

Education For All by 2015

Education International's Response to the Global Monitoring Report 2008



- ❖ Expand early childhood care and education
- ❖ Provide free and compulsory primary education to all
- ❖ Promote learning and life skills for young people and adults
- ❖ Increase adult literacy by 50 percent
- ❖ Achieve gender parity by 2005 and gender equality by 2015
- ❖ Improve the quality of education



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Introduction

Eight years have passed since the historic moment in April 2000, when the international community met in Dakar, Senegal, and set itself a global challenge with the potential to transform the lives of millions of children, youth and adults around the world. That historic challenge is embodied in **the six Education for All goals**. They are:

- 1. Expand early childhood care and education**
- 2. Provide free and compulsory primary education to all**
- 3. Promote learning and life skills for young people and adults**
- 4. Increase adult literacy by 50 percent**
- 5. Achieve gender parity by 2005, gender equality by 2015**
- 6. Improve the quality of education**

The sixth edition of the Global Monitoring Report on the achievement of EFA goals measures to what extent these commitments made by the partners have been achieved. Midway through the process, this review is Education International's analysis of the progress report.

It must be acknowledged that significant measurable progress has been accomplished in many aspects, such as increased enrolment and expansion of free primary education. However, EI is concerned that the goal of achieving gender parity by 2005 was not met. Nor have the financing commitments met the needs: indeed the aid funds for adequate basic education actually diminished in 2005. Finally, the issue of quality education for everyone has not been addressed.

Speaking of quality, the Global Monitoring Report 2008 and numerous other studies and papers confirm that the practice of



teacher recruitment, their working conditions, their appropriate remuneration, as well as the quality of their initial and continuous education are crucial factors if quality learning is to become a reality for all. The systematic and growing practice of engaging unqualified and underpaid contract teachers who lack initial or adequate teacher education and career prospects, is a major contributing factor to the degradation of quality of education.

Clearly, the issue of stable and adequate financing is crucial. The Report states that the share of education costs as a percentage of Gross National Product (GNP) and public expenditure on education have increased, notably in Sub-Saharan African countries and in West and South Asia. However, regrettably, external aid to basic education, which grew between 2001 and 2004, has declined once again. In 2005 aid was down to the level of 2002. Evidently the commitment made in Dakar that “no country seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by lack of resources,” remains unfulfilled.

The Global Monitoring Report 2008 is a powerful reference document and a guide to the way forward. In this analysis of that report, EI attempts to highlight the questions at the core of our agenda from the perspective of education unions and our members, 30 million teachers and education workers from 171 countries in the world.

Photos from UNESCO, ILO, United Nations, EI and its affiliates as well as from José Nicolas (PhotoNews) on backcover and John Walmsley (educationphoto.co.uk) on pages 22-23.



Early Childhood Education is fundamental

Education, including early childhood education (ECE), is enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Although the first EFA goal is to expand and improve early childhood education and care, this goal remains largely neglected.

The 2007 EFA Global Monitoring Report highlighted the compelling case for early childhood education and care. ECE programmes contribute to young children's physical, mental, social and emotional development, eliminate disadvantage and prepare children for formal schooling.

Education International recognizes the vital importance of ECE programmes for all young children. That is why the 5th EI World Congress in Berlin decided to establish an ECE Task-force to spearhead the global union's early childhood education initiatives.

Education and care services for children under 3 largely neglected

It is discouraging to note that the 2008 GMR¹ reports that ECE programmes for young children under the age of 3 remain largely neglected. The Report reveals that these programmes are found in only 53% of the world's countries, mostly in North America and Western Europe, Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Even in some of these countries, the provision of ECE activities is considered the sole responsibility of families and/or private providers.

The Report aptly observes: "Few countries have established national frameworks for the financing, coordination and supervision of ECCE programmes for very young children. Often there is neither a clear lead ministry nor a developed national policy with goals, regulations, quality standards and funding commitments."

