PREFACE

These modules on educational financing have evolved out of a series of seminars held in the small states of the Caribbean and the Pacific under the aegis of the Commonwealth Secretariat. Regional university communities, policy makers and planners from the various ministries of education and finance were the main participants. Their deliberations underscored:

- the vital need for personnel in both ministries to forge a deeper awareness of how each ministry conducts its business;
- the notion that workers in finance should be persuaded to empathise with an education project – a project that is deeply implicated in virtually all policies of national development;
- the portent of change in educational financing issues – trends toward decentralisation, school development and school improvement planning and, therefore, the need for initiatives that incorporate 'new' players, such as principals, senior teachers and community workers.

Insights from the seminars have been fashioned into these modules. They contain overviews of the issues to be explored, detailed content relevant to those themes, including definitions, teaching materials and extended interaction with the materials through boxed excerpts, reflective questions and hands-on activities, summaries, wrap-up stimulus in the form of a case for discussion and reference lists.

The modules can be used as a source of information by ministry, school and community personnel, as well as by researchers. A series of workshops could be planned around the specific themes contained in each module. The challenges and varied responses to educational financing issues occasioned by the inevitable worldwide changes being wrought in the institutional context of education, will demand that participants contextualise the materials, so making them more meaningful. In this way, the modules will be useful throughout the various small states of the Commonwealth and the developing world.

We hope that these modules will help in demystifying the jargon and ideologies that have tended to characterise educational financing in the past, and that they will promote greater understanding of its scope and relevance, particularly as it touches the lives of most citizens and institutions in every country.

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