

## IRELAND'S RESPONSE TO AFRICA'S EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

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An examination of educational provision in sub-Saharan Africa reveals many problems: access, low completion and achievement rates at primary level, maintaining quality while increasing access at second level, and the cost, and relevance of tertiary education. The development of Ireland's official aid programme and current features are described. Mandatory commitments to the European Community and the World Bank take up more than half of all expenditure. Less than 10% of this goes to education and training. Bilateral aid is concentrated on Africa and education and training activities account for more than 40% of expenditure in recent years. An examination of the education projects funded between 1980 and 1990 reveals that most are located in third-level institutions and none has supported primary education.

The education sector in sub-Saharan Africa is facing severe problems. At all levels, the quality of the education being provided in schools and colleges is regarded by many as unsatisfactory. At the same time, too many children and young people have no access to education of any kind. The Irish aid programme appears to recognise these problems and to be willing to assist. In a speech in 1990, the Minister of State with special responsibility for Irish aid said: 'Our assistance is focused on priority sectors, in particular rural development and education' (Ireland: Department of Foreign Affairs, 1990, p.9). The annual report on Irish aid in 1986 gave reasons for this:

the provision to developing countries of assistance in the field of Education and Training is a major objective .... This reflects both the importance of this sector for developing countries and the expertise and experience which Irish personnel and institutions have to offer (Ireland: Department of Foreign Affairs, 1986, p.32).

This paper examines how the Irish aid programme assists the education sector in sub-Saharan Africa. The problems facing the sector are first examined. The Irish aid programme is then described and some recent developments explained. Following that, an analysis of the expenditure from the aid programme is presented. Finally, some conclusions are drawn and recommendations made.

## EDUCATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Data in the paper normally refer to 39 countries south of the Sahara desert. The Republic of South Africa and Namibia are excluded. Also excluded are six countries with populations of less than half a million: Cape Verde, Comoros, Djibouti, Equitorial Guinea, São Tomé and Principe, and the Seychelles.

*Achievements of Education*

In the past twenty-five years, a number of important achievements have marked the development of education in sub-Saharan Africa. There have been qualitative improvements

in terms of the range of educational services offered, the localisation of cadres of educational personnel, the rise in qualifications of teachers on average, the unification of the previously fragmented educational systems, the enhanced educational opportunities for females (Williams, 1986, p.92).

There have also been achievements in localization of syllabi in many countries. By the late 1970s, locally-developed texts and the vernacular were being used to begin instruction in more than half the countries (Hawes, 1979). As Table 1

TABLE I  
SCHOOL ENROLMENTS AND ENROLMENT RATIOS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA,  
1960 AND 1986

Level	Numbers Enrolled	
	1960	1986
Primary Education		
Enrolments (thousands)	11,700	53,341
Gross Enrolment Ratio (percent)	36	70
Secondary Education		
Enrolments (thousands)	800	13,671
Gross Enrolment Ratio (percent)	3	23
Higher Education		
Enrolments (thousands)	22	673
Gross Enrolment Ratio (percent)	0.2	1.8
TOTAL ENROLMENTS (thousands)	12,500	67,685

Source: World Bank, 1990a

shows, dramatic changes have occurred in the absolute numbers who have access to education at all levels. Between 1960 and 1986, the number of students enrolled at third level had increased by a factor of 31; at second-level by 17; and at primary level by 4.5.

*Problems of Education Access.* Despite these positive achievements, many problems remain. The major one is access, which extends to all levels of schooling. Over a quarter of all children do not get any primary education; the percentages of the appropriate age ranges participating at higher levels are very much lower. Girls fare worse than boys: in 19 of the 45 countries across sub-Saharan Africa, girls number less than 40% of the children in primary schools (World Bank 1990a, pp.16, 17). Similarly, rural children do not have the same access as urban children. For example, enrolment ratios in urban centres in the 1980s were 30% above those in rural areas in Cote d'Ivoire (World Bank, 1988). In Ethiopia, Addis Ababa had enrolment ratios of 90%, 89% and 50% in primary, secondary, and tertiary education respectively, while the rural Hararge region had only 24.1%, 9.1% and 3.9% respectively (Ethiopia: Ministry of Education, 1987).