¹ GMR, p 34



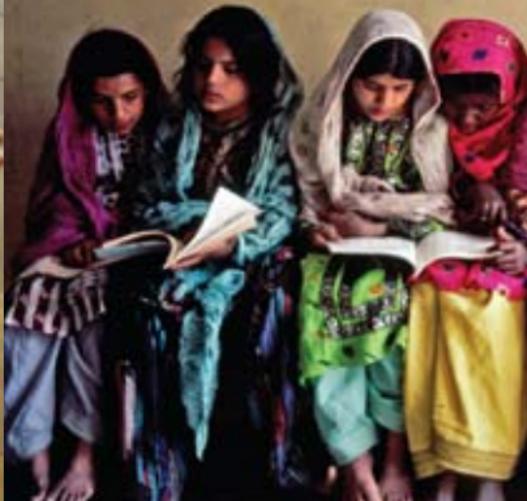
El calls upon public authorities to make early childhood education a priority for funding. Governments ought to play a leading role in organising and providing ECE. El also believes that the provision of early childhood education is, primarily, an education function. Therefore, ministries of education should be the lead agencies responsible for ECE programmes in any country. However, other government agencies, such as ministries of health, social welfare and agriculture also ought to take an active part. This would ensure children's wellbeing through the provision of health care such as immunization, nutrition and other complementary services.

Uneven progress in ECE for three-year-olds and above

The GMR² reports uneven progress in the provision of pre-primary education across the globe. On a positive note, the number of children enrolled in pre-primary schools worldwide increased from 112 million in 1999, to 132 million in 2005. The global pre-primary Gross Enrolment Ratio correspondingly increased from 33% to 40% during the same period. However, participation in pre-primary education is unevenly distributed. It is highest in developed and transition countries. It is also high in Latin America and the Caribbean and in East Asia and the Pacific. It remains very low in Sub-Saharan African countries (14%) and Arab states (17%).

More ECE funding ought to be mobilized and channeled to disadvantaged regions of the world and countries in greatest need. These countries should come up with comprehensive education sector plans, including early childhood education as one of the key components. El, teachers' unions, civil society organizations and other education stakeholders should lobby and assist governments to provide ECE services to every child.

²GMR, p 35



Primary education is not enough

The key concept of the GMR 2008 is basic education, intended as a synonym for the broader EFA agenda in education, and referring to all programmes meeting basic learning needs. The term is meant to capture a country's commitment to providing universal access beyond primary education. Basic education is recognized as a framework in which EFA goals can be reached, matching quality and equity.

Progress made, but not for all

The Report acknowledges remarkable improvements in many countries. However, it also highlights increased inequality in the distribution of, and access to, quality education for various groups in societies, for different countries, as well as for whole regions.

The gap between those who are improving and those who lag behind is growing!

In fact, survival rates to the last grade of primary school improved between 1999 and 2004 in most countries, but remained low in Sub-Saharan Africa and in South and West Asia. Relatively low and unequal learning achievement in language and mathematics characterize many countries. Crowded and dilapidated classrooms, too few textbooks and insufficient instructional time are widespread in developing countries and fragile states. Acute shortages of teachers are common, especially in the developing world. Many governments are hiring contract teachers to save costs and rapidly increase the teaching force, but where such teachers lack adequate training and service conditions, this practice is having a negative impact on the quality of education.

The problem of quality is becoming recognized

The Report shows remarkable progress in acknowledging quality issues at political level: important high-level meetings have focused



extensively on education quality issues; the Fast Track Initiative plans to incorporate quality measures such as the monitoring of learning outcomes as additional criteria for approving FII country plans; several new UNESCO initiatives focus on education quality; and so on. This growing attention to quality does not necessarily mean that quality is improving, but it does indicate that it is seen as being of critical importance. Two main policy dilemmas remain ahead: how to combine quality and equity, and how to measure quality. In response, the Report focuses on specific key quality issues at different levels of education.

Three key challenges ahead

The Report identifies three main challenges in relation to quality of education.

First, learning outcomes should be monitored. In spite of the weaknesses of comparative tests of achievement, these are widely used as a proxy of what and how much students actually learn in school. At international level, the main assessments (PIRLS 2001, PISA 2003 and PISA 2006) show low learning outcomes in much of the world, especially in developing countries. Inequalities are found between and within countries. While in the developed world learning disparities seem to be attributable to the socio-economic background of pupils and their immigrant status, in developing countries strong disparities favour urban over rural schools. Effective strategies to assess knowledge and skills and demonstrate measurable learning outcomes are needed.

