

Information Kit on Education for All

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INTRODUCTION

This Information Kit on Education for All is an attempt, some eighteen months after the World Education Forum in Dakar, to take stock of the major issues facing the EFA movement, to outline current trends and to identify possible avenues of future action. The kit has been designed as an easy-to-use and up-to-date source of quick reference for all those involved in the EFA endeavour, including ministers of education, planning and international cooperation, along with their technical staff; UN agencies and development partners (bilateral and multilateral); non-governmental organizations active in education and related fields; and educationists, professional bodies, and researchers.

Many of the themes developed in this kit relate directly to the six EFA goals and associated targets which national governments and the international community have committed themselves to attain by 2015 at the latest. Other themes, such as EFA in countries in crisis and the impact of HIV/AIDS on education, are highlighted because they clearly deserve special attention. Without urgent and targeted action, a number of countries will not meet the EFA goals according to the schedule agreed in Dakar.

The key role of partnership in the EFA drive is the common thread running through the entire kit. EFA will not be achieved without the collaboration of all partners at all levels. At the national level, of course, the driving force behind EFA must be the government, working in collaboration with civil society and the private sector, and supported by international partners of several kinds. Good examples of partnership in practice are evident in the flagship initiatives such as the UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), the AIDS, Education and School flagship, and Focussing Resources on Effective School Health (FRESH).

Collaboration with civil society is gaining ground. The Dakar Framework for Action specifically calls for greater civil society involvement in national policy making. Today, civil society organizations are making increased efforts to present a coherent voice and to build systematic relationships with governments and international agencies. Through such partnership, we can make common cause in the struggle to achieve basic education for all of sound quality.

I hope you will find this Information Kit informative and thought-provoking.

Koïchiro Matsuura
Director-General
UNESCO

The Achievable Goal

Education provides individuals with the power to reflect, make choices and enjoy a better life, stresses the Dakar Framework for Action. Education has powerful synergistic effects on other development objectives: empowerment, protection of the environment, better health and good governance. Education of mothers has a strong impact on health, family welfare and fertility.

According to a recent OECD report, investment in education results in a clear economic pay-off: one extra year of education leads to an increase in an individual's output per capita of between 4 and 7 per cent (in OECD countries).

Education is important for other reasons too, specially the cultivation of values, attitudes and conduct essential for living together in peace, and for personal growth and fulfilment.

EFA: looking back

Since the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990), real progress towards EFA targets has been made: 10 million more children attend school each year; adult literacy rates rose to 85 per cent for men and 74 per cent for women; primary school enrolment increased from 599 million in 1990 to 681 million in 1998; the number of out-of-school children fell from 127 million to 113 million.

At the same time, over 100 million children, mostly girls, were still out of school and risked joining the 875 million illiterate adults, nearly two-thirds of them women.

Educational quality often remains low and uneven. In South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa less than three-quarters of pupils reach Grade 5. Yet research indicates that six years of primary education is needed to reach sustainable levels of literacy and numeracy.

Many individual countries have achieved dramatic progress in expanding enrolments, improving schooling retention and completion rates, and reducing gender disparities. For example, enrolments in Uganda, Malawi and Mauritania have doubled in a matter of five years, approaching 100 per cent gross enrolment ratio. Benin and Guinea-Bissau have steadily expanded primary enrolments.

Some regions are also close to the goal of universal primary education. This is already a reality in developed and transition countries, and East Asia, the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean are close to reaching the goal.

Although this expansion of enrolment has outpaced population growth, it still falls short of the pace necessary to meet the goal of universal enrolment in all regions.

EFA: looking forward

Is the goal of universal primary education as difficult as it was in the past decade? For most countries, school enrolment growth of 5 per cent per year over the next 15 years would suffice to achieve EFA goals, though several will need to grow at up to 10 per cent per year.

In developing countries primary schools will need to accommodate about 156 million more children than in 1997, an increase of 27 per cent.