*Primary Education.* None of the statistics about primary education in Africa can prepare the visitor for his or her first impressions. A primary school in Lesotho is described as follows:

The teacher has insisted that I sit in her chair - the only one in the room. There are eighty-three children of varying ages sitting on the floor. Thirteen of them have a copy of an English reader, bought by their parents. The teacher has a copy. Seventy children have no book. The teacher, untrained, has written three sentences containing two English mistakes on the board. Very few children in the room can read them or the text in the book. Yet these children attend school six hours a day, 190 days a year in similar conditions (Hawes, 1979, p.4).

This scene, which is replicated across the region, portrays the problems perfectly in microcosm. The problems are recognized by politicians and educators in Africa and by the World Bank (Williams, 1986; World Bank, 1988). According to the World Bank (1990b) policy paper on primary education, 'the most visible signs of ineffective primary education systems are low primary completion rates and low student achievement' (p.11). An examination of teacher training and education levels in seven African countries, for example, showed that teachers who had both completed secondary school and received teacher training were in a minority in all but one country, and in every country the number of untrained teachers was unacceptably high (Hawes, 1979). Nor are teachers well deployed; although the pupil-teacher ratio across Africa is on

average 39:1, this hides huge regional differences within and between countries. In Malawi, for example, the ratio is 74:1 in Lilongwe rural district, while in Mzuzu city it is 48:1 (Malawi: Ministry of Education and Culture, 1985). In the Central African Republic, the ratio is 69:1 and in Mauritius it is 23:1 (World Bank, 1988). An examination of the amount being spent on educational materials is also instructive.

Educational materials account for just 1.1% of the recurrent primary budget in the median African country .... This allocation amounts to less than \$0.80 per pupil per year which buys very little in the way of books, slates, wall charts and writing instruments (World Bank, 1988, p.31).

*Secondary Education.* The European visitor to a typical secondary school in sub-Saharan Africa finds a familiar situation. While buildings are not likely to be as well maintained, libraries not as well stocked, laboratories not as well equipped, and teachers not quite as well qualified, there are still many similarities to schools in Europe: many teachers are graduates and they will be teaching familiar subjects in a familiar language to recognizable levels. Examinations at the end of courses may even be set in Europe. Overall, the quality of the education being provided in many second-level schools in sub-Saharan Africa is relatively good.

The real problem facing policy-makers and planners in Africa is how to increase access to secondary education while maintaining standards. Almost 80% of the age range do not participate in second-level education at present and, while the percentage of those completing primary school and not going on to secondary school is much lower at 57%, the numbers completing primary school go up each year (World Bank, 1988). In Zambia in 1986, for example, an estimated 135,000 students left school having completed their primary education, and it is estimated that the numbers completing primary school will rise to 250,000 by the year 2000 (Kelly, 1986).

A number of countries have expanded access to secondary education very rapidly. For example, Lesotho's enrolment of 17,732 students in 1978 increased to 33,564 in 1984 (Lesotho: Ministry of Education, 1988). The numbers in secondary school in Zimbabwe increased from 74,966 in 1980 to 645,792 in 1987 (personal communication from Ministry of Education). Apart from the increase in government expenditure on education and the strains which such increases in numbers produce, there is some evidence that standards are falling in the two countries. Results in the Cambridge O-level examinations in Zimbabwe, for example, have been declining: the percentage pass rate declined for every subject except Ndebele (Zimbabwe: Ministry of Education, 1987). In Lesotho, the percentage of the intake into senior secondary school who passed

the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate two years later has declined each year and the absolute number of students getting a first or second class pass did not increase between 1978 and 1984 (Lesotho: Ministry of Education, 1988).

This leads to a separate but related problem: the low numbers of students taking mathematics and science and the levels of their achievement. A number of countries in southern Africa have not been producing a sufficient number of students qualified in mathematics and science to fill the places available in third-level institutions. Zambia, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Botswana have all established special programmes to upgrade students in mathematics and science and prepare them for third-level courses.