Second, learning environments must be improved. Access to learning resources, first and foremost textbooks, is a key factor. The pupil/textbook ratio is a significant measure of education quality. The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) survey found that **over half the Grade**

6 pupils in many African countries reported learning in classrooms that did not have a single book.³

Retention and learning are also hampered when pupils attend school in dilapidated or overcrowded buildings, in noisy or unsafe environments, or, especially, in classrooms that are inadequately supplied or poorly lit and ventilated. In the SACMEQ countries, 47% of school buildings were reported to need major repairs or complete rebuilding; only 13% were listed in 'good' condition.⁴

Access to technology is another critical aspect; while it remains inaccessible to most children in the countries that are struggling the most to achieve the EFA goals, in the developed world the recent expansion of ICT has facilitated the increased application of various models of distance education and pedagogical innovations. In 2004 India launched EDUSAT, the world's first dedicated education satellite, devoted exclusively to beaming distance learning courses.⁵

Finally, attracting more and better teachers is paramount. The teacher shortage is a major problem, particularly in the developing world, where pupil/trained teacher ratios (PTR) can reach 40:1 or more (the average for North America and Western Europe is 15:1). In the developing world this shortage is exacerbated by an even more acute shortage of adequately trained teachers. Exceedingly high PTRs (above 100:1) were found in Afghanistan, Chad, Madagascar, Mozambique and Nepal, and high ones (above 40:1) in Sub-Saharan Africa.⁶

| ³GMR, p 73 | ⁴GMR, p 74 | ⁵GMR, p 134 | ⁶GMR, p 77



Shortages of qualified teachers threaten the achievement of EFA

The GMR makes a fundamental acknowledgement about the vital contribution teachers make towards the achievement of the EFA goals. It says: “The quantity, quality and distribution of the teaching workforce are critical factors for reaching the EFA goals.”⁷ In terms of quantity, over 18 million additional teachers are needed to meet the Universal Primary Education goal alone by 2015. Currently, there are 27 million primary school teachers worldwide.⁸ The GMR reveals that, between 1999 and 2005, the total number of primary school teachers in the world increased by 5%. Overall, teacher numbers have grown slightly less rapidly than enrolments (which increased by 6% during the same period). This calls for the training and recruitment of more qualified teachers.

EI strongly believes that quality education cannot be achieved without adequate numbers of properly trained qualified teachers.

The GMR⁹ also acknowledges a fundamental principle of learning – that the interaction between the student and the teacher is the key determinant of the quality of education programmes. Small class sizes guarantee maximum teacher-pupil interaction and enable the teacher to attend to each individual learner’s needs. Unfortunately, the GMR¹⁰ reveals that Pupil-Teacher Ratios, particularly at pre-primary and primary school levels, remain high in many parts of the world. In some cases, expansion of education services is not accompanied by appropriate teacher recruitment measures to cater for increased enrolment. This negatively affects the quality of education.

Education International firmly believes that governments should play a leading role in training teachers, who should be equitably deployed to urban and rural schools. There is need to improve teachers’ conditions of service, including salaries. Special incentives should be introduced to attract teachers to remote rural areas and other needy areas.

Non-qualified contract teachers are not the solution!

The Report clearly and specifically addresses the dangerous policy trend aiming at solving teacher shortages by engaging unqualified teachers or those who have only taken short-term ‘crash’ courses. This leads to serious quality problems, even if it seems to help solve access issues in the short term. The so-called “contract teachers” are generally less experienced than regular or civil-servant ones, and their salaries tend to be one-quarter to one-half of those of permanent teachers.

