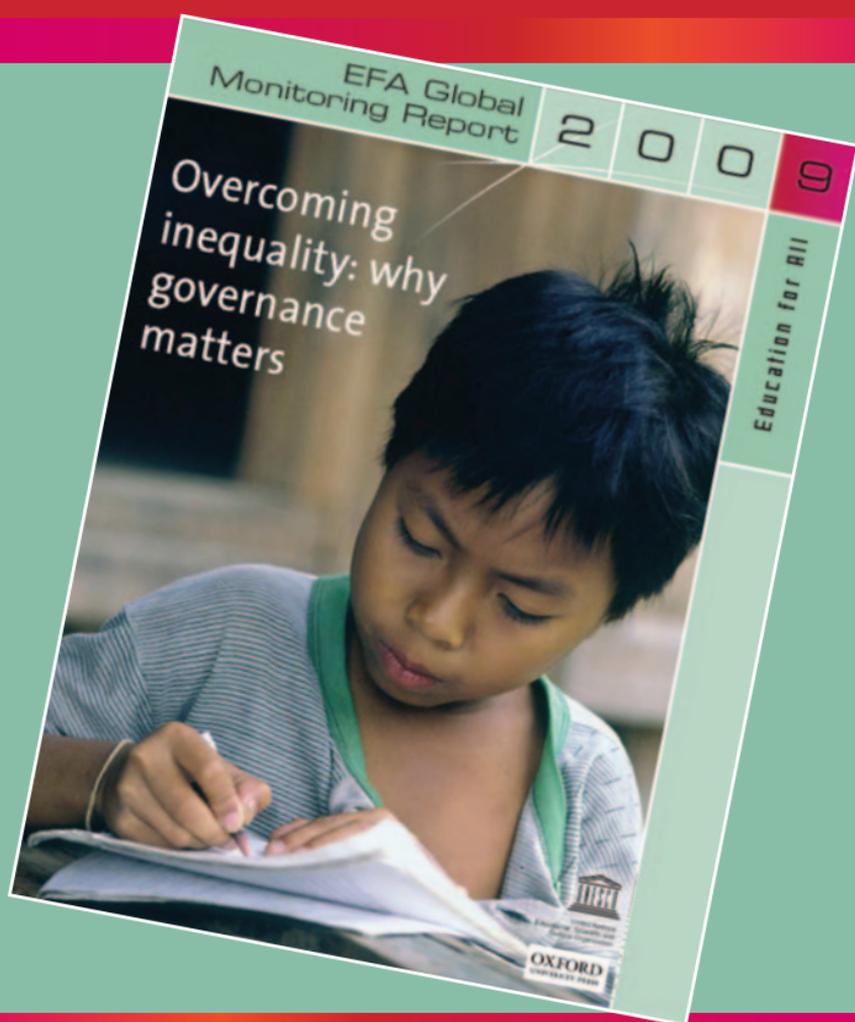


Education For All by 2015

Education International's Response to the Global Monitoring Report 2009



- ❖ 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

The EFA Global Monitoring Report was first published in 2002 to monitor progress towards six Education For All goals enshrined in the historic Dakar Framework for Action. This year's Report looks beyond the six goals to a range of issues in education governance, finance and management, seeking more complex solutions to the current situation. It focuses on equality as the overarching policy goal of any government and as a key to measuring the success of initiatives by the international community. It also focuses on sound education governance as a critical tool to achieve new momentum towards the EFA goals.

The complete document or its summarised version can be downloaded on Unesco website at: <http://www.unesco.org/en/education/efareport/>

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The Seventh edition of the EFA Global Monitoring report argues that equity must be at the centre of the Education For All agenda. There has been strong progress towards many goals, but key targets for 2015 will not be achieved and time is running out. Financing and governance have important roles to play. Governments are failing to tackle inequality, as are current approaches to governance. Developing countries are not spending enough on basic education and donor countries have not lived up to their commitments. Stagnating aid to education is a serious concern for educational prospects in a large number of low-income countries. But increased financing without provisions built in to ensure equity will not benefit the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. A pro-poor approach to education policy is imperative for the goals to have meaning for the world's out-of-school children and 776 million adult illiterates. Projecting the enrolment needs of just two-thirds of those countries which account for 75 million children out of school today, the Report estimates that there still will be 29 million out of school in 2015.¹

¹ EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009, UNESCO, 2008, p.25



Education for All: Human Right and Catalyst for Development

Ambitious objectives under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including universal primary education with gender equality, will not be met by 2015 on current trends. Most importantly, despite this prognosis, the 2009 GMR reaffirms that there is no alternative to accelerated progress towards Education for All, and governments must act with a renewed sense of urgency and political commitment. However there has been significant progress and it shows that international commitment matters, whether or not deadlines are met.