*Tertiary Education.* While access is a very serious problem at tertiary level, with less than 2% of an age range participating, there are many other problems. These include the frequent closure of universities, the poor quality of the education being provided, the management of the institutions, the paucity of the resources devoted to expenditure on items such as library, science equipment, and teaching materials, the inadequacy of the salaries paid to lecturing staff, the poor quality of the science and technology courses, the pre-occupation with providing non-teaching services to students, the production of graduates who cannot find employment, and the difficulties of recruiting well-qualified students into science and technology courses. Many of these problems are caused by inadequate resources, and yet many of the third-level institutions in Africa already cost too much to run. A World Bank (1988) study of cost disparities in the low-income countries of Africa shows that tertiary institutions took up, on average, 19% of the education budget in 1983<sup>1</sup>. The cost to government of each tertiary student was, on average, 60 times the cost of each primary-school student, compared to four times in Ireland and a factor of three in most industrialized countries. Put another way, each student cost ten times the GNP per capita in the low-income African countries in 1983 compared to 0.6 times in Ireland. As Hinchliffe (1987) puts it:

High shares of education expenditure relative to enrolments suggest that the unit costs of higher education are large in relation to those for other

1 The World Bank classifies countries as low-income if they have per capita incomes of less than \$400. In sub-Saharan Africa, 25 countries were so classified in 1984. The remaining 14 countries with populations greater than half a million were classified as middle income. Their per capita incomes ranged from \$450 in Mauritania to \$4100 in Gabon in 1984.

levels of education. In many African countries they are also large in absolute terms compared to countries in most other regions of the world. Further, since per capita incomes in the region are among the lowest in the world, the cost of higher education in Africa is particularly high in relation to overall domestic resources (pp. 31-32).

### *Population and Budgets*

The most obvious way to address the problems of access and low quality might seem to be to increase the level of government resources being devoted to education. Two important factors militate against this, however. The first is the growth of population in sub-Saharan Africa and the second is the level of economic growth.

TABLE 2

## POPULATION GROWTH AND PROJECTIONS, SELECTED AREAS

	Average annual growth of population (%)	
	1973-1984	1980-2000
All low income economies	2.0	1.8
- sub-Saharan Africa	2.9	3.1
All middle income economies	2.4	2.1
- sub-Saharan Africa	3.0	3.3
Industrial market economies	0.7	0.5
Ireland	1.3	1.0

Note: Data for 35 countries in sub-Saharan Africa with populations greater than one million in 1984.

Source: Adapted from World Bank, 1986a, pp. 228, 229.

*Population of Sub-Saharan Africa.* At present, as Table 2 shows, the population of sub-Saharan Africa is growing at a very high rate and the growth rate is itself increasing. It is estimated that the population of sub-Saharan Africa, which was 385 million in 1982, will almost double by the year 2000 and more than redouble by 2020 if present rates of growth continue (World Bank, 1984).

*Population Growth and Education.* Population growth obviously has significant implications for the size of the school-going population. A major study by the World Bank (1988) estimates that the 51.3 million primary-school places and the 11.1 million secondary-school places in sub-Saharan Africa in 1983 would have to reach 90.7 million and 19.7 million respectively in the year 2000 just to

maintain participation rates at 1983 levels. The provision of universal primary education would require 131.8 million places by the year 2000.

*Government Spending on Education.* If governments continue to provide the same level of resources for each student in primary and secondary education, then increases of 3% annually will be required in funding simply to maintain present participation rates. Any increases in participation rates will require either greater increases in resources or reductions in the level of spending per student. Government revenues, and consequently the ability to spend on services such as education, are dependent on economic growth.

*Economic Growth and Government Revenue.* The first five years of the 1980s have seen growth rates averaging only 1.1% in the Gross Domestic Product of the low-income economies of sub-Saharan Africa and 1.3% in the middle-income economies (World Bank, 1986). These rates are much lower than the rates of growth of population (see Table 2) and imply that if the total product of the economy were shared out equally, each individual would be a little less well-off year by year in the 1980s.

Most of the governments of sub-Saharan Africa devote a high proportion of their revenue to education. Expenditure on education averaged 15.9% of total government expenditure for the low-income economies and 17.2% for the middle-income economies in 1983 (World Bank, 1986). Despite the high priority accorded to education, the total expenditure at constant prices actually declined between 1980 and 1983.

Both rapidly increasing populations and slow economic growth rates affect the amounts that governments can spend on educational services. For the foreseeable future, it would appear that the amounts which governments spend may increase but, at best, will only increase in line with student numbers so that there will be no increase in the amount spent per student.