The report notes that the key policy challenge for governments with respect to contract teachers is the long-term sustainability of maintaining two groups of teachers with very different conditions of service. Moreover, maintaining a large group of contract teachers will create pressure for their eventual absorption into the regular teaching force. The Report claims that governments need a policy framework preserving the flexibility and local responsiveness that a system of contract teaching offers, while ensuring that quality is not compromised and that in the long run regular and contract teachers are integrated into one career stream. While there may be financial advantages for the government to hire teachers under contract terms, the use of contract teachers poses a quality issue for pupils and a labour rights issue for the teachers themselves.

Quality versus Equity?

Out of the six EFA goals, the last one addresses the issue of quality of education. EI welcomes this focus, as we believe that only if universal access to education is matched with equal quality then we can expect public education to benefit all societies and individuals. Moreover, quality is important from the development perspective, as more educated people tend to be more engaged in civic and political affairs and are more likely to vote. Furthermore, quality education seems to have a stronger link to economic growth than quantity of education. The Report admits, however, that “education expansion does not necessarily translate into reduced inequality.” The same can be said about economic expansion, which can indeed be sustained by well-educated elites.

EI approaches this line of argument with some caution, as it may lead some governments to trade off quality with access, and vice versa. **We insist that only universal access to equitable quality education can fully achieve human and social development goals.**



Equity and Equality Matter

The international commitments on adult literacy, equal access to school, quality education and achieving gender equality by 2015 require narrowing the wide gap between promises and reality.

Illiteracy among women requires more attention

GMR 2008 data shows that the number of adults who cannot read and write declined by 10.4%, from 864 million to 774 million between 1985-1994 and 2000-2004. But what remains virtually unchanged is that **64% of illiterate people worldwide are women**. The number of illiterate adults is actually on the rise due to continuing population growth. Overall illiteracy rates are highest in the countries with the greatest poverty, which affects women. More than 70% of the people living on less than a dollar per day are female and illiterate, women who are unlikely to be able to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

The GMR estimates that 75% of illiterate adults live in 15 countries, including eight highly-populated countries. Globally 50% —some 388 million people, live in South and West Asia, (67 women for every 100 men). India alone accounted for nearly 35% of the world's adult illiterate population in 1995-2004. Despite progress in the same period, striking gender disparities still prevailed in Afghanistan, India, Nepal and Pakistan. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 150 million adults cannot read or write (76 women for every 100 men).

Gender parity in education: still a distant goal

The goal of eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by the year 2005 was missed in 122 of 181 countries with available data. Gender parity in primary education was achieved in 63% (118) of 188 countries,¹¹ and 37% of 144 countries with data available,

¹¹ GMR, p 81

had achieved the goal of gender parity in secondary education. According to projections, more than 90 countries will not reach gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2015. Taking steps forward requires action in specific areas. The GMR affirmed the link between access to school and social status, especially in countries where gender disparities are wider among disadvantaged than advantaged groups. Gender disparities are also more prevalent and wider in secondary and higher education than primary.¹² Out of 148 countries, only Botswana, China, Mexico and Peru had achieved gender parity at the tertiary level by 2005. In short, a lot remains to be done.

There has been progress towards increasing primary enrolment yet **72 million primary school-aged children are still denied their right to education, 57% of whom are girls.** Girls accounted for 60% of out-of-school children in the Arab States, 66% in South and West Asia, and 54% in Sub-Saharan Africa. India, Nigeria and Pakistan account for 27% of all out-of-school children. Thirty-five “fragile states” identified by the OECD accounted for almost 37% of all out-of-school children in 2005.

Strategies to achieve gender parity in secondary education thus need further development. The incentives used to attract children, especially girls from rural settings, to enrol in and complete primary schooling should ideally be continued into the secondary level. This is particularly important for girls since, in many societies that traditionally have low levels of female education, girls are removed from public spheres such as schools at the onset of puberty, a factor that has little or no bearing on boys’ ability to continue their education.

The current focus on getting girls into school must be sustained and supported with positive changes in approaches to learning and teaching, including relevant curricula. Changes in attitudes, ideas and beliefs about gender relations; resources that are sensitive to language, cultural and gender concerns; separate and private hygiene facilities with water sanitation for both girls and boys: all these challenges will make a difference for girls and boys education.

