and who are destined either for unskilled labour in the towns or for work in the traditional areas of the agricultural sector.

The attempt to turn the school into a combined school-cum-training centre has, however, resulted, almost universally, in a declining standard of education while failing to provide a standard of vocational training that can be recognized by formal sector employers.

The experience of the European Community and the Member states in supporting the diversification of the school curriculum serves to underline the need to shift the focus of support to job-related training in the context of specialized training institutions or in the context of in-service training offered by employers themselves.

3) Improving opportunities for educationally disadvantaged groups.

In countries with restricted access to formal education, the patterns of educational opportunity show a clear discrimination against certain groups within the school-age population. Such educational discrimination tends to be closely correlated with other aspect of social disadvantage, with the result that groups with the most restricted access to formal education are also those with highest incidence of poverty. The three commonest manifestations of this kind of disadvantage are : the restricted access to formal schooling experienced by rural as opposed to urban children; the restricted assess to schooling, in many countries, for girls and young women in comparison to the opportunities available to boys and young men; and restrictions on educational opportunities for children and adults with special educational needs.

Assisting the efforts of the DC's themselves to increase the scope of educational opportunities for such groups must be a priority for the European Community and the Member states for three fundamental reasons :

1. considerations of social equality and justice which demand that systematic discrimination be eradicated;
2. the fact that such groups are deprived of educational opportunities represents a huge waste of potential, educated manpower that would otherwise be available to the country concerned;
3. the fact that education and its links to the labour market is a potent weapon in the fight agains poverty.

Amongst the various disadvantaged groups priority must be given to improving the access to education available to women and the impact of all education sector projects on womens' education must be studied at the stage of project appraisal and monitored during the course of project implementation. In particular, stress must be placed on womens' education in all projects leading to interventions in primary schooling and in teacher training.

Emphasis must also be placed on the development of inclusive schooling for groups with special needs.

Such priorities are fully in line with the conclusions of the World Conference on Education for All and of the Salamanca Statement of June, 1994.

IV. STRATEGIES.

The principles and priorities outlined in the previous sections are only meaningful to the extent that they can be translated into practical measures whereby education and training in the DCs can be supported. The mechanism proposed for this task is a strategy for European aid to education and training.

The first requirement of such a strategy is that it should permit a "balanced" approach to the needs of the DCs' for education and training. Education systems are both complex and interrelated and the impact of developments in one part of the system will, inevitably, have repercussions for other parts.

The proposed strategy comprises two main elements, based on the experience of existing Community education and training programmes, and, where possible, on a bottom-up approach :

1. the identification of target areas of intervention;
2. the identification of measures to increase the efficiency of resource utilization in the target areas;

1. Target areas of intervention

1) Basic education

Adequate basic education is both a fundamental human right and a pre-requisit for development. The cornerstone, therefore, of any European strategy for education and training in the DCs must be support for the provision of basic education.

In view of current demographic pressures, merely making more primary school places available may not succeed in providing an acceptable quality of basic education for a larger proportion of the primary age cohort. In addition, there is an important trade-off in terms of the available government recurrent budget allocation for the education sector between expanding the number of primary school place and ensuring an adequate level of recurrent support for all the other components of the formal education system.

Thus, European support for basic education must include an element to increase the availability of alternative non-formal education opportunities for those individuals who are unable to complete the primary school cycle successfully.

A significant strengthening of non-formal education opportunities is the only effective route whereby basic education for the majority can be achieved within a reasonable time frame without placing unsustainable demands on governments' recurrent budgets. At the same time, support to non-formal education provides the means whereby hitherto disadvantaged groups can secure access to education.

There may also be a real need to protect current and future students against the trend of the decline in the quality of formal primary schooling. Should this need become apparent, measures to rehabilitate existing buildings and to supply equipment, books and teaching aids can be considered, but in the context of financial and managerial reforms which will ensure the sustainability of such actions in the longer term.

2) Secondary and post-secondary education

A sound secondary education sector is essential to provide the qualified entrants for higher education, teacher training, and other courses in tertiary and post secondary education and training. The strategy, therefore, to be adopted towards secondary education must focus on those areas and skills that are most relevant to the development needs of the country.

Much of the impetus behind the expansion of secondary education over the past 20 years has come from the pressure of social demand caused by the inability of many DCs' economies to absorb inappropriately or inadequately educated primary school leavers. However, the existence of unemployed primary school leavers can no longer be considered as a valid justification for donors continuing to support the expansion of secondary schooling.

As with the primary schools, there may be grounds for supporting interventions in the areas of construction and equipment supply on the basis that the quality of the existing system must be maintained. Such intervention should be undertaken within the framework of a longer-term plan for support to the sector.