Why Education for All matters

Progress towards Education For All is one of the defining development challenges of the 21st century. The right to education is basic human right and, as such, it should be defended as an end in itself. However, education is also means to wider social, economic and political goals. In the current situation of economic crisis and competition of various interests, it is timely to stress this critical role of education as this Report does. Only educated citizens can achieve economic growth and this requires equalized access to quality education, now more than ever. No country or society today can afford to exclude anyone from education because of poverty, ethnicity, religion or gender. The Report argues at length about wider benefits of education in economic terms. For example it cites several studies which have found that one additional year of schooling lifts average annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth by 0.37%.²

But education is more than skills for economic sustainability. Schools are cultural institutions where children learn the languages, history and culture of their respective societies, acquire social skills and self-confidence, broaden their horizons and address issues as full and active citizens. People who are denied this full broad-based education are less likely to participate actively in their societies and influence decisions that alter their lives and those of others. That is why education is also fundamental to democracy and government accountability.

| ²GMR 2009, p.30



Education International

Millennium Development Goals cannot be achieved without EFA, but neither will education goals succeed without progress in other development areas!

The Dakar Framework for Action was adopted in 2000. In the same year at the United Nations Millennium Summit, world leaders adopted the Millennium Development Goals, which extended from the reduction of extreme poverty and child mortality to improved access to water and sanitation. The MDGs put education goals in this broader context, thus clearly linking achievements in one area with the development in others. Indeed, as this Report illustrates, it is difficult to sustain progress in only one area of development. Halving poverty or cutting child mortality by two-thirds appears not to be a serious proposition, given the slow and unequal progress towards universal primary education (UPE). By the same token, achievement of UPE will not be feasible without increasing and equalizing access to food, sanitation, medicine and other life-sustaining resources. Children whose lives are blighted by hunger, poverty and disease are clearly not equipped for realising their full potential in school. Public health and child mortality are both linked to education: the level of a mother's education is related to the mortality rate of her children less than five years of age, as this Report illustrates.³ These links seem obvious but are too often forgotten in sector-narrow policy debates, and this is why the Report places so much emphasis on the interdependence of the MDGs and EFA.

Education International strongly supports the view that Education is a fundamental human right and a catalyst for social justice and development.

³ GMR 2009, p.33



Monitoring progress towards the achievement of the EFA goals

Early childhood education: a long way to go

The GMR notes that adequate nutrition, good health and an emotionally secure, language-rich home environment during the earliest years are vital for later success in education and life.⁴ It goes on to assert that good Early Childhood Education (ECE) can equip children with cognitive, behavioural and social skills that generate large benefits in terms of access to primary school, progression through school and learning outcomes.⁵ Unfortunately, the report notes that one in three children under the age of 6 in the developing world start primary school with their bodies, brains and long-term learning prospects permanently damaged by malnutrition and ill-health.⁶

Education International calls for universal provision of early childhood education services and targeted measures to assist the poor and most vulnerable. EI insists that ECE is a public good which should be an integral part of every country's education system. ECE staff should receive pre- and in-service training of good quality, continuous professional development and support. Their salaries and conditions of service should be comparable to those of teachers with the same level of qualifications in other sectors.

The Universal Primary Education goal will not be reached

Granted, there has been significant progress towards the achievement of Universal Primary Education (UPE) since Dakar. For example, in 2006 there were over 40 million more children in primary school than in 1999. Sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia

| ⁴GMR, p.42 | ⁴GMR, p.50 | ⁴GMR, p.42



accounted for the bulk of the increase, with enrolment in the former increasing by 42% and in the latter by 22%.⁷

However, it is evident that on current trends the goal of achieving Universal Primary Education will be missed. As the GMR reveals, “Some 75 million children of primary school age are still out of school, and their numbers are coming down too slowly and too unevenly to achieve the 2015 target.”⁸

Serious disparities in access and completion vary between and within countries. Fifty-five percent of the children of primary school age who are not in school are girls and over 4 out of 5 of these children live in rural areas, mostly in South and West Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Child labour, ill health and disability are some of the major barriers to UPE. The Report painfully notes that children with disabilities are among the most marginalised and least likely to go school.⁹

The GMR calls for integrated policy approaches aimed at removing the structural barriers that keep children out of school. It argues that many countries will have to strengthen their focus on out of school children. The Report also cautions that merely getting children into school is not good enough; retention, completion and learning outcomes are also critical.¹⁰

EI welcomes the progress made towards UPE but strongly argues for inclusive quality education for all – girls, boys, children from poor families, those involved in child labour, migrant children, children of ethnic minorities, disabled children, rural children and all others. Governments, teacher unions and all education stakeholders should join forces to guarantee access to quality education to the marginalised and unreachable.

| ⁷ GMR, p.57 | ⁸ GMR, p.56 | ⁹ GMR, p.82 | ¹⁰ GMR, p.64

Secondary education and beyond: a mixed bag

The GMR reveals that enrolment in secondary education has risen by nearly 76 million since 1999. The average net enrolment ratio also rose from 52% in 1999 to 58% in 2006. However, many developing regions still lag behind. For example, in Sub-Saharan Africa, the secondary NER was just 25% in 2006.¹¹

Countries that have made significant progress are those that are committed to providing universal access to basic education, which includes lower secondary and basic education. The Report argues that enforcement of compulsory schooling laws and the elimination of primary school leaving examinations are some key measures being taken by some countries to improve transition rates.