The GMR also states that gender parity by itself is not a sufficient condition for gender equality. It requires that girls and women can live free of violence, can participate in institutions, can gain access and control over resources and services, including reproductive health care and support for women affected by HIV and AIDS, whether as patients or caregivers.

More and better trained teachers, with a higher proportion of women, are fundamental to promoting real learning and giving girls equality in schools.

But “the mere presence of female teachers alone does not guarantee gender equality in socialization processes in school.¹³ Teachers need training to understand how gender interacts with their own

| ¹² GMR, p 83 | ¹³ GMR, p 87

identity before they can recognize their own and students' attitudes, perceptions and expectations. Training that promotes such understanding takes time and it is still relatively rare."¹⁴

Exclusion versus inclusive educational practices: other disparities

Children who are not in school are usually from poor households and/or have mothers with no schooling. The GMR states that wealth is a major source of disparities in education, in addition to gender and proximity to urban areas. Tackling the factors contributing to exclusion in education requires decisive action, such as introducing and enforcing legislation prohibiting exclusion, and eliminating gender bias in textbooks.¹⁵ Also important is improving the learning environment, with special emphasis on school supplies, safer and more hygienic facilities, and multilingual instruction based on the mother tongue.

Children (and adults) from ethnic and linguistic minorities learn better in their mother tongues. "Bilingual education in Mexico and Guatemala has been found to improve the learning outcomes of children from indigenous communities and reduce ethnic discrimination in schools. In Guatemala, bilingual education has also led to a reduction in repetition rates."¹⁶

Inclusive education policies for specific target populations are needed. Culturally sensitive materials, strategies enhancing cultural identity, and more resources can empower students in multicultural societies. Governments have the responsibility to protect excluded and vulnerable groups. That means recognizing their educational rights and measuring their needs, providing teachers with adequate training, facilities and culturally sensitive resources.

Education for All remains an enormous challenge for children who are involved in work, armed conflict, natural disasters, trafficking, migration, and those with different abilities.

HIV/AIDS in the GMR 2008

EI welcomes the reference to HIV/AIDS in the GMR 2008. However, in EI's view it is not substantial enough, and **the report ignores HIV/AIDS education efforts implemented by teachers and their unions.**

The GMR 2008 shows that HIV/AIDS still poses an enormous threat to the educational sector but does not recognise the vital role played by teachers' unions in decreasing its negative impact. Indeed, EI is now cooperating with 75 teachers' unions in 46 countries to train their members on HIV/AIDS education and promotion of EFA. So far, in West Africa where only seven coun-

| ¹⁴ GMR, p 88 | ¹⁵ GMR, p 89 | ¹⁶ GMR, p 52

tries are involved in the programme, 80,000 teachers have been trained in HIV/AIDS education in more than 15,000 schools.

The GMR indicates that HIV/AIDS education has been introduced in the school curricula in several countries at primary or secondary levels.¹⁷ Indeed, unions in Uganda, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Tanzania and Gabon, for example, have greatly contributed to getting HIV/AIDS modules included in school curricula. Teachers' unions have also contributed to introducing HIV/AIDS education in teachers' colleges in Senegal, Burkina Faso and Guinea.

However, in 2007 EI published an update of its report "Training for Life" on the record of governments in providing HIV and AIDS training for teachers. The report notes that such training is still lacking in many countries. It paints a picture of poor state performance and very limited training or more whatsoever for teachers in Guyana, Ivory Coast, Malawi and Sierra Leone, for example.

The GMR says that in some countries the courses had a strong impact on increasing relevant knowledge and some impact on behaviour, but that the impact is mixed.¹⁸ For teachers' unions involved in EI's EFAIDS programme (www.ei-ie.org/ef aids) it is undeniable that they see an increase in knowledge about HIV/AIDS among their members, and also an increase in their skills and confidence in teaching about HIV/AIDS. (This assessment was based on the systematic use of self-administered pre-training and post-training questionnaires for teachers/trainers in several countries involved in the EI EFAIDS programme). The increase in knowledge and skills can also be noted among students. In 2007 trainers asked teachers in Mali whether the training had an impact on teachers and students. All respondents had noticed changes in teachers' and students' behaviour. **A decline in unwanted pregnancies among students was cited as concrete evidence of the positive impact of the training.**