#### THE IRISH AID PROGRAMME<sup>2</sup>

Until 1955, when Ireland joined the United Nations, almost the only substantial Irish involvement with developing countries was that of the missionaries. An estimated 4,500 were still working overseas in 1990, 2,030 on development. However, it is from January 1973, when Ireland joined the European Economic Community and began to contribute to the Community's

2 This section is taken mainly from Grindle & Murphy (1991).

aid programme, that Ireland's official aid programme really dates. From 1973 to 1986, there was significant growth in the programme.

In 1974, an Agency for Personal Service Overseas (APSO) was established for 'the promotion of temporary personal service in the developing countries of the world for their economic and social development by persons from Ireland in the interests of justice and peace among nations' (APSO, 1974, p.5). In the same year, an official bilateral aid programme was established to be administered by the Department of Foreign Affairs. Bilateral assistance is provided by Ireland directly. Multilateral assistance is provided through bodies such as the European Community, the United Nations, and the World Bank.

There was a strong sectoral response to these governmental initiatives. The Irish state bodies established an umbrella body called DEVCO in 1974; in 1975, the Irish universities and some other colleges formed their own umbrella body, HEDCO, to promote and co-ordinate their contribution to developing countries; and 17 non-governmental organizations, most of whom had already been active in developing countries, formed an umbrella group which came to be known as CONGOOD.

In 1979, the government established the Advisory Council on Development Co-operation to advise the Minister for Foreign Affairs on all aspects of the Irish aid programme. Two years later, the government gave a clear commitment to achieving the United Nations target of devoting 0.7% of GNP to ODA (Official Development Assistance) and the first minister of state with special responsibility for aid was appointed. In 1982, an all-party Oireachtas Joint Committee on Co-operation with Developing Countries was established. This provided a forum wherein members of the Dáil and Seanad could consider Ireland's relations with developing countries in the field of development co-operation and the government's official development assistance to developing countries.

Five countries were identified as priority recipients for bilateral aid: India, Lesotho, Sudan, Tanzania, and Zambia. However, while in theory India remains, in practice there have been only four priority countries. Development Co-operation Offices, each headed by an officer of the Department of Foreign Affairs, were established in Lesotho (1978), Tanzania (1979) Zambia (1980), and the Sudan (1986).

The support for ODA by succeeding governments resulted in an increase in assistance between 1974 and 1979, both in real terms and as a percentage of GNP. Between 1981 and 1986, ODA again increased in real terms and as a share of GNP. Table 3 provides information on the allocation in selected years.

Since 1986, the ODA programme has been in decline. The Development Co-operation Office in the Sudan was closed in 1987. The all-party Oireachtas joint committee was not re-appointed following a change of government in 1987. In 1991, the Advisory Council on Development Co-operation was abolished. The ODA allocation as a share of GNP was steadily cut back from 0.25% in 1986 to 0.18% in 1991 (see Table 3).

TABLE 3  
IRELAND'S AID, SELECTED YEARS 1976-1991 (IRISH POUNDS MLN)

	1976	1981	1986	1991
<b>Multilateral</b>				
EC	1.3	7.5	12.6	18.1
World Bank/UN	2.1	3.3	6.8	6.8
Multilateral Total	4.0	12.3	21.7	25.9
% of total ODA	85%	65%	54%	59%
<b>Bilateral:</b>				
Bilateral Fund	0.4	5.1	14.8	10.2
APSO	0.2	1.0	2.4	2.4
Disaster Relief	0.1	0.4	0.8	1.0
Other	-	-	0.2	3.3*
Bilateral Total	0.7	6.5	18.2	16.9
% of total	15%	35%	45%	39%
Dept Admin	-	-	0.6	0.8
Grand Total	4.6	18.8	40.5	43.6
% of GNP	0.10%	0.18%	0.25%	0.18%

\*IR£3.25m food aid for countries affected by Gulf crisis.

Source: Grindle & Murphy (1991) and discussions with Chief Executive, APSO.