A particular effort will be needed in sub-Saharan Africa, which will have to accommodate more than half of the additional school places required at the global level: roughly a 150 per cent increase from its 1997 enrolment level, almost three times the effort undertaken during the period 1990-97.

Angola, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Liberia, Niger and Somalia will need to increase their efforts ten-fold. South Asia will have to enrol about 40 million more children – an increase of one third – requiring at least the same pace of effort as in the 1990-1997 period.

The Arab States need twice the previous effort to accommodate some 23 million additional children, representing an increase of 72 per cent.

The Six Dakar Goals

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
2. Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
3. Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.
4. Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
6. Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

EFA is politically and economically feasible

While the challenge is considerable, there is reason to be optimistic. Many countries, including some very poor ones, have demonstrated that with political leadership and commitment it is possible to attain rapid progress.

Projections show that for almost all of the very low-enrolment countries, once the system stabilizes after an initial surge in enrolments has moved through the system (a period of about 10 years), national resources should be able to sustain efforts.

In the meantime, significant external financing will be required to cover the additional direct costs of enrolling all children in school, improving quality and reducing the direct costs of education. Higher levels of international aid, however, will be related to more effective utilization of resources and increased national effort.

EFA is achievable

Achieving EFA will require better systems of gathering, analysing and disseminating information from individual countries. Specifically, there are urgent needs for:

- Better mechanisms for monitoring and valuating national plans;
- Better data on the functioning of national education systems;
- Better information on what works;
- Better tracking of educational expenditures; and
- Focus on quality of education and on all six Dakar goals.

Achieving these goals will require sustained, intensive and co-ordinated action on several fronts. Transforming resource inputs into learning outcomes requires not just financial investment but also effective education systems, the right mix of resources (e.g. teachers and learning materials) and an overall national context of sound economic and social policies. Without significant policy changes, existing structural imbalances will hinder the attainment of the Dakar goals.

The Price Tag

Achieving Education for All will require large amounts of new financial resources, a significant proportion of which must come from the individual countries themselves.

According to the World Bank, only 3 per cent of education budgets in developing countries are funded by the international community. Other estimates put this figure at 10 per cent, while in some specific countries it can be as high as 40 per cent. Although countries will continue to fund the lion's share of their education systems, external funding will be vital to allow them to step up their EFA efforts.

The 1990 decline

Despite the pledge made by the international community in Jomtien (Thailand, 1990), Official Development Assistance (ODA) and lending declined severely during the mid 1990s although it has recovered somewhat in recent years. As a percentage of GNP of OECD/DAC countries, ODA fell by more than one-fifth in constant dollar terms, with slight recovery in 1999. Given the urgency of reaching the EFA goals, this decline is disturbing.

Even in the least developed countries, the trend has been downward. Sub-Saharan Africa has witnessed the sharpest decline, of roughly one-third. Four major economies – France, Germany, Japan and the United States – recorded the highest reductions in their assistance during the 1990s.

Although it is noteworthy that within this overall drop, education seems to have suffered relatively less, no increase was registered. Basic education, on the other hand, continues to constitute an insignificant proportion of individual countries' development assistance.

The Dakar response

The Dakar Framework for Action calls for external funding on a systematic basis. It states: "We affirm that no countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources". It also calls for a global initiative to formulate the strategies and mobilize the resources needed to provide effective support to national EFA efforts.

The global initiative

The global initiative is based on a common understanding between development partners and countries on the following basic principles:

- It is more than a financial mechanism; it is a means of tackling poverty reduction, ensuring sustainable development and creating an enabling environment nationally, primarily through human and institutional capacity-building. Resources are understood as financial, human and material.
- It favours a sector-wide approach above the fragmented project support that characterized development co-operation in earlier decades.
- It argues that greater predictability rests, on one hand, on the capacity of aid providers to fulfil medium- or long-term commitments, and on the other, on the capacity of aid receiving countries

to absorb and use funding in accordance with nationally defined plans and goals.