EFA Goals 3 and 4 remain largely neglected. The Report notes that millions of teenagers have never attended primary school and many more have left school lacking the skills they need to earn a livelihood and participate fully in society. In addition, there are about 776 million adults — two-thirds of them women — lacking basic literacy skills. Illiterate adults constitute 16% of the world's population. On current trends, over 700 million adults will still lack basic literacy skills in 2015. The problem is compounded by the fact that many governments have given little priority to youth and adult learning needs in their education policies and strategies.¹²

Education International urges governments, donor organisations, other agencies and stakeholders to adopt a holistic approach to Education For All. There is need to focus on all the EFA goals, so that every child, youth and adult has access to education of good quality. This year's Global Action Week (20 – 26 April) has adult literacy and lifelong learning as its main focus. Education International and its member organisations, its Global Campaign for Education partners and others will use this opportunity to highlight the need for governments and other players to address this essential, but neglected, goal.

Equity of access to quality education: key challenge for further progress!

The GMR 2009 Report shows that educational opportunities remain highly polarized – both between and inside countries. Being born in a developing country is a strong indicator for reduced opportunity. In OECD countries almost 100% of 6-years old children are in school, while in Sub-Saharan Africa only 20% of them attend school. By age 15, more than 80% of students attend secondary school in the OECD region, but in Sub-Saharan Africa there are only

| ¹¹GMR, p.84 | ¹²GMR, p.91

70% enrolment and minority of them – in secondary level.¹³ This clearly illustrates limitations, not only of access to education but also to different quality of education. However, inequalities within countries create an even starker picture of disparities. Income based disparities are reinforced by those based on gender, ethnicity and location. This is why one of the central messages of this report is that national governments and international development agencies need to strengthen the focus on equity in order to achieve the core goals of the Dakar Framework for Action.¹⁴

What matters in education is of course not only access, but quality as well. Quality of education is much more difficult to measure and assess than quantity. This Report attempts to address the issue by relying on a few international studies, such as PISA, which show that some participating developing countries, such as Peru or Brazil, fall far short of average achievements of students in the OECD countries. However, we should be cautious about using international comparative surveys as tools to measure education quality. True quality involves much more than what can be tested and depends on national contexts, curriculum and goals, and qualified and well resourced teachers above all.

Gender equality: Progress is too slow

The Dakar gender agenda is two-part: achieving gender parity and progress towards gender equality. This combination makes the EFA Framework far broader than other international development targets. The world has made continuous progress towards gender parity showing that gender differences in education can be overcome through public policy and changes in attitude, but there is still a long way to go as only 59 out of 176 countries have achieved gender parity in both primary and secondary education

Gaps are widest in South and West Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa with some success stories, such as a 30% increase in Nepal, Ethiopia and Liberia. In many countries girls are less likely to repeat grades, and have greater chances of reaching the final grade and completing the primary school cycle. In primary education over half the countries in sub-Saharan Africa, South and West Asia and the Arab States are yet to achieve gender parity

In secondary education, among the developing regions, the Arab States, South and West Asia and sub-Saharan Africa still show low participation. Conversely in Latin America and the Caribbean, more girls were enrolled than boys. Expansion of secondary school enrolment has led to a reduction in gender disparities in almost all regions but still only 37 % of countries have achieved gender parity.

In tertiary education there are large differences between regions. The situation of developing countries varies, with higher rates of female participation in the Caribbean and the Pacific and far fewer female students in South and West Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Cross-national research using household survey data carried out for

| ¹³ GMR, p.27 | ¹⁴ GMR, p.28

the 2009 GMR underlines the strong association between poverty and gender inequalities in education.

Gender equality in educational opportunities and outcomes is the most challenging to achieve and is inherently more difficult to measure. Clearly much remains to be done. Girls continue to outperform boys in reading literacy and language arts. Historically boys have outperformed girls in mathematics in all grades of primary and secondary education – but that picture is changing. The science gap is often small, though boys tend to maintain an advantage. Subject choice in tertiary education is still marked by strong gender selection effects. The presence of female teachers may increase gender parity and equity in many cases.

For Education International inequality is one of the major barriers to achieving the Dakar goals and the MDGs related to education.