The GMR states that HIV/AIDS is an important cause of teacher attrition.¹⁹ Indeed, AIDS remains one of the main causes of teacher mortality, in countries with a high prevalence rate of HIV. Teachers' absenteeism due to illness also has severe consequences for the quality of education. A September 2007 study done by the Uganda National Teachers' Union (UNATU) found that 40% of Ugandan primary and secondary teachers in the four main regions of the country had reported that their school had lost a teacher to AIDS within the last five years. The impact of HIV/AIDS manifests itself in increased absenteeism, but also time lost caring for those affected and infected, inefficiency in teaching, stigma and discrimination.

| ¹⁷ GMR, p 132 | ¹⁸ GMR, p 136 | ¹⁹ GMR, p 76





Will we make it, financially?

Numerous political statements are delivered and countless resolutions adopted in support of achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. These also include the Framework for Action to achieve Education for All. The title of the 2008 Global Monitoring Report is: “Will we make it?” The answer to that question is ultimately determined by concrete steps and not by high level meetings alone. One such concrete step is setting aside funds to make EFA 2015 a reality rather than a dream. These are funds from national governments and the international donor community. The 2008 GMR highlights some of the key financial aspects and poses some tough questions.

Government spending on education: on track?

First and foremost, the EFA goals can only be achieved through efforts of public authorities. They have to take the political decision to set aside adequate funding. One way to measure government spending on education is by looking at the Gross National Product. The 2008 report notes that more than half of the industrialised countries spend 6% of their GNP or more on education. Clearly these countries consider education to be a sound long term investment.

On the other side of the spectrum the investment as a percentage of GNP in Central and Southwest Asia is considerably lower. These countries invest just over 3% of GNP in education. The report notes that worldwide a great number of countries are prepared to make the extra financial effort in support of education.

Differences exist not only between regions, but also within each region. A country-by-country analysis is needed to come to conclusions on the level of willingness of governments to invest in education. Across sub-Saharan Africa changes were positive, on the whole. However, it fell in countries like South Africa and Namibia!



Education International

Likewise, analysis shows great differences between governments in term of the distribution of education funding across the different levels of education. Low income countries, on average, devote almost half their total education expenditures to primary education. In high income countries, secondary education receives the highest priority.

Is spending equitable?

Public spending on education is intended to benefit the whole populace equally. However, the question is whether all citizens are equal in getting their share of public spending on education. The report states: “Total expenditure on education was not pro-poor in any of the country groupings, and particularly not in Sub-Saharan Africa or Asia and the Pacific.”²⁰ Particularly in poor countries “children from higher income households tend to dominate, and to benefit overwhelmingly from government expenditure.”²¹ The report states that “the burden is heaviest for the poorest households.”²²

These remarks are of great concern. El takes the view that government education policies have to reduce poverty by tackling social exclusion and marginalisation, particular the access to education for girls. When resources are limited, girls are usually the ones excluded.

The report clearly shows that improving education finance is not only a matter of increasing investment. To a large extent, it is also a matter of budget allocations that permit policies to be implemented in a way that promotes equity at all levels. Funding policies should ensure that public services benefit all, in particular, marginalised and vulnerable groups such as the poor, girls and women, racial and ethnic minorities, children involved in child labour and children in conflict areas. This is currently not the case in many countries.

| ²⁰ GMR, p 148 | ²¹ GMR, p 148 | ²² GMR, p 152

Free public education under threat

The report reveals a disturbing increase in household expenditure on education in countries where families can least afford it. “The reality is that households also make substantial contributions to the education system. In Chile and Jamaica the household share exceeds 40%”. And from India another disturbing trend: “The share of private spending is reported to have increased sevenfold in India between 1998 and 2003”²³. Not so in OECD countries where “overall reliance on public sources to finance education is greater” and “public funding for all non-tertiary education is at least 90% of the total.”²⁴

Increased spending by households stands in stark contrast to politicians’ assertions that education should be free of charge. Indeed, fourteen countries have eliminated tuition fees, but parallel to this EI notes increasing costs and – most distressing of all – an increase in privatisation of public education systems. One study made for the GMR 2008 states that “in Pakistan the private sector enrolment at primary is viewed to be between 30-36 per cent of the total enrolment.”²⁵ This is not exceptional and the trend is moving upward.