- It supports the identification of innovative financial schemes that can supplement official development assistance and lending. Debt relief and/or cancellation and debt for development swaps are examples of such mechanisms.

- It argues that more effective donor co-ordination could support consistency in goals and strategies by all actors and maximize the impact of international assistance.

EFA is affordable

The World Bank, UNESCO and other organizations are calculating the likely additional EFA funding needs by countries to achieve universal primary education. Current global estimates vary between OXFAM 's \$8 billion a year and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics ' \$15 billion.

However, taking the highest estimate of \$15 billion a year, the cost of achieving EFA is less than 0.3 per cent of total GNP of the developing countries, 0.06 per cent of that of developed countries and 0.05 per cent of the world 's GNP.

Considering that for the period 1997-98, ODA averaged only \$703 million, the resource gap compared with the lowest required figure –\$8 billion –is glaring.

What is proposed?

Only five countries –Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Luxembourg (in the case of Luxembourg, provisional indications for 2000) actually meet the UN target of 0.7 per cent or more of GNP for international development assistance. All development partners should not only fulfil this commitment but should also increase the proportion they allocate to basic education.

Another proposal is increasing ODA for basic social services from the current 10 to 20 per cent along the lines of the 20:20 Initiative, which recommends that development partners provide 20 per cent of their international assistance to basic social services and recipient countries 20 per cent of their budgets.

Support for education in countries in crisis and emergencies must be addressed now. The EFA partners must jointly find creative ways to sustain these countries, thus demonstrating their collective will to follow through effectively on the Dakar commitment.

Education in Countries in Crisis

Children and adolescents in refugee, internal displacement or other crisis situations have the right to receive an education and to benefit from the stabilizing and reassuring environment that schools provide. The importance of these rights was recognized by the Dakar Framework, which highlighted “the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural calamities and instability.”

Emergencies, caused by armed conflict, chronic crises or natural disasters are a major constraint upon the achievement of EFA. It is estimated that roughly fifty countries today are in conflict or post-conflict situations or host substantial refugee populations. Unless support to these countries is reinforced considerably, a sizeable number of them will be unable to meet their Dakar pledge.

Although education is increasingly viewed as the “fourth pillar” of humanitarian response alongside those of food, shelter and health, some donor agencies do not yet see education as a vital component in situations of emergency and crisis.

Scope of the problem

In the 1990s as much as 1 per cent of the world’s population was displaced by conflict or other disasters. In many displaced populations, children under 18 make up half of the population. At the beginning of 2001, the number of people of concern to UNHCR was almost 22 million. This figure includes refugees, asylum seekers, returnees and internally displaced persons. In Africa alone, more than 120,000 boys and girls under 18 years of age are currently participating in armed conflicts. Some of these children are no more than 7 or 8 years old. Roughly 300,000 under-18-year-olds are today enrolled in armies in Afghanistan, Somalia, Congo, Sierra Leone, Colombia, Sri Lanka and other countries.

On the other hand, only 1 million children and young people are recorded as beneficiaries of education services, provided either in refugee camps or in special programmes, of whom 40 per cent are girls.

What is being done?

Refugee camps cited as providing model education programmes are those in Nepal for Bhutanese refugees, in Pakistan for Afghans, and in Guinea and Uganda for multiple refugee populations. In countries of continuing, long-term crisis, such as Somalia, Angola and Sierra Leone, UNESCO, UNICEF, the European Union and NGOs are working to provide educational services in these unstable situations.

Key messages relevant to new and stressful situations are disseminated, such as HIV/AIDS prevention, landmine and environmental awareness and peace and citizenship education. Gender-sensitive materials are also increasingly available as are new and more targeted programmes for children with disabilities and excombatants, and for training of refugee teachers, youth leaders, community school committees and local education authorities.

The challenges are many and diverse as implementing agencies strive to improve quality, coverage and management.

One mechanism created to meet these challenges through collaborative efforts is the Inter-

Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). The Network is under the leadership of UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, CARE and the Norwegian Refugee Council, and it has a staffed Secretariat within UNESCO's Unit for Support to Countries in Crisis and Reconstruction.

