



Secondary Education in Ethiopia: Supporting Growth and Transformation (World Bank Studies)

Rajendra Joshi, Adriaan Verspoor

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Becoming a middle-income economy is an explicit development goal of many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. This book assesses the implications of that goal for secondary education in Ethiopia. It shows that a rapid expansion of secondary education will be needed to support the country's transition from a low-income economy with substantial subsistence agriculture to a lower-middle-income economy with an increased share of commercial agriculture, as well as growing industrial and service sectors. As Ethiopia moves towards this goal, the demand for a labor force with skills beyond basic literacy and numeracy will increase, which in turn will fuel demand for secondary education. The implications of this demand are significant, as the profile of entrants into secondary education will change from students aspiring to higher education to students with a much more diverse range of aspirations and abilities. At present, the existing secondary curriculum is primarily designed to prepare students for university studies; if it is retained, it will not only fail students, it may also fail the country's aspirations for middle-income status. A flexible curriculum that serves the needs of all students and helps them develop the higher-level skills demanded by employers is critically important.

The massive expansion of secondary education needed in Ethiopia will require significant additional resources. The book argues that financing reforms aimed at using existing resources more efficiently and mobilizing more nongovernment resources will be indispensable. Specifically, it advocates launching financing reforms within a broad framework that, among other components, includes governance reforms that implement school-based management, changes in teacher preparation and development, and improved student examinations. Finally, the report emphasizes that the success of secondary reforms will to a large extent depend on the achievements of primary education, particularly in light of low primary learning outcomes and the unfinished agenda of universal primary education.

This may be the first book to specifically address how secondary education should be reformed in order to help countries transition from low- to middle-income economies and is intended to help initiate deliberations on this important topic. The primary audience for the book is comprised of policy makers, academicians, development practitioners, the education bureaucracy, and teachers.

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