The report also notes an interesting development: the increase of Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programmes. The Bolsa Família in Brazil is the largest, covering about 16 million children receiving the education transfer. The report notes that “CCT programmes have been effective in increasing access to schooling in several middle income Latin American countries.”²⁶ Whether this type of programme can be applied in other regions is still to be seen.

And how about international solidarity to meet EFA?

“Trends in aid to education: after the rise, a fall.”²⁷

This is a worrisome caption, noting the decline in international funding for education from \$6.5 billion in 2000, to \$10.7 billion in 2004, down to \$8.3 billion in 2005. (All figures in US\$.) This consistent reduction of funding is exactly the opposite of what the G8 agreed to in Gleneagles in 2005: to increase, to sustain and to be reliable on promises made. Aid to basic education initially rose from \$2.7 billion in 2000, to \$5.1 billion in 2004, but fell to \$3.7 billion in 2005. The decrease in 2005 was especially significant for the low income countries. The UK decreased commitments for aid to basic education by 70%!²⁸

A closer look shows that “the shares for South and West Asia have increased significantly – from 12% to 20% for education and doubled from 16% to 31% for basic education.”²⁹ A detailed check on donor countries’ behaviour is equally telling. The GMR quotes a recent study concluding that while countries like the UK “tend to allocate their aid to basic education based on education needs and

| ²³ GMR, p 150 | ²⁴ GMR, p 150 | ²⁵ Pakistan Country case study, Masooda Bano 2007, p 3 | ²⁶ GMR, p 154 | ²⁷ GMR, p 154 | ²⁸ GMR, p 160 | ²⁹ GMR, p 157

poverty, others – including France, Germany, the US and the European Commission – are more likely to be influenced by strategic and political factors.”³⁰

Donors differ in choice of regions and countries, the level of education to support (basic, secondary, or tertiary) and the type of funding (project-based or budgetary support). Countries like Canada, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the UK and the USA clearly make basic education their top priority and allocate more than half of their education aid to it. Others, such as France, Germany and Japan, subsidize large numbers of foreign students in their universities. The report rightly states that money alone does not solve all problems. Still, “a considerable gap exists between donor rhetoric and actual aid allocation ... notably that for primary education.”

For quite a number of years EI has made a plea to consider the consultation of unions and civil society on education policies as part of ‘good governance.’ The 2008 report honours this call by stating that “The second ‘key’ to releasing increased aid for EFA is effective consultation with civil society.” It also underlines the importance of “civil society participation in the formulation of national education sector policies.”

Many developing countries face major governance and management problems. (This will be the theme of the 2009 Global Monitoring Report.) Together governments, non-governmental organisations, unions and donors in developing countries should jointly address the challenges through cooperation and dialogue.

This is seen as the way forward. Financially, a lot has been accomplished. However, it is not huge amounts for the short run, but steady and quality investment in education for the long run that will make the difference.

Deeper engagement of civil society is needed

Since 2000, the Report states, civil society advocacy work on education has grown substantially at national, regional and international levels. Civil society perspectives and proposals appear to have influenced the formulation of national education strategies to some degree, with several proposals having been integrated into national plans. However, the scope of influence was limited when proposals challenged particular areas of sensitivity, and opportunities to participate systematically in sector-wide committees and broader policy fora, such as those on Poverty Reduction Strategies, have been very limited.

Overall, civil society networks reported that, while there had been positive developments regarding relations with governments, their involvement rarely extended beyond information sharing and con-

| ³⁰ Caillaud, 2007 | ³¹ GMR, p 170

sultation, was often confined to dialogue on very specific technical issues, was usually limited to the middle stages of an initiative rather than agenda setting or final drafting, and never extended to real influence in monitoring and evaluating policy implementation.³²

The Report's main recommendations to engage civil society are: further strengthen civil society organizations to enable citizens to advocate for EFA and hold governments and the international community to account; engage with national governments in development, implementation and monitoring of education policies; and encourage training in education policy analysis and finance.