INEE is working to develop learning materials, as well as policy guidelines and standards. Four specialized international task teams have also been established to develop teaching and learning resources, monitoring and evaluation instruments, guidance notes for formal and non-formal post-primary education, and tools for information sharing. INEE has a growing membership roster of agencies, including Ministries of Education, bi- and multi-lateral donors, and NGOs.

Agencies, donors and implementing partners have developed phased strategies to respond to new crises. The dominant emphasis is now upon education for repatriation.

Who is doing what in emergency education?

Much of the work is implemented by UN agencies and bilaterals, many in partnership with international and local NGOs:

- UNICEF provides a rapid educational response and child-centred methods and materials.
- The World Food Programme contributes food for students and teachers.
- UNHCR supports education in refugee primary and secondary schools.
- UNESCO under takes emergency education efforts in East and Central Africa, and provides technical support in other regions.
- Emergency education is the core activity of several major NGOs, many of which provide basic education to children, adolescents and even adults.

Next steps

Areas to be addressed are defining strategies, within the framework of reconstruction programmes, to re-establish peace and sustainable development in post-conflict situations, and the serious shortage of funding.

National EFA Action Plans

National EFA action plans are the very foundations of the Education for All drive. The Dakar Framework for Action stipulates that all States should develop or strengthen national plans of action. It also suggests that they:

- be integrated into a wider poverty reduction and development framework;
- be developed through transparent and democratic processes, involving stakeholders, especially peoples 'representatives, community leaders, parents, learners, non-governmental organizations and civil society;
- address budget priorities that reflect a commitment to achieving EFA goals and targets;
- set out clear strategies for overcoming the problems facing those currently excluded from educational opportunities, with a clear commitment to girls 'education and gender equity.

They should be completed by 2002 at the latest.

Why are national EFA action plans so important?

They are essential for planning and introducing reforms as well as for assessment and monitoring purposes. They allow for a sharpening of focus and prioritizing in areas of need and are a precondition for resource mobilization nationally and internationally.

What is a credible action plan?

Much discussion has centred around what constitutes a credible action plan. Their quality is fundamental to establishing their credibility with development partners. The recommendations of the Dakar Framework for Action coupled with the view of EFA partners suggest that the following dimensions are essential:

The plans should be comprehensive, addressing all six EFA goals and the issues covered by the flagship programmes; they should relate directly to national plans for poverty reduction; and be feasible in light of the foreseeable financial and institutional environment, and available human resources.

They should include indicators, targets and measures of good quality for each EFA goal.

To ensure ownership of the reform process, they should be fully participatory. In other words, major civil society organizations with a take in education should be included in the planning process.

To gain public support on a scale commensurate with the EFA challenge, constant high-level advocacy, and persuasive public relations and communications work should be undertaken.

Meeting the EFA goals is a management challenge of a high order. They are achievable if they become a national priority.

Current status of EFA Action Plans

Countries are at various stages in the preparation of national action plans. Of the sixty-six countries responding to UNESCO 's survey on the status of EFA plans, in May 2001, forty-one reported already having a plan.

A process and a product

The quality of the existing national plans varies widely. A major concern is that many education development plans do not conform to the basic principles laid out in the Dakar Framework for Action, such as, for instance, the involvement of all stakeholders (parents, teachers, NGOs etc.) in the planning process.

It is clear that most countries need to revisit their existing plans or develop them in accordance with the EFA criteria. The plans should embody the national consensus on EFA. The process is as important as the final document.

Where governments have set up parallel forums for formulation of EFA plans, this has resulted in certain cases in two separate plans. Where countries already have existing plans, the idea is to integrate EFA goals into these rather than create new ones.

Supporting national efforts

Governments now need help in preparing their EFA plans and are awaiting the support promised in the Dakar Framework for Action. Fifty-five countries responding to UNESCO's survey indicated they would require methodological and technical support for the preparation of EFA plans or strengthening of existing ones. Only seven said that no support was needed.