Achieving Gender parity and equality in education derives from principles of human rights, clearly enshrined and accepted by the international community. In addition, gender inequality in education entails serious losses for society. Where girls and women are more educationally disadvantaged than boys and men, shifting the balance towards girls will nourish citizenship, enhance the well-being of children, reduce fertility, and improve the prospects for future generations. For a large number of reasons, removing gender gaps in education, improving the relevance and quality of girls' and women's education, recruiting women teachers where they are lacking, are among EI's top priorities.

Therefore governments across the world need to act with far greater resolve to reduce the disparities that restrict opportunity in education. Recruiting candidate teachers in remote areas and from diverse socio-economic, ethnic and cultural groups, training them and encouraging them to work as qualified teachers in the areas and/or groups they come from will certainly contribute to more equity.

Teacher supply and quality: the education challenge

The GMR acknowledges the fact that delivery of good-quality education is ultimately contingent on what happens in the classroom, and teachers are in the front line of service.¹⁵ Education International agrees and strongly argues that the most important determinant of educational quality is the teacher. Therefore, if you want to improve

| ¹⁵ GMR, p.117

educational quality, improve the quality of the teacher. Furthermore, the attainment of both quality and equity depend, to a large extent, to the central role of teachers and school leaders.

The Report aptly notes that governments have to train and recruit on a vast scale to achieve the EFA goals. It is estimated that the world will need approximately 18 million additional primary school teachers by 2015. The most pressing need is in sub-Saharan Africa, where an estimated 3.8 million additional posts must be recruited and trained by 2015 and in Asia, where the estimate is just under 8 million.

Good quality education depends in part on reasonable class sizes and Pupil/Teacher ratios (PTR). Yet the Report reveals that there are large regional and national disparities in PTRs. The approximate ceiling PTR usually used is 40:1, but there are large regional and national disparities. Some countries (such as Afghanistan, Chad and Mozambique) exceed a national average of 60:1, but within countries with lower national average PTR, huge disparities can exist between regions.¹⁶

Trained teachers are in short supply in many countries. Nearly half of the 40 countries with data both in 1999 and 2006 increased the presence of trained teachers. However, more than a third of countries moved in the opposite direction, with percentages of trained primary school teachers declining.

PTR and the recruitment of quality teachers are key elements in quality education, but quality teacher initial and in service training and motivation of teachers are crucial. This is also related to job satisfaction. Yet the GMR states: “Evidence suggests that many countries face a crisis of teacher morale that is mostly related to poor salaries, working conditions and limited opportunities for professional development”.

The GMR highlights several problems faced by teachers in developing countries. It points to problems of salary levels, the doubtful use of contract teachers and the lack of evidence for introducing performance related pay structures.¹⁷

Teacher motivation is a major problem in many developing countries, leading to a flight of teachers from the profession and a lack of new teachers to fill the gap. Governments often use unqualified, community or para-teachers to quickly ‘solve’ this problem, apparently creating better PTRs. However, the GMR warns that superficially positive outcomes have to be weighed against concerns that there may be a trade-off between the supply of contract teachers and overall education quality.¹⁸ Rather, something must be done substantially to enhance teacher recruitment policies: “One way of reducing the pressure for recruitment is to strengthen teacher retention. In many countries, large numbers of teachers are leaving the profession not just because of poor pay and conditions, but also because of inadequate support, large class sizes and low job status,” the Report argues.¹⁹

| ¹⁶ GMR, pp.119-120 | ¹⁷ GMR, pp.171-174 | ¹⁸ GMR, p.173 | ¹⁹ GMR, pp.173-174



Another quick fix sometimes pursued for improving teacher motivation and performance is the introduction of performance-related pay. The GMR notes that despite “the controversy and the enthusiasm for performance-related pay in some quarters, evidence of the benefits claimed is limited.”²⁰ The Report further argues that often these systems will stimulate teachers to focus on the best-performing students or encourage the phenomenon of “teaching to the test.”²¹ Governments need to commit more clearly to making the teaching profession more attractive.

EI's position is clear when it comes to teachers and quality. Quality education can only be provided by quality teachers, qualified teachers.

Teacher supply is important in this aspect but not only in terms of quantity but also in terms of quality. Teacher education policies are of outmost importance in managing the supply of adequately trained teachers and in organising quality initial and in-service training. Teacher unions should be the top ranking partners in designing these policies.

The professional development of teachers must be at the centre of all policies concerning teachers, quality and equity. EI insists that teachers and their unions should be involved in the development of education policy and in the determination of their conditions of service, including salaries, allowances and other benefits. Efforts should be made to improve the status of the teaching profession in order to attract more people and to motivate and retain those who are already in service.

