D. Cohen (2000). Report on the Workshop on the Impact of HIV/AIDS on Education. International Institute for Educational planning in collaboration with UNDP and UNICEF – (Paris September 2000).

The aim of this report is to identify the main policy and programme issues generated through the discussions and papers of the workshop held at the IIEP.

1. What is the problem?
It is generally agreed that the HIV epidemic is eroding the capacity of the educational sector and that the problem will worsen over the next 10 years in sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, there is little or no data on the following:

- Loss of human resources in all levels of the education sector (teachers, assistants etc.) directly or indirectly due to HIV/AIDS.

- Only a limited number of countries in SSA are attempting to forecast the losses of teachers over the next ten years to HIV. MOE appear to be more concerned with HIV prevention through curriculum reform and have not taken into account the fact that if teaching is not sustained then the curriculum will not be deliverable. Moreover, MOE have neither the capacity nor the resources to tackle such large scale problems.

On the demand side there is little or no data on:

- Performance, attendance and drop out rates
- The effect of disparate age ranges in primary education
- Effectiveness of HIV/AIDS prevention programmes in schools i.e. the gap between expectations and achievement
- The consequences of shifting towards "fee for access" as a fundamental principle

2. Dissenting Voices
There is a need for improved HIV prevalence data that generates more policy related information. Due to the lack of data about the situation in SSA there are numerous interpretations of the problem.

- Demographic-based modelling of supply and demand does not take into account the wider implications of the HIV/AIDS impact on the education sector (absenteeism, regional differences and losses of teachers due to HIV/AIDS etc.)

- A study in Botswana [Benell et al] (based on the records of the Medical Aid Scheme rather than general HIV teacher prevalence rates) paints a more complex picture and suggests that MR's vary according to type of school and gender. Indeed, this study suggests that MR's may be falling contrary to other projections for Botswana, thanks to access to medical care, better nutrition etc.

- The reports from Senegal and Uganda show that new HIV infections seem to be falling among adolescence and young people, yet there is no hard data to confirm why. On the other hand, data suggests that HIV prevalence rises with educational level although this does not take into account the sexual behaviour of the better educated who have practised safer sex over the past 10 years. There is little data allowing for

the identification of trends in HIV incidence disaggregated by occupation and educational attainment.

3. What are the Strategic Policy and Programme options?

- It is clear that the state is ill-equipped to respond to the epidemic (lack of expertise, lack of effective outreach etc); partnership is clearly the way forward not only between NGO's and CBO's but also teachers, students, trade unions and so on. However, this does not mean a reduced role for MOE, in fact the contrary would be true with MOE performing critical functions (educational planning, resourcing). The lessons learned in Uganda highlight the need for open dialogue and a supportive environment, conditions that are not present in most SSA countries. Developing a policy framework through consultative programmes is the first step in addressing the challenges faced in the educational systems.

- Research will of course vary from country to country and needs to be relevant to policy makers. Impact studies albeit of limited value do generate awareness. What is needed is hands-on research which identifies the changing needs of clients and appropriate policies.

- Policies must reflect changing conditions in the HIV/AIDS epidemic which is not the case in most countries due to lack of awareness, capacity constraints and management failure. The next step will be to put in place sustained technical support to enable countries to implement effective programmes; of course this will entail additional financing. Change must also come from within, if communities are to take ownership for their educational provision, with the state providing the appropriate policy framework.

Although the challenges are great due to the complexity of the situation and resource constraints, the problems must be addressed in the early stages. Effective responses need to be implemented now.