3) Teacher training

One of the most important factors in ensuring the quality of education available in all segments of the formal education system is the professional competence and motivation of the teaching force. The extent to which the classroom is able to provide a constructive learning environment is directly related to the number of trained and qualified teachers and to the quality and relevance of the training that they themselves have received. The importance of the teacher's or the instructor's role is equally apparent in a non-formal education learning situation and in vocational education and training.

The fundamental importance of the teacher's professional function must be recognised by the inclusion of teacher training as an essential component of any donor strategy to support education and training in the DCs.

For the European Community and the Member states, the approach towards teacher training must be conditioned by the approach adopted towards other sub-sectors of the education system. Thus, priority will be given to the training of teachers in the field of basic education and to those teachers engaged in the teaching of developmentally-relevant skills in secondary and post-secondary education.

As regards the training of instructors for non-formal education, the achievement of all targets in the area of basic education and literacy training will depend upon the DCs' success in mobilizing a cadre of instructors having a high level of appropriate skills and motivation. Support for basic education must, therefore, include measures to assist instructor training.

The key question however, for all measures of support for teacher and instructor training, is the relative emphasis to be placed on in-service as opposed to pre-service training. Support for improved in-service training is likely to be both a cost-effective and professionally effective means of upgrading the professional skills of the teaching force while at the same time raising the morale of this important group.

Interventions in the area of teacher and instructor training must be undertaken within a framework of long-term planning for the sector. Within such a framework measures involving the creation of infrastructure and the supply of equipment can be contemplated, in particular to rehabilitate elements of the system that are no longer able to function properly.

Also, insofar as the availability of appropriate textbooks is essential for teachers to be able to teach effectively, measures are needed to support the production of local materials and to increase the overall supply of books to schools.

4) Technical and vocational education and training

Technical education and vocational training (TEVT) are essential to create the qualified manpower needed by all sectors of the economy. In addition, TEVT offers an alternative to purely academic post-secondary studies and provides a route to self-employment in both the formal and the informal labour markets. It is essential, therefore that support to this area be included in the donor strategy of the European Community and the Member states.

The question of relating the extent of any support to this sub-sector to the needs of the labour market is particularly important as the unit cost of this kind of education is normally considerable. For the same reason it is essential to ensure that the kinds of skills for which training is being offered are tailored to the actual needs of employers. Support by the European Community and the Member states in this area must, therefore, be integrated into a long-term strategy for technical manpower development for the DCs concerned as well as satisfying the normal criteria for sustainability in terms of the ability of the administration to provide recurrent budget support.

In view of the need to relate training directly to the requirements of a specific employment context, the involvement of industry and other users of technical skills is essential when planning curricula. Also, in-service training, such as apprenticeship schemes, upgrading programmes and extension courses should be given equal emphasis to the kinds of pre-service training that are more commonly supported.

In view of the need to ensure that instructors in these areas have both professional qualifications and practical employment experience, support should be made available for industry-based instructor training and for the in-service training and up-grading of the existing instructor cadre.

5) University education

Three factors must be considered regarding support to tertiary-level education.

Firstly, unit costs for this level of education are very high and the opportunity cost of funds devoted to university education is very significant in terms of the possible alternative uses of these funds at other levels of the education system.

Secondly, the "prestige" element in achieving a university education has led to a strong social demand for courses which are not necessarily those most needed by the DCs' economies.

Thirdly, every country needs a cadre of professionals to occupy senior positions in the administration, in commerce and in industry. On the basis, therefore, that the quality of a country's professional leadership depends on the quality of the education available at the national universities, there is a strong argument for donors to continue to support the highest levels of professional education.

Thus, while taking account of the questions of cost and the economies' absorptive capacity, support from the European Community and the Member states should continue to be directed to the strengthening of the country's professional and intellectual elite.

In this context it is important not to underestimate the value of scholarships and training awards for the nationals of the DCs to undertake certain kinds of advanced training in Europe.

2. Measures to increase the efficiency of resource utilization in the target areas.

The ability of the DC's to utilize aid more or less effectively depends on the stage of development of the local institutional structures involved with the management of aid and the implementation of aid funded projects. However, a DC's "absorptive capacity" is neither fixed, nor, indeed, is it inflexible in the short-term.

The experience of the European Community and the Member states is that well-directed aid can have an important impact on the way in which both local and donor resources can be used. In the field of education and training this is particularly important as there is evidence that resource utilization in formal education is often significantly sub-optimal.

