

Resourcing to improve equity in education

Pointers for policy development

PRIORITISE EARLY CHILDHOOD AND BASIC EDUCATION

- Focus policy priorities on early childhood education and care and other public policy measures to improve the lives of young children.
- Ensure that any fees applied to early childhood education and care services are moderate and waived for those too poor to pay.
- Focus on basic education as it includes the entire cohort and within basic education pay particular attention to sustaining the performance of those with learning difficulties
- When budgets are limited, give priority of public expenditure to early childhood education and care rather than to tertiary education when budgets are limited. Reconsider policies in countries where fees are charged for early childhood education and care but not for tertiary education.
- Review policies in countries where grants to families for school-age children are tied to school performance as this may encourage students to drop out.

DIRECT RESOURCES TO STUDENTS AND REGIONS WITH THE GREATEST NEEDS

- Provide adequate mechanisms to redistribute resources and minimise regional inequities of provision so that minimum standards are met everywhere
- Channel extra resources through schools to help disadvantaged students in order to:
 - overcome the disadvantaging effect of social background
 - help to tackle poor performance without rewarding it
 - discourage schools from “selecting out” children from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Provide incentives for experienced teachers to work in disadvantaged schools.

SET CONCRETE TARGETS FOR MORE EQUITY

- Consider adopting a small number of numerical targets for equity, particularly for reducing the number of school-leavers with poor basic skills and the number of early school dropouts.
- Plan carefully how to manage and respond to the public debate which follows publication of school-level test results, give strong support to those schools with weak results and use the data to bring all schools up to a level, rather than allowing the pressures of league tables to polarise school quality.

FURTHER READING

These pointers for policy development are drawn for the Thematic Review of Equity in Education and the findings presented in *No More Failures: Ten Steps to Equity in Education*, published in 2007. Country background reports prepared by 10 countries, country reviews of 5 countries and other documents are on the OECD website www.oecd.org/edu/equity.