The onus is on the international community to support these efforts so that credible EFA action plans are on the table by the 2002 deadline.

Literacy and Non-Formal Education

Literacy and non-formal education are specifically mentioned in three of the six Dakar goals. This is a measure of their importance or achieving Education for All.

The magnitude of the EFA challenge implies that, in addition to ensuring primary schooling, more efforts are needed to develop literacy and non-formal education so as to reach those children, youths and adults who are unreached by the formal system.

While many educational authorities are fully aware of the need for literacy and non-formal education, these sub-sectors suffer from a lack of recognition. This translates into insufficient training, low salary and status of literacy teachers, insufficient co-ordination between non-formal education providers (government and NGOs) and inadequacy of public investment. Often perceived as second class, literacy and non-formal education are undervalued by parents and communities and receive less national and external funding than the formal system.

As a consequence, most literacy and non-formal education activities are run by NGOs and non-profit organizations rather than governments and, despite the extent of the problem, projects are relatively small-scale.

What is literacy?

Considerable evolution in thinking about literacy has occurred in recent years. Illiteracy is now viewed as a structural phenomenon and a social responsibility. Likewise, whereas literacy used to be viewed as a panacea or educational development, it is now seen in the broader context of educational and socio-economic interventions.

Literacy is always "functional", that is, meaningful and useful for children, young people and adults. And literacy learning needs and uses change over time. Being able to read, write and calculate in today's complex world is not enough. Skills training, health and environmental education, and computer literacy are increasingly considered part of the literacy endeavour.

The scope of illiteracy

There are today worldwide still more than 550 million female and 300 million male adult illiterates. To achieve the Dakar literacy goal, the world's adult illiteracy rate has to be reduced from its current level of 21 per cent to about 10 percent by 2015. In other words, the literacy rate of adults must reach at least 90 percent by 2015. This means that the number of adult literates will have to increase annually by 92 million, or 42 percent more than the current figure. Such a rate represents 1.3 times the previous effort.

While some regions of the world, notably East Asia, the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, could meet the Dakar literacy goal by maintaining almost the same efforts as in the past decade, other regions face substantial challenges. The challenge is particularly acute in the least developed countries, where success will require more than a doubling of past efforts. Egypt and India will have to double their efforts, while Bangladesh and Pakistan will have to triple them.

Who is doing what in literacy and non-formal education?

Governments, non-governmental organizations and UN agencies, mainly UNESCO, are active in literacy and non-formal education. Some examples of government activities include Egypt's

National Campaign on Literacy and Adult Education and India's National Literacy Mission. Other examples to be mentioned are Guatemala's Basic Education or Work Project which targets sixty communities in the country's poor rural areas. UNESCO Bangkok's APPEAL programme has for many years promoted community learning centres in the region, providing literacy and non-formal education to communities.

UNESCO focuses on support of literacy and non-formal education at the international, regional, national and community levels, with particular emphasis on women's literacy and on projects addressing marginalized youth, and rural and indigenous populations. Actions include policy advice, capacity building and concrete country- and community-based activities. Considering the new vision of literacy, UNESCO's activities in this field include health, basic skills training, income generating schemes, and civic and cultural development.

NGOs have promoted new methods, such as Action Aid's participatory, learner-centred approach (known as REFLECT). In many countries NGOs link literacy with local income-generation and cultural development. Since adults learn what is useful and relevant for them in their own circumstances, it is often local NGO programmes which are most effective. Frequently they promote literacy in the local language, as well as in widely-spoken languages which adults want to learn.

Monitoring non-formal programmes

Current EFA monitoring systems are mainly based on formal education. The role played by non-formal programmes is often underestimated. Non-formal education information systems need to be set up to facilitate comprehensive monitoring and evaluation. In 2000, UNESCO initiated a programme to develop a comparative and adaptable methodology for monitoring non-formal education initiatives and the UNESCO Institute of Statistics has also taken preliminary steps to develop new indicators for the non-formal sector.