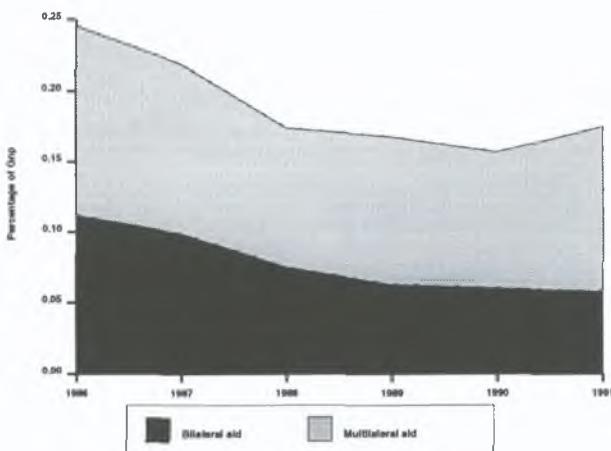
On the multilateral side, the main cuts have been in the 'voluntary' allocations to the UN agencies, especially to the United Nations Development Fund. Contributions to the World Bank and the EC development budgets are mandatory and the size of Ireland's contribution is not decided by Ireland alone. In 1991, these mandatory commitments took up 96% of multilateral assistance leaving very little room for further cuts. As the budget declined overall, so the mandatory commitments

took up an increasing share and bilateral assistance declined. When the once-off allocation in 1991 to countries affected by the Gulf crisis is excluded, bilateral aid, over which Ireland exercises direct control, has decreased each year since 1987, both as a percentage of GNP and as a proportion of total Irish ODA (see Figure 1).

On the bilateral side, the largest cut fell on the NGO (non-governmental organization) co-financing scheme, which was reduced from £2.57 million in 1986 to £0.5 million in 1990. APSO's grant-in-aid remained almost the same in cash terms over the period 1986 to 1991, meaning that there was a significant reduction in real terms. A number of other agencies involved in the bilateral aid programme also suffered; for example, HEDCO's grant for administration was terminated in 1989.

FIGURE 1

IRELAND'S ODA AS % GNP, MULTILATERAL AND BILATERAL, 1986-1991\*



\*Excludes once-off Gulf allocation

A major study of Irish aid commissioned by the (now defunct) Advisory Council on Development Co-operation found that there was no clear statement of the philosophy of Irish aid or of the policies underlying the Irish aid programme, but identified a number of primary motivations: humanitarian concern, enlightened self-interest, and foreign policy. A number of basic policy principles can be inferred from speeches and reports: concentrating on a limited

number of countries in Africa, targeting the poor, encouraging self-reliance, co-operating with partner countries, no tying of aid to the purchase of Irish goods and services, and using Irish people to provide technical assistance (Grindle & Murphy, 1991).

#### IRISH AID TO EDUCATION

##### *Education and Multilateral Assistance*

Multilateral assistance is mainly dispensed through the EC (36% of all Irish ODA in the period 1981 to 1990) and the World Bank group (11% of all aid in the same period). For non-mandatory contributions, the main recipients are the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Children's Fund (UNICEF), the High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), and the Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Of the funds provided for multilateral assistance, a relatively small proportion is likely to be used for education. The largest recipient is the EC but only 6.8% of the third Lomé agreement<sup>3</sup> was allocated to education (Amat Armengol & Dubois, 1990). This share is likely to have been reduced rather than increased in recent years as the main thrust of the EC programmes has been on rural development. While the World Bank is devoting increased resources to education (at the World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, it committed itself to doubling its lending to education), it will allocate only about 6% of its resources to education lending in developing countries in the period 1991-94 (World Bank, 1991). It should be noted that Ireland has very little say in how the World Bank allocates its resources, and, while it participates in the decisions about EC allocations, its influence is limited.

Of the UN agencies, UNICEF is increasing its support for education. None of the other UN agencies which get support from the Irish ODA concentrates on education. The major UN educational agency, UNESCO, gets no support directly from Irish ODA. However, Ireland is a member of UNESCO and some of the membership fee, paid through the Department of Education, is allowed as part of Ireland's ODA. This amounted to £19,000 in 1990.

3 The main development co-operation budget of the EC is the European Development Fund and the best known agreement is the so-called Lomé agreement with 69 African, Caribbean, and Pacific states.

### *Education and Bilateral Assistance*

The three main sources of funds for bilateral assistance are the Bilateral Aid Fund, administered by the Development Co-operation Division (DCD) of the Department of Foreign Affairs, the grant-in-aid for APSO, and disaster relief. These took 75%, 18%, and 7% respectively of bilateral aid in 1991 (when the once-off allocation to countries affected by the Gulf crisis is excluded). As the name implies, disaster relief funds are not devoted to education or training. Both APSO and the Bilateral Aid Fund concentrate on sub-Saharan Africa and each devotes a significant share of resources to education and training activities.

