

Foreword

In recent few years, many countries have found it increasingly difficult to finance their education systems. By definition, available resources in less developed countries are scarce, and education is expensive. The combination of high population growth and the global economic crisis of the 1980s has placed many governments under severe strain.

At the 1984 ninth Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers, in Cyprus, delegates recommended that 'a study should be conducted on a cross-country basis of the experience within the Commonwealth of raising additional and alternative funds for education' (Commonwealth Secretariat 1985, p. 33). One focus of discussion had been the extent to which extra resources could be generated by communities.

To implement the conference recommendation, the Commonwealth Secretariat commissioned a set of studies and organised a workshop in Botswana to discuss the issues. The workshop was held from June 12–19 1985, and was mainly attended by representatives of governments, academic specialists, churches and other voluntary agencies from the neighbouring Commonwealth countries of Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. With the help of additional funding from the Economic Development Institute of the World Bank, it became possible to extend the scope of participation. This resource book is one outcome of the workshop and the associated studies. Most of its content was discussed at the workshop, and it draws considerable inspiration from participants' views.

Community resourcing of schools has implications beyond the purely financial. For example, increased community funding can improve linkages between schools and the general public. It is frequently suggested that people value services more highly and take a stronger interest in the nature of the services when they directly contribute finance or labour, however small in amount.

Active community involvement can also strengthen support for teachers and children, and it can help improve supervision and accountability in the school system.

At the same time, the outcomes of community financing projects are not always entirely positive. Heavy financial demands fall with unequal weight on different sections of society, and can become a severe burden on individuals. Where communities are divided, self-help schemes may intensify rivalry rather than promote solidarity. The Harambee schools in Kenya, for example, have tended to be qualitatively poor by comparison with government schools, and have done little to reduce regional inequalities.

The book has four main audiences:

1. government officers in headquarters who want to know both how to improve strategies for collecting resources at the local level and what dangers to avoid,
2. district level government officers who have similar concerns,
3. leaders in churches and other non-government organisations who wish to establish or expand schools with government and community support, and
4. community leaders with similar objectives at the local level.

Systems of community financing tend to be highly culture-specific, which makes it hard to generalise. One group of West African societies, for example, generates funds through systems of age groups which may have no exact counterparts elsewhere. Religious groups with strong interests in education operate in some areas but not in others. And while some societies are so cohesive that they can require even their non-resident sons and daughters to contribute to schools back home, others command weaker loyalties and find it hard to encourage contributions even from resident community members. Clearly the examples and suggestions in the book must be adapted in different contexts.

Yet many of the points discussed in this book clearly *are* generally applicable. For example:

- * in all countries there is scope for increasing the resources provided in education by communities,

- * all governments should collect basic information on self-help operations,
- * all governments need to exercise controls to regulate the provision of schooling and its quality,
- * all schools need to be properly managed, and
- * all schools should operate a system of careful accounting.

Finally, although this resource book concentrates on community financing in primary and secondary education, readers may also find it valuable in nonformal and vocational education projects, and even in schemes outside the education sector altogether.

Peter R.C. Williams,
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How to Use this Book

A SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICER

A DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER

A CHURCH EDUCATION SECRETARY OR
AN OFFICER OF ANOTHER NON-GOVERNMENT
ORGANISATION

A COMMUNITY LEADER

1. Go through it to decide what is relevant to your context,
2. Discuss it with others in the community,
3. Follow up its suggestions,
4. Distribute it to colleagues, government officers, and non-government organisations.

1. Go through it to decide what is relevant to your context,
2. Discuss it with your colleagues,
3. Organise workshops for schools and community leaders, using it in conjunction with local materials,
4. Distribute it to colleagues, community leaders and government officers.

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2. Discuss it with your colleagues,
3. Organise workshops for school and community leaders, using it in conjunction with local materials,
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1. Go through it to decide what is relevant to your context,
2. Arrange for the topics to be discussed during policy meetings,
3. Instruct subordinates to follow up its suggestions in local level workshops with community leaders,
4. Distribute it to district officers, non-government organisations and community bodies.

**Who are
you?**

**What
could you
do with
this book?**