



Consortium for Research on  
Educational Access,  
Transitions and Equity

## Long Term Planning for EFA and the MDGs: Modes and Mechanisms

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### Summary

This discussion paper provides an overview and analytic guide to long term planning of education systems in the context of Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals. Long term gains in educational access depend on anticipating future financial and non-financial constraints on growth and on successful implementation of plans which support growth that can be sustained. Some recent expansion of primary schooling has failed to take a sufficiently long term approach to growth and has risked the creation of resource bottlenecks, poor trade offs between quality and quantity, and dependence on uncertain financing.

The paper first outlines three different styles of long term planning – Planning Lite, Framework National Planning, and Participatory Planning. It distinguishes between aspirational and target-generating approaches. It then describes the processes and tools that are needed to develop long term plans for expanded access that can reconcile goals and targets with realistic resource envelopes. These processes are designed to include mechanisms to promote consensus and build commitment. The nature of Medium Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEF) is then explored as a necessary tool to manage implementation. Appendix 1 provides more detailed discussion of the three approaches to planning. Appendix 2 elaborates on aspirational planning and gradients of achievement. Appendix 3 explores issues concerned with targets and indicators of performance. Appendix 4 contains a selected list of source materials.

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