APSO supports Irish assignees in developing countries, directly sponsoring people or co-financing assignees with voluntary agencies. Most of its assignments - 80% in 1989 - are in sub-Saharan Africa. Over the period 1981-1990, 40% of the total of the annual assignments were for education (see Table 4).

The assignees are mainly secondary teachers. In 1986, 80% of the 237 assignments in education were secondary teachers. APSO has large secondary teachers' programmes in Zimbabwe, Lesotho, and the Sudan and it supplies teachers to other countries. (From late 1990 the Gulf crisis and the difficult political situation in the Sudan caused the suspension of support for teachers.)

TABLE 4

#### APSO TOTAL ASSIGNEES AND EDUCATION ASSIGNEES, 1981-1990

Year	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Total Assignees	251	270	387	440	482	464	455	435	451	395
Education Assignees	78	82	143	195	219	237	196	175	155	149
Education as % of Total	31	30	37	44	45	51	43	40	34	38

Note: The total number of assignees over the period is not the sum of the numbers for each year as people are normally assigned for more than one year.

Source: APSO annual reports.

### *The Bilateral Aid Fund*

Allocations from the Bilateral Fund in the period 1981 to 1991 were mainly for projects in developing countries. Two activities in Ireland, Education/training and Development Education, take up more than one-third of the remaining funds.

*Education in Ireland.* Education/training in Ireland has three components: fellowships for people from developing countries in Irish third-level institutions or for training activities in public enterprises; grants to three special courses in

Ireland (a graduate course in Engineering Hydrology in University College Galway, a graduate informatics course in Trinity College Dublin, and an undergraduate and graduate Diploma in Development Studies in Kimmage Manor); and grants to organizations concerned with education (HEDCO up to 1988 and the Irish Council for Overseas Students which continues to get a grant).

TABLE 5  
IRELAND'S BILATERAL AID FUND (POUNDS MLN)

	1981	1986	1991Est
<b>Priority Countries:</b>			
Tanzania	0.5	1.7	2.3
Lesotho	1.7	2.7	2.1
Zambia	0.4	1.9	2.0
Sudan	0.8	1.5	0.6
Sub-total	3.4	7.8	7.0
% of total	65%	53%	66%
<b>Other Projects:</b>			
Partner countries	0.2	0.7	0.3
SADCC	-	0.3	0.2
Total Projects	3.6	8.8	7.5
% of total	70%	59%	71%
<b>Through Multilaterals:</b>			
Co-Financing	0.2	0.7	0.4
Int. Research	-	0.5	0.2
Gulf Food Aid	-	-	0.3
Sub-total	0.2	1.2	0.9
<b>Through NGOs:</b>			
Co-Financing	0.5	2.6	0.7
<b>Activities in Ireland:</b>			
Education/Training	0.8	1.6	0.9
Development Education	0.1	0.5	0.4
Evaluation/Misc	-	0.1	0.2
Sub-total	0.9	2.2	1.5
Total	5.2	14.8	10.6*

\*1991 allocation plus funds carried forward from 1990.

Source: Grindle & Murphy, 1991.

*Development Education* covers support for courses and initiatives which educate Irish people about development and developing countries. This includes support for the Development Education Support Centre (DESC), located in St Patrick's College in Dublin, and an office in Mary Immaculate College of Teacher Education, Limerick, which supports agencies and individuals providing Development Education. Other development education activities are supported from a special fund controlled by a national committee.

#### *Education/Training in Developing Countries*

Seventy-one percent of expenditure from the Bilateral Aid Fund in 1991 was for directly-funded projects, almost all located in Africa, mainly in the four priority countries, Lesotho, Zambia, Tanzania, and the Sudan. An analysis of the sectors receiving project support is provided in Table 6.

TABLE 6

PERCENTAGES OF EXPENDITURE ON OVERSEAS PROJECTS BY SECTOR,  
1981, 1986, 1991

	1981	1986	1991
Agriculture	41%	25%	10%
Education/Training	17%	25%	34%
Basic Needs Provision	3%	21%	23%
Institutional Support	32%	20%	26%
Miscellaneous	7%	9%	7%

Source: Grindle & Murphy, 1991.