EI further argues that the most important determinant of educational quality is the teacher. Therefore, every child deserves to be taught by a properly trained and qualified teacher. Teachers need both pre- and in-service training and continuous professional development and support, to be effective in their work. The recruitment of non-professional teachers, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, undermines the provision of quality education. The governments, international financial institutions and NGOs that promote this unfortunate practice ought to stop it. Instead, they should promote policies and strategies that ensure that every child is taught by a properly trained and qualified teacher.

| ²⁰ GMR, p.178 | ²¹ GMR, pp.178-179

Response to the GMR 2009 on HIV/AIDS

The GMR 2009 takes due notice of the impact of HIV/AIDS in the education systems and draws attention to the fact that the shortage of teachers continues to be a major obstacle to the achievement of the EFA goals, a fact to which EI and its members consistently call attention. In many countries, the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS on education systems continues to be inadequately addressed in education planning. “In many cases the focus has been on curriculum reform in education to include teaching on HIV/AIDS prevention rather than an integrated response aimed at addressing the multiple disadvantages faced by children affected by HIV/AIDS.”²²

EI welcomes the fact that the report recognizes that: “Education systems could play a far more active and effective role in combating HIV/AIDS through teaching and awareness-raising about risky behaviour.”²³ These recommendations, however, remain broad and are not sufficient in addressing the problem concretely. For example, governments should be encouraged to develop policies aimed at supporting children who live with HIV and/or who have lost parents to the disease, which is the situation faced by around 9% of population under 15 in sub-Saharan Africa. As the report notes, in Kenya, access to medicine for families living with HIV/AIDS has improved school attendance for children.²⁴

The report recognizes that in parts of Africa HIV-related health problems lead to teacher absenteeism. Teachers and their unions are addressing the issue by including and supporting teachers living with HIV and AIDS, ensuring they can continue to work in a supportive environment which is free of stigma and discrimination. In countries such as Namibia, Senegal, Kenya, Uganda and Malawi, associations of teachers cater for the needs of colleagues living with HIV and help spread the message that teachers who have access to treatment and care can continue to contribute to the achievement of the EFA goals.

For EI, education is the best social vaccine against HIV/AIDS and increased efforts by national governments and the international community to strengthen the public education systems are essential not only for the achievement of UPE, but also to halt by 2015 the spread of HIV/AIDS.

As the report notes: “**There is strong evidence that primary education has a significant positive impact on knowledge of HIV prevention, with secondary education having an even stronger impact.**” (Herz and Sperling, 2004, in GMR 2009, p. 35)

| ²² GMR, p.192 | ²³ GMR, p.35 | ²⁴ GMR, p.182



Raising quality and strengthening equity: why governance matters

In the Dakar Framework for Action, governance of education systems plays a small role in achieving Education for All. In the declaration, governments have made a very general pledge that they will “develop responsive, participatory and accountable systems of educational governance and management.” The GMR 2009 however does make a strong case for why a closer look at governance is vital for reaching the goals. In this effort, it takes a critical view towards ideologically inspired governance reforms, such as the heavily promoted agendas of decentralisation and school competition, which have little support in academic research. A ‘blueprint’ for governance reforms does not exist, according to the authors. Rather, a local context defines what works or doesn’t work for education governance. However, problems in local governance practices do exist and if they are not tackled, EFA will remain a goal, rather than reality. Teacher unions can use the analysis and recommendations in this section to claim their place at the negotiation table, strengthening their demands.

Governance is a complex issue, which is hard to define precisely. The GMR therefore adopts a broad view of the issue: “In its broadest sense, it is concerned with the formal and informal processes by which policies are formulated, priorities identified, resources allocated, and reforms implemented and monitored.”²⁵ It thus comprises major political areas affecting teachers’ unions, such as teachers’ pay, teacher recruitment policy or the place of unions in education policy formulation.

To draw its conclusions on governance issues, the research team has analysed decision-making in 184 countries, focusing on many of the issues mentioned above. The broad sample contains a wealth of information and forms a good basis for a critical analysis of both existing governance structures and recent reforms. It forms one of the first comprehensive reviews of governance policy in education, with a particular view for equity, in the framework of Education for All.

A specific analysis is made of financing education, competition between schools, ‘teacher governance’ and the importance of

| ²⁵ GMR, p.129



education for poverty reduction. Its general conclusion is that after “some two decades of far-reaching governance reform in education the jury is still out on the results. Despite continuing enthusiasm, there is surprisingly little evidence that governance policies implemented thus far have actually improved education quality and led to greater equity.”²⁶ It notes two main *raisons* for disappointing outcomes:

- **Governments uncritically borrow blueprints from rich countries when developing their strategies for governance reforms; and**
- **Governments fail to place equity and poverty reduction at the centre of governance reform.**²⁷