Regrettably, the Report does not mention social partners, nor the role of education unions in particular. EI welcomes broad and substantial involvement of civil society in education policy development, implementation and monitoring. However, EI emphasizes the crucial role of education unions as the only organizations democratically representing teaching personnel, and therefore as indispensable actors in the worldwide effort to achieve the EFA goals.

| ³² GMR, p 108





Conclusions

The main conclusion of the Global Monitoring Report 2008 is that halfway to the deadline for achievement of six EFA goals, the progress remains insufficient. There are improvements in some aspects and in some regions or countries, but there are also remarkable and serious failures and underachievement in others. Even more, the Report clearly demonstrates backsliding, for example, in external aid, and dead-ends of some policies, like employment of non-formal contract teachers. Significantly, even where progress has been made, it does not necessarily benefit all, but rather is resulting in wider differences between regions, countries, groups of society and individuals.

The first EFA goal is to expand and improve early childhood care and education. The Report acknowledges that ECCE programmes contribute to young children's physical, mental, social and emotional development, eliminate disadvantage and prepare children for formal schooling. Despite such recognition, this target remains largely neglected. The 2008 GMR³³ reports that ECE programmes for young children under the age of 3 remain largely neglected. The Report reveals that ECE programmes are found in only 53% of the world's countries, located mostly in North America and Western Europe, Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Even in some of these countries, the provision of ECE and care activities is considered a responsibility of families and private providers.

Out of the six EFA goals, the last one addresses the issue of quality of education. While quality aspects are becoming recognized at policy level, their implementation often leads to increasing inequalities both in and between countries, as improvements are distributed differently among schools, regions and levels of education. The Report shows that the main factors influencing the growing differences in quality are infrastructure and the quality of the teaching force. The latter is of particular importance because deteriorating standards of recruitment, employment, remuneration and education of teachers diminishes any positive impact of increased access and improved infrastructure in schools.

The international commitments on adult literacy, equality of access to schools and quality education to achieve EFA by 2015 will require filling the growing gap between promises and reality. Although the total number of illiterate adults has decreased in most regions, what remains virtually unchanged is that roughly 64% of them are women. The world has failed to meet the goal of eliminating gender disparities in basic education by the year 2005, according to the GMR 2008 data. Gender inequalities prevail, and moving

| ³³ GMR, p 37



forward requires affirming the equal rights of girls and reinforcing the corresponding governmental obligations. Gender parity by itself is not gender equality. It requires that girls and women can live free of violence, can participate in institutions, can gain access and control over resources and access to equitable services, including reproductive health and support for women affected by HIV/AIDS, either as patients or care-givers.

The EFA goals can only be achieved through the efforts of public authorities. Governments must find the political will to set aside adequate funding. While most countries have increased their spending on education, the disparities are also increasing. In the developed world governments on average allocate 6% of GDP for education including up to secondary level, while it is much less in developing countries, where the focus of expenditures is primary level. This imbalance between needs and resources could be tackled through international donor aid, however, there was a significant decrease in aid up to 2005. Moreover, too many governments are seeking refuge from their obligations by increasingly relying on private funding of public education, and downloading costs onto parents and communities.

The noble concept of universal free public education is still an unmet promise for millions of children worldwide.

Finally, it is regrettable that, while admitting the role of civil society, the GMR does not mention social partners, nor the crucial role of education unions. This could provide one explanation for the stagnation of the EFA process. **Real progress can only be made through ongoing and substantial dialogue between government policy makers and representatives** of those who are essential to the implementation of any reforms — **the unions of teachers and education workers around the world.**

The noble concept of universal free public education is still an unmet promise for millions of children worldwide.

Real progress can only be made through ongoing and substantial dialogue between government policy makers and the unions of teachers and education workers around the world.



** He will grow
They (fem.) will grow*



Education International

is the Global Union Federation representing 30 million teachers and education personnel from pre-school to university in 171 countries and territories.

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