Since 1986, Education/training has received a larger share of Irish expenditure than any other sector. This is unusual among OECD donors: the average across the DAC (Development Assistance Committees) of the countries of the OECD in 1989 was half of the Irish allocation.

Apart from these directly-funded projects in developing countries, the Bilateral Aid Fund also co-finances projects with the NGOs. In 1986, £2,570,000 was provided in this way. In 1991, provision had dropped to £700,000. An analysis over the ten-year period from 1981 to 1990 indicates that 37% of the amount provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs for these projects was for education or training activities.

Table 7 brings together the various education/training expenditures from the Bilateral Aid Fund. As the table shows, a major, and increasing, share of Ireland's total bilateral assistance is devoted to education and training.

TABLE 7  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING AS A SHARE OF TOTAL BILATERAL AID FUND,  
1981-1990, MILLIONS OF IRISH POUNDS (1991 PRICES)

Year	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Education/training										
Projects Abroad	0.63	1.24	1.48	1.65	2.02	2.26	2.71	3.19	3.00	2.79
NGO Education/training										
Projects	0.12	0.24	0.42	0.52	0.62	0.86	0.49	0.19	0.13	0.20
Education in Ireland	0.73	0.94	1.09	1.27	1.49	2.12	1.60	1.28	0.95	0.98
Total Education/training	1.48	2.42	2.99	3.44	4.13	5.24	4.80	4.66	4.08	3.97
Bilateral Aid Fund	5.10	7.10	8.50	9.70	11.9	14.8	13.9	10.3	9.40	9.1
Education/training as % BAF	29	34	35	35	35	35	35	45	43	44

Source: ODA reports

### *Education or Training*

Appendix 1 lists those education and training projects on which funding exceeded a quarter of a million pounds over the ten-year period 1981-1990. It is extremely difficult to categorize projects as education projects or as training projects. Despite the difficulty, a categorization has been attempted, defining projects as 'education' if they are based in an institution for which a Ministry of Education is responsible and 'training' if they are the responsibility of some other ministry (see Kellaghan & Lewis, 1991). Thus, the medical laboratory technicians training programme in Lesotho is classified as education since the project was located in the Lerotholi Polytechnic, an institution of the Ministry of Education, while support for Mikumi trade school in Tanzania is classified as training, since the school is under the Ministry of Trade. This very rough allocation yields a 58% share of expenditure for education over the past ten years. A similar analysis of NGO projects shows that 76% of the expenditure was for education. The remaining 24% was expended on training activities.

*Support for Levels of Education*

An examination of the education projects funded over the ten-year period, 1981-1990, shows that none aims at supporting primary education, one aims directly at supporting secondary education, and another aims at training technical teachers for secondary schools. With the exception of the secondary-school support project in Lesotho, all the projects are located in the tertiary sector. However, despite their location, they are not necessarily aimed at supporting the education sector. With the exception of the technical teachers project in Lesotho, all the projects aim at producing people for sectors other than education. The largest project, for example, is aimed at relieving the shortage of accountants and other business cadres in Zambia. Projects in the University of Zambia have been aimed at producing veterinarians and economists. In Tanzania, education projects are aimed at producing agriculture extension specialists and accountants. In the Sudan, one of the two education projects was aimed at producing animal production specialists. The other supported the library of Khartoum Polytechnic. The only project in Tanzania aimed directly at the education sector provided modest general support (mainly for libraries and laboratories) for the two universities and this was terminated in 1987 when funding became scarce.

*Dual-purpose Projects*

A thread running through the education projects is that many of them serve two purposes. One common purpose is to strengthen the institution in which the project is based. The other purpose is to provide skilled people or to provide a service to the community. One example is Business Studies in Zambia. The project is designed to strengthen the capacity of Evelyn Hone College to run courses itself but is justified by its production of scarce business studies graduates for the economy. A second example is the support for Sokoine University of Agriculture in Tanzania. Support is provided to strengthen its Centre for Continuing Education but the project is justified by the Centre's work to retrain agricultural extension workers.

In the absence of policy guidelines, it is difficult to ascertain the reasons why these projects were chosen. However, the fact that there are so few projects which are aimed directly at supporting the education sector indicates that it is not the sector itself that attracts Irish support but, rather, particular products of the sector. Thus, projects aimed at providing modest general support for a university were terminated as funds decreased, while projects which were based in a university but aimed at supporting sectors outside education continued to be supported.