Financing Strategies for closing the equity gap

Financing education for all remains one of the core challenges, even though improvements can be seen. The GMR advises that several analytical remarks can be made about statistics on education funding. Although only a few governments invest 6% of their GDP in education, even improved GDP figures have to be analysed critically. These statistics often say less about the political priority attached to education than figures on “education-spending as a percentage of total national spending.” Similar problems exist with the share of teachers’ salaries as part of the national education budget. The GMR further notes that the “large share of teacher remuneration in education financing is not, as is sometimes assumed, an indicator that teachers are overpaid; ... Rather, it indicates that the primary education sector is under-resourced, suggesting a need for increased commitment from governments and aid donors.”²⁸

The most important message however is that decentralisation of financial authority can have a negative effect on equity. Financing

| ²⁶ GMR, p.130 | ²⁷ GMR, p.130 | ²⁸ GMR, p.135

and decentralisation strategy are often presented in the light of equity by the international development community. How much schools receive from public sources, how they can further raise money and in which ways they can spend this money defines how free a school is to achieve its own aims. However, the GMR is critical of the effect of decentralisation of financial authority from the central government on equity. It sees two broad dangers. “First, devolution of finance can act as a powerful driver for disparities in provision.”²⁹ And secondly, “financial and political devolution to weak local governance structures can have negative consequences for the coverage and quality of education, again with damaging consequences for equity.”³⁰

Four broad rules are given to guide policy-makers to make decentralisation policies more equitable. These rules might be used by teachers unions to critically examine these policies in their countries.

- a. **Revenue-raising powers for local government should be clearly defined;**
- b. **Central government should retain redistributive capacity;**
- c. **Equity goals should be built into inter-governmental financing formulas;**
- d. **Central governments should carefully assess the implications of decentralisation for the achievement of national goals in education.**³¹

Choice, Competition and Voice

The GMR provides evidence for the assertion that competition between publicly and privately funded education is detrimental to education for all, stating that “competition and choice have the potential to reinforce inequality.”³² Earlier, the OECD had concluded that competition does not necessarily lead to higher learning outcomes. The GMR quotes the PISA study from 2007, saying that whether “students are in competitive schools or not does not matter for their performance when socio-economic factors are accounted for... None of the factors related to parents’ pressure and choice were found to have a statistically significant association with educational equity.”³³ This evidence counters rhetoric that blindly promotes competition and privatisation.

That the opportunities grabbed by the private sector are often a sign of failure of the public system is another useful message. The GMR emphasises the emergence of low fee private providers, which often operate in areas where no public system exists. The GMR also points to absence of standards for some private schools, particularly low fee private schools. In developing countries, these schools have emerged in areas where there is no or little public provision. It further notes that rather than embracing this trend as it expands its reach, “the overwhelming priority should be to improve their

²⁹ GMR, p.146 | ³⁰ GMR, p.147 | ³¹ GMR, pp.150-151 | ³² GMR, p.152 | ³³ OECD, 2007, p.236

standards and accessibility rather than to channel public finance into the private sector.” (p. 164)

Another concern that the GMR raises, is the issue of participation of parents and civil society organisations in decision-making in schools. More efforts should be made to make this participation equitable. The GMR warns that transferring “decision-making to village-level associations often concentrates power in the hands of local elites.” (p. 157) Rather than creating more opportunities to hear the voice of the poor, decentralisation can thus contribute to the reinforcement of local inequities.

An integrated approach to education and poverty

Education plays an important role in elevating families from poverty. Education can increase opportunities for better jobs, and stimulate healthier lifestyles and a better use of arising opportunities. However, governments too often fail to make this connection, which shows from the lack of attention for education in Poverty Reduction Strategic Papers (PRSPs). These papers describe governments’ broad development priorities. The GMR states that most of these PRSPs “take a narrow and reductionist approach to education, rarely reflecting the broad EFA agenda.” (p. 185)

Another problem is that critical voices are left out of the process of formulating or implementing poverty reduction strategies. “Teachers’ unions, many of which oppose education reforms that affect employment and pay conditions, are often not invited to participate in policy dialogue.” (Mund et al., 2007, p. 198). Again, teachers and their unions will have to be taken more seriously to make Education For All a reality.

EI has warned for a long time that decentralisation without adequate, equitable funding and accountability, and competition practices in education can put the achievement of EFA at risk. Good governance of the education systems and schools need to hear the voice of the teachers and their unions. Teacher unions need to be recognized as partners in social dialogue and as partners in the broader dialogue on education in society. Again, teachers and their unions will have to be taken more seriously to achieve an integrated approach to education and poverty.

| 34 GMR, p.130 | 35 GMR, p.130 | 36 GMR, p.135



Increasing Aid and Improving Governance

Bearing in mind that the 2007 GMR estimated that an annual US \$11 billion of aid was required to support achievement in low-income countries of the three EFA goals— Early Childhood Care and Education, Universal Primary Education, and Adult Literacy— and that current commitments would need to be triple that annual amount, a number of alarming developments in total aid flows highlighted in the GMR 2009 report are briefly reiterated here:

- Official development assistance has been declining for two consecutive years; donors are falling far short of their commitments, and will likely fall far short of their target: almost US \$30 billion (at 2004 prices) remains to be committed to meet donor promises for 2010.
- The European Commission and especially the US contribute very little relative to the size of their economies. Some European countries have performed very poorly.
- Since 2000, there has been very little increase in the share of aid for education, including basic education, directed to the 50 least developed countries³⁸ and distribution remains uneven: less than half of aid for basic education was allocated to the 50 least developed countries.³⁹
- Overall contribution to basic education is dominated by a small core of donors: indeed, half of all aid commitments to basic education came from just three donors – the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the International Development Association – who were responsible for 60% of all aid to low income countries.⁴⁰ “When growth is driven by a handful of donors, there is a greater danger of sudden reduction in aid,”⁴¹ which will inevitably damage progress towards EFA.

| ³⁸ GMR, p.211 | ³⁹ GMR, p.218 | ⁴⁰ GMR, pp.214-215 | ⁴¹ GMR, p.215



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- The report criticises France, Germany and Japan for their neglect of aid for basic education in low income countries, and for maintaining aid programmes that are only weakly aligned with their international commitments to the Dakar Framework for Action and the education MDGs.⁴²

EI welcomes the recognition by the GMR 2009 report that, while aid is imperative in many developing countries towards achieving the EFA goals and the wider MDGs, global trends in aid are a serious cause for concern, given the overall failure of donors to acts on their commitments to the Dakar Framework and in closing the growing financial gap. It should be stressed that the recognition and concerns expressed in the report are long overdue, particularly in consideration of the slowdown in growth of aid commitments for education and basic education since 2000. The increasingly fragile financial situation around the globe as a result of the economic crisis will inevitably place pressure on official development assistance levels and could lead to further cuts in aid budgets in the near future. EI recommends monitoring aid and aid governance on all levels, particularly in local contexts where aid should be having effect.

| ⁴² GMR, p.217

Aid to those most in need: Equity is not improving!

“In their dialogue with developing countries, donors have strongly emphasized the importance of equity in public spending. The share of basic education in overall spending is widely used as an indicator for equity. Were they to apply the same standards to themselves, many donors would regard their own aid programmes as highly inequitable.”⁴³

The case for increased aid remains, from the perspective of donors, dependent on recipients’ ability to deliver positive results. The report highlights the inequity in the distribution of aid in favour of middle-income countries which have reported progress towards achieving EFA, to the disadvantage of low-income countries which often show the poorest EFA indicators, but are arguably most in need of aid. As EI concluded from previous GMR reports and developments towards EFA, the reality is that need is often not a determinant of where aid is provided. Four years since the commitments made by the G8 at Gleneagles, the report concedes that although there has been some movement towards needs-based provision (providing more aid to countries with the highest number of out-of-school children), this has not been consistent. Still two-fifths of aid to education and a quarter of aid to basic education went to middle-income countries.

EI insists that aid should be considered in a long term approach and be distributed equitably to all countries which are in need of financial support in the provision of quality education, adequate training and fair working conditions for teachers. Adequate training and support should not be overlooked, and most countries, middle- or low-income countries are in need of financial support in these areas.

Fragile states that are particularly in need of support should not be denied aid on the grounds of the instability of their governments, or severe problems in education quality. This however does appear to be the case: “In 2006, thirty-five countries received US \$1.6 billion in education aid, of which US\$.9 billion was allocated to basic education.”⁴⁴ Their share of aid to education is hardly more than that for all other low-income countries.

Real progress towards EFA needs to be matched with development aid that is in line with the individual needs of the recipient country, in particular for countries which have been encouraged to draft large scale national plans and will, in the future, be left without the resources required to fully implement these plans. Countries should not need to wait to receive financing in order to build schools, recruit, train and support their teachers, and to provide incentives needed to reach marginalised groups. At the same time, if aid is unpredictable, the basis for long-term investment in schools,

| ⁴³ GMR, p.214 | ⁴⁴ GMR, p.213

recruitment and training of teachers, and supporting marginalised groups, cannot be sustained.⁴⁵

Fast track initiative: not meeting expectations!

The report indicates that not enough donors have prioritised the EFA goals, either through their own programmes or through support to the FTI Catalytic Fund; bilateral support for basic education is declining.⁴⁶ “Of the total commitments of aid to basic education in low-income countries in 2006, the Catalytic Fund accounted for just over 2%. Looking to the future, the Fund faces a large and imminent shortfall.”⁴⁷ It is expected that over the next years, countries receiving support from the Catalytic Fund will not see it continued and other countries will not see their plans endorsed at all.