The strategy for the European Community and the Member states includes, therefore, two target areas designed to increase the internal efficiency of education provision :

1) Support for education planning and management

The point has been stressed consistently that the strategic approach of the European Community and the Member states must be based on a planned response to the educational needs of the DCs. The basis for such a response, and indeed the effectiveness with which aid measures can be expected to achieve the intended objectives, will depend on the quality of the DCs' own machinery for planning and managing the development of the various components of its educational system.

Thus, an essential element in the support for all the target areas outlined above must be the strengthening of institutional capacity within the relevant part of the administration to monitor and manage local- and donor- funded measures of support for the education system and to establish a comprehensive planning framework within which targets for the future development of this system can be set and resource needs assessed. This implies additional support for planning and statistical units within educational administrations at both central and regional levels and the need for capacity-building within the Ministries responsible for Education and Training to receive greater attention from donors. Particular importance must be placed on the ability of the DCs' to undertake effective financial management.

Two further aspects of this target area are support to agencies involved in the assessment of manpower needs and for manpower planning at the central government level together with institutional strengthening for those parts of the budgetary process that involve the education sector.

2) Support for educational innovation and reform

In describing the present situation of education and training in the DCs, this Communication has repeatedly underlined the need to take into account the problem of the poor quality of much of the available education and the crucial issue of the inefficiency with which resources devoted to the education sector are being used.

Thus, on the one hand, resources are being swallowed up by the need to expand the scale of provision of formal schooling, while on the other, constraints on the education budget mean that additional resources are not available to develop and disseminate the means whereby the productivity of the educational sector can be increased.

The strategy of the Community and the Member states must be to assist the DCs to improve the overall quality of educational services and to increase the efficiency with which resources allocated to education and training are used. This means that the emphasis must shift from more traditional kinds of assistance to focus increasingly on innovation both as regards the delivery of educational services and as regards the process of curriculum development.

One innovation offering significant possibilities for both expanding educational access and for increasing the quality of the education provided is that of distance education.

Distance learning methods can increase educational opportunities on their own and as adjuncts to conventional classroom teaching. Delivery systems for distance learning courses can range from complex national networks involving radio or TV programmes to small-scale local distribution of written learning materials. As such they provide a means of economizing on scarce curriculum development skills within the DCs and support the work of teachers and instructors who may be poorly equipped for their professional tasks.

In view of the importance of supporting educational innovation, it is recommended that criteria relating to the extent of quality improvement and resource efficiency should become standard monitoring indicators in all education projects funded by the Community and the Member states.

V. IMPLEMENTATION : THE MEANS AND THE INSTRUMENTS.

There is a synergy between the means available to execute and manage an aid programme and the character of that programme. The aim of this present section is to show that the Principles, Priorities and Strategies outlined in Sections III and IV have resource implications. The extent to which these resource implications can be met in practice will determine the extent to which the goals of increased coordination can be achieved.

1. The means for implementation.

1) Financial resources.

The necessity of increasing the total finance for education and training has already been emphasised in Section III.1, above.

During the 1980's, despite calls to focus on the development of human resources, external aid for education and training failed to increase sufficiently to tackle the considerable increase in needs resulting from the growth of populations.

The necessity of increasing the flow of resources to this sector can be seen as being especially urgent for the least developed countries.

In this regard, the Community and the Member states must pay particular attention to the need to strike a balance for each individual country between, on the one hand, the need to raise the productivity of the DC's education system, and, on the other, to provide sufficient resources to make gains in productivity possible.

For those countries where the possibilities for economic development are already severely limited, external funding should take the form not only of investment in projects and programmes but should also include finance for the running costs of educational systems within the framework of appropriate reciprocal commitments.

2. Human resources.

An increase in the effectiveness of coordination between the Community and the Member States will be possible only on the basis that sufficient human resources are made available to enable coordination to be properly planned and managed.

The increase in the availability of human resources that this would involve could be achieved through the sharing of expertise between different European donors; through a rationalisation of tasks, at all levels, between the Community and the Member states; through the creation of additional posts for education and training specialists; or by the re-training of existing personnel.

In addition, unless the outcome of the new strategy is properly monitored, then any future revisions of policy will be based on purely theoretical considerations rather than on a systematic analysis of actual experience. It is essential that the human resources should be made available to enable this task to be properly carried out.

2. Instruments

- 1) Much of the aid required will still have to come through the financing of projects and programmes. These will have to mesh together in a much more consistent whole than before and act as complementary and operative factors in the national strategies negotiated with donors.
- 2) However, given the growth in manpower in many DCs, more direct ways of transferring resources should be developed, i.e. through previously used instruments and structural adjustment programmes such as general and sectoral import programmes or through direct budget support.