*Organization of Aid to Education*

As we have seen, the government department responsible for Irish development aid is the Department of Foreign Affairs and a good share of its funds go to education and training projects. The Department does not claim any educational expertise itself and seeks assistance from a range of individuals and institutions to identify, assess, and manage educational projects. The only Irish institution which was established specifically to provide support for education in developing countries is HEDCO - Higher Education for Development Co-operation - which was set up by third-level colleges in Ireland in 1975 to promote and co-ordinate their work in developing countries. HEDCO initially received its administration funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs and APSO and from 1985, following the recommendations of a review committee, from the Department of Foreign Affairs only. HEDCO's work has mainly involved strengthening institutions of third-level education in developing countries. However, it has also managed projects supporting other levels of education as well as outside the education sector. It was decided in 1988 to terminate the grant to HEDCO for administration and, from 1989, HEDCO has received no grant. It now earns income from the management of projects on behalf of the Department of Foreign Affairs, the European Commission, and the World Bank.

Eight of the Irish projects in the education sector and one training project were managed by HEDCO in 1990. Three education projects were managed directly by the Department of Foreign Affairs with technical consultancy from the Dublin Institute of Technology's Kevin Street College, University College Galway's Department of Engineering Hydrology, and the Department of Education. Of the three remaining training projects, two were managed by the Institute of Public Administration and FAS and the third was managed directly by the Department of Foreign Affairs with technical consultancy from an individual.

## CONCLUSION

This paper set out to examine how Ireland was assisting sub-Saharan Africa to solve some of its educational problems. Two major conclusions emerge. First, education and training are important components of the Irish bilateral aid programme. Secondly, the emphasis in Irish education/training directly-funded projects is on using the education sector to strengthen other area of the economies of beneficiary countries rather than on the strengthening of the education sector itself. On the other hand, APSO does concentrate on supporting the education sector, particularly secondary education. The teachers' programmes, run by

APSO in a number of countries, are important providers of scarce secondary teachers.

If greater emphasis were to be put on direct assistance to the education sector in sub-Saharan Africa, wide-ranging discussion would be useful on the assistance that Ireland should provide. Clearly, there are many needs in the sector at all levels and the discussion would need to focus on priorities. However, a number of issues would also have to be resolved. For example, which should be given priority, the needs in Africa or the Irish strengths? Should Ireland provide buildings or people? Most purists would argue that the needs in the developing countries must take priority. However, this ignores the importance of maintaining support for an aid programme in Ireland. Where the choice is between building classrooms or supplying skilled people, it could be argued that Ireland's limited aid funds would not buy many classrooms but that it could provide some of its own surplus of skilled people to assist in developing countries. However, the provision of highly paid (relative to indigenous professionals) foreign experts is being increasingly questioned in many developing countries.

When the priorities had been determined and the issues resolved the discussion would then have to focus on how best Ireland should organize and implement support for education in Africa. Is a specialist educational aid agency needed? How should it be structured and supported? Following the discussion, a document should be produced which would spell out the purposes, strategies, and financing of Irish aid to education over the next decade.

#### APPENDIX I

Education and training projects funded by the Bilateral Aid Fund in the period 1981-1990 (total expenditure in period in millions of Irish pounds (1991 prices)).

##### *Training*

Centre for Accounting Studies, Lesotho (3.7)

Mikumi Trade School, Tanzania (2.54)

Anaesthetist training, Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre, Tanzania (0.27)

Institute of Public Administration, Zambia (1.4)

##### *Education*

Technical Education support/support for Ministry of Education,  
Lesotho (3.2)

Medical Laboratory technicians training programme/National Health

Training Centre, Lesotho (2.2)  
Secondary schools support, Lesotho (0.42)  
Khartoum Polytechnic Library, Sudan (0.35)  
National Institute of Animal Production, University of Khartoum, Sudan (0.29)  
Centre for Continuing Education, Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania (0.49)  
University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (1.3)  
Technological Education Institutes, Zambia (2.9)  
University of Zambia (1.0)  
Hotel and Catering school, Bulawayo Polytechnic, Zimbabwe (0.34)

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