While promises have been made to meet the shortfalls in the FTI-endorsed countries and increase education aid, these need to be met with strengthened international commitment in practice. The report calls on the High-Level Group on Education for All to provide guidance to heads of state or governments, development agencies, ministers of education and representatives of education and the private sector, to reinforce political will and accelerate progress towards EFA through identifying resources, strengthening partnerships, and identifying priorities.⁴⁸ The report claims that the High Level Group has so far failed to stimulate international action and the commitment of ministries in donor countries. “EFA has lacked a strong and consistent voice to keep it at the centre of the international development agenda.”⁴⁹

Governance and aid effectiveness

In better coordinating how aid is delivered, the Paris Declaration on Aid effectiveness in 2005 with its main principles of national ownership, alignment and harmonization, aimed to enhance aid predictability, to use national institutions and financial systems for the delivery of aid, and to cut transaction costs through donor coordination. The GMR 2009 however points to continuing serious problems in aid governance: “Too often, national ownership is weak, transaction costs are high and development assistance is delivered in ways that erode, rather than build, the institutional capacity of aid recipients.”⁵⁰

The most problematic of the new approaches to aid governance are the shift towards sector programmes and the alignment of aid with national priorities. The report recognizes that these new delivery models have not been successful in really developing national ownership without donor interference and promotion of their own concepts of ‘good governance’ in the education sector. As the report says: “Donors have no monopoly on insights into what constitutes good governance for education.”⁵¹ The European Commission and the World Bank have been particularly active in promoting good governance through their aid programmes. The failure of national

| ⁴⁵ GMR, p.220 | ⁴⁶ GMR, p.218 | ⁴⁷⁻⁴⁹ GMR, p.219 | ⁵⁰ GMR, p.205 | ⁵¹ GMR, p.233

governments to comply with donor requirements and priorities (whether they comply with good governance standards or not) may undermine a country's eligibility for aid, to the detriment of efforts of those who are actively engaged in improving the education system, and in the case of teacher unions, the situation of teachers.

The report concedes that: "There is a risk that policies reflecting particular currents of education policy debates in rich countries – such as shifting powers from local authorities to schools, expansion of voucher programmers, performance-related pay for teachers, and an increased role for private sector provision – will become routinely promoted."⁵² This without consideration as to whether these exported education methods are relevant for the receiving country. EI warns against the exportation of education structures and programmes—voucher programmes, performance related pay, decentralization, privatization, testing of students—that do not correspond to the needs of a country.

The Paris Agenda has reinforced the Sector-wide approach (SWAp) as a model of aid to low-income countries. While the idea of coordinated provision of aid from all donors in support of broad sector programmes may help to strengthen national ownership in some countries, and help to align and harmonise the provision of aid, SWAps will not necessarily be effective everywhere and should not become a blueprint for providing aid to all recipient countries, as it may ultimately undermine the leadership and capacity of recipient countries and their influence over the development and implementation of programmes. As the Report itself states: "Programme aid might offer a textbook route to greater efficiency, but it can also entail greater intrusion into national policy."⁵³ Tailoring aid provision to the country circumstances is crucial; donors must be able to set aside their own agendas. For example, cutting pre-service teacher training to quickly recruit teachers for the sake of countering the student-teacher ratio imbalance should not be a means to an end.

While EI welcomes the Report's critique that it is more difficult to change procedures than it is to change the language of aid governance, concrete approaches need to be developed and monitored: for donor agencies, for donor governments, for recipient governments, for civil society and also, importantly, with the involvement of those receiving the support on the ground: teachers and education staff. The report fails to recommend that the Paris agenda be closely monitored and followed up: it is in local contexts that the effectiveness of donor aid and aid governance can really be monitored, and not only through the analysis of broadly gathered data.

| ⁵² GMR, p.223 | ⁵³ GMR, p.222



Conclusions

On the basis of the findings, the Report makes recommendations to governments, donors and non-governmental actors. EI considers that this whole set of recommendation fails to put forward the three key messages from the 2009 GMR.

- **The role of education as a human right and as a catalyst for social justice and sustainable development.**
- **The essential role of teachers and the need to attract, train and retain qualified teachers in all classrooms. To achieve this, participatory management and predictable aid should be developed. The low importance given to the role of teachers in the FTI strategies should have been stressed. EI would have expected a clear call to bring a halt to the increased recruitment of unqualified teachers.**
- **The negative impact on EFA goals as a result of the non-delivery of commitments by the donors, despite high level statements and declarations. This should have been linked with the poor results on equity and quality in education.**

The Report's key message is:

"If we are serious about EFA, it is high time to invest in equitable education and in quality teachers."

Regrettably, this message does not receive sufficient prominence in the recommendations.

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.



Education International

is the Global Union Federation representing 30 million teachers and education personnel from pre-school to university in 172 countries and territories.

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