Next steps

Mindful of the magnitude of the problem and the enormous task ahead, the United Nations General Assembly is planning to proclaim in 2002 a United Nations Decade of Literacy within the global efforts for Education for All and is expected to entrust UNESCO with the task of leading the ten-year challenge. The prime purpose of the decade is to mobilize governments and civil society to recognize the importance of creating literate environments and providing quality non-formal learning opportunities.

Educating Girls and Women

Why do girls and women need special attention

Though everyone has an equal right to education, girls and women lag far behind boy and men. Two out of three of the 110 million children in the world who do not attend school are girls - and there are 42 million fewer girls than boy in primary school. Even if girls start school, they are far less likely to complete their education. Girls who miss out on primary education grow up to become the women who make up two-thirds of the world 's 875 million illiterate adults.

Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, Middle East and North Africa have the widest gender gaps. A six-year-old girl in South Asia will typically spend six years in school, compared with nine years for a boy. Living in the countryside widens the gap; a girl living in a rural area is three times more likely to drop out of school than a city boy.

Yet education is not only their fundamental right, but an effective way of achieving higher economic growth as well as social well-being. Educated girls marry later, have fewer children, and feed and look after themselves and their family better. Their survival rate is higher, and their daughters are themselves more likely to go to school. Studies have shown that women with some education are more productive than those with none, for example in agriculture.

Why do girls miss out?

The reasons are often related to poverty or traditional beliefs and practices -in some cultures, girls 'education is regarded as less important than boys; the female role remains tied to marriage and child-rearing, and girls are often given household and childcare duties instead of an education. Sometimes parents remove their daughters from school at puberty fearing sexual harassment by a pupil or teacher, an unwanted pregnancy, or early marriage, or because there are no toilet facilities. Over-aged girls often cannot enter formal school.

Educational costs, such as fees, uniforms and books, often deter parents from educating girls; sending a daughter to school means she cannot work to earn money.

Even if they do attend school, many girls fall behind because of poor educational quality, gender discrimination in schools, and in curriculum choice and learning materials as well as bias in teaching methods and teachers ' attitudes. National indebtedness or low priority for education funding can mean too few school places or inadequate facilities (such as lavatories), leading to exclusion of girls.

What is the EFA commitment?

The Dakar Framework for Action set the goal of eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, achieving gender equality in education by 2015 and ensuring that girls are not denied their right to education. To this end, the United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, launched a 10-year flagship programme, the UN Girls ' Education Initiative (UNGEI), at Dakar.

What is UNGEI?

A partnership between thirteen UN entities to help governments meet their commitments to

ensure that all girls receive a quality education. Led by UNICEF, this initiative also involves bilateral agencies, civil society, NGOs, the private sector and governments.

Its five core strategic objectives are to:

- build political and resource commitments for girls 'education;
- end the gender gap in attendance and completion;
- eliminate gender bias within national educational systems;
- support girls 'education in areas affected by or recovering from armed conflict, natural disasters or external shocks;
- eliminate social and cultural discrimination that limits the demand for girls 'schooling.

Co-operative activities in girls 'education are taking place in more than seventy countries. For example, Egypt 's Education Minister made a commitment to close sizeable gender gaps in basic education, beginning with two pilot projects which include reaching out-of-school children.

In Nepal, where the girls ' enrolment rate lags 19 per cent behind that of boys, a new

initiative to promote girls 'education is focusing on health education, community owned schools and capacity building of female teachers. Others are providing education to girl children of bonded labourers.

In Malawi, interventions have aimed at stemming the rise in girls 'drop-out rate, targeted youth participation and HIV/AIDS prevention, and promoted vocational training and cognitive and psycho-social skills for teenage girls.

Do other approaches exist?