- 3) Where counterpart funds are used to support the education sector, there should be improved consistency with traditional types of financing in the form of projects.
- 4) As regards study grants, at present the majority of scholarship and training awards granted to nationals of the DCs are for training in the North.

European donor countries must be prepared to grant recognition to courses and training programmes of proven quality at institutions in the DCs and to increase their sponsorship of students from the DCs' onto such courses.

- 5) Technical assistance should evolve over the next few years. Advisory and consultancy work remains a valuable way of comparing experiences and of jointly analysing problems and solutions, especially as part of support for education policies and of country-by-country planning activities.

The necessary change should gradually result in the development of national capabilities through a progressive dismantling and replacement of technical assistance. Operations financed by the Community and its Member states should try to make even more use of individual and institutional skills in the DCs.

VI. PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICAL STEPS FOR COORDINATION BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY AND THE MEMBER STATES

1. General principles

- 1) The DCs see education as a particularly sensitive area politically, socially and culturally.

On the other hand, the comparative advantage enjoyed by respectively, the Community and the Member States is not easy to identify and so donors' policies tend to draw on different education models.

- 2) Because of these various factors, coordination should simultaneously aim to:
 - clarify the objectives of the Union in this field : the normal role of the Community as regards the conception and execution of coordination measures being maintained;
 - ensure the recipients of education schemes are closely involved in devising and carrying out the schemes recommended by donors;
 - be clear about the areas for cooperation without trying to cover every aspect of the "development of human resources and education", which is something that can vary according to donor policy and DC;
 - turn possible differences between Member States' own ideas of development cooperation to good advantage, that is by not using coordination to bring in standardization but to avoid duplication and to increase the synergies and effectiveness of aid in line with Council resolutions.

2. Practical steps

- 1) The Community and its Member states will coordinate their work through existing mechanisms on the basis of the principles set out by the Council in its resolution of 2 December 1993 on procedures for coordination between the Community and the Member states.

The Community and its Member states attach special importance to management committees, which also draw on the appropriate services of the Community responsible for cooperation in education and training if called upon, both in the planning phase of all development schemes in a country and in identifying education and training schemes.

- 2) Unlike other areas of Community and Member State development cooperation, policy coordination between the two on education and training is practically non-existent.

Coordination will be based on the operational complementarity between the Member States themselves and between them and the Community, including the Commission services with expertise in the area of education and training in DC's.

- 3) At the policy level, coordination will be based on exchanges of information and experience. These could look at the place of education in DC budgets, policies and priorities; effectiveness, quality, financing, aspects of financing by the Community or Member States of specific schemes (budget support or projects) and any other relevant matters.

On the Commission's side, thought will be given to the establishment of a data bank for Community and Member state's education and training projects.

- 4) Policy coordination will prove most useful for local operational cooperation in one or in a number of identified DCs (regional cooperation).

It is by taking each country or group of countries in turn that consultation will be of value: by talking with the recipient DCs, a coherent framework can be identified for action to be taken by the Community and Member States.

The process will centre on regular, systematic contacts between local representatives of the Commission and Member States designed to exchange information and ensure greater consistency in discussion with the DCs (on sectoral and subsectoral policy issues and on specific operations or projects).

It could lead to joint studies and evaluations and to the preparation and implementation of joint operations in line with the guidelines adopted by the Community and Member States.

Such consultations could precede the programming stage or go on throughout it.

It will be up to the Commission to instigate and maintain policy consultation and to follow progress in operational coordination.

However, in each of the recipient countries, one or other of the European partners will, by joint agreement, act as leader in the education sector and take the initiative to strengthen coordination.

- 5) At both the policy and the operational level, the Commission will bring together groups of Member states' experts (at least once a year). On the basis of Council guidelines applicable to the Member States and the Community, they will discuss the range of problems outlined above and elaborate the analyses made of some geographical areas or particular aspects of policy or concrete actions in education and training.

The expert groups could come up with specific guidelines to be submitted to the Council as needs dictate.

They should concentrate their efforts on a limited number of DCs where the Community and Member States have a significant presence.

The Commission will prepare an annual progress report on coordination work, covering Member State and Community action.

- 6) If the coordination between the Community and the Member States remains the first priority, a joint approach in other international fora must be pursued in parallel. In this regard joint consultations should be both systematic and informal.

Regarding dialogue and coordination with the other major donors active in the field of education, this should be undertaken on the basis of a common "European perspective", especially in the context of the development of long-term sectoral programmes.

The Commission's annual report referred to above, will cover activities undertaken in the context of coordination with other, non-European, donors as well as monitoring the progress of intra-European coordination.