While supporting the school-based elements of UNGEI, other agencies such as the World Bank, the World Food Programme (WFP) and a number of bilateral partners address the situation of out-of-school girls and women. UNESCO, for example, helps many countries to open up access of girls to education in non-formal settings and build bridges between them and the school. This gives girls who have dropped out a second chance and the opportunity to reintegrate the formal system. UNESCO also conducts advocacy with governments. Its "Working Document on Gender Equality in Basic Education: A Strategic Framework" provides countries with guiding principles on gender equality in education.

UNGEI partners

UNICEF (lead agency)

(Programme Division/Education Section) www.unicef.org

DGO (Development Group Office) www.undg.org

International Labour Office (ILO) www.ilo.org

The World Bank www.worldbank.org

UNAIDS unaids.org

UN-DAW/DESA (Department of Economic and Social Affairs) www.un.org/esa/desa.htm

UNESCO www.unesco.org

UNFPA (UN Population Fund) www.unfpa.org

UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees) www.unhcr.ch

UNIFEM (UN Development Fund for Women) www.undp.org/unifem

WFP (World Food Programme) www.wfp.org

UNDP www.undp.org
WHO (World Health Organization) www.who.int

School Health (FRESH)

Good health is essential for success in the classroom -and vice versa. Sick, weak or malnourished children perform less well at school than healthy, well-fed ones, and education plays an important part in improving pupils 'health and nutrition.

With the expansion of education in most countries, more children are attending school the ideal place where health and education authorities can work together to improve and maintain child health and nourishment, keep at bay nutritional deficiencies or parasitic infections, and correct poor eyesight and hearing. Good health for pupils means higher school enrolment and attendance, and optimizes governments 'investment in education.

Health programmes also lead to greater social equity -the children who benefit most from them include the disadvantaged, such as girls, the disabled or the rural poor. An inter-agency initiative called FRESH (Focusing Resources for Effective School Health) was launched at the World Education Forum to draw renewed attention to the links between health and education and raise awareness among ministers and other policy- makers of the importance of a comprehensive and effective school health programme as part of the EFA strategy.

What does FRESH advocate?

Its four-point plan comprises:

- Health-related school policies: to make schools safer, for example by eliminating sexual harassment, violence and bullying, and promoting inclusion by guaranteeing further education of pregnant schoolgirls and young mothers;
- Provision of safe water and sanitation: to prevent the spread of infectious disease and provide a healthy, safe and secure school environment and to act as an example for students and the wider community;
- Skills-based health education: extending beyond physical health to include psycho-social and environmental health issues, to develop pupils 'knowledge, attitudes, values and lifestyles that will lead to good health -for example to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies ,injuries, violence and drug abuse;
- School-based health and nutrition services: providing food supplements, deworming or spectacles can improve school performance.

What concrete actions are taking place?

Initiatives are mushrooming in many regions. Partners are providing financial support for FRESH projects in schools in fourteen African countries. Drug education in Viet Nam, in-service teacher training in Saudi Arabia and water and sanitation programmes in Burkina Faso, Colombia, Nicaragua, Nepal and Zambia are other projects.

Regional meetings and capacity-building workshops have been held in East Asia and the Pacific, and Health Promoting Schools networks are active in furthering comprehensive approaches to school health in Central and Eastern Europe and in Latin America and the Caribbean.

While all countries are called on to include school health in their EFA action plans, those belonging to WHO 's Mega-Country Health Promotion Network and UNESCO 's E9 initiative have become active participants in FRESH. They are Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan ,Russian Federation and the United States. All have more than 100 million inhabitants and together they comprise over three-fifths of the world 's population.

In July 2001 representatives from the education and health ministries of these most populous nations endorsed FRESH and committed themselves to promoting such actions as establishing school health co-ordinating bodies within their education ministries to be responsible for EFA links and follow-up, and sharing in health ministry initiatives concerning school health.

FRESH partners

UNESCO www.unesco.org

UNICEF www.unicef.org

World Bank www.worldbank.org

World Health Organisation (WHO) www.who.int

UNAIDS www.unaids.org

FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) www.fao.org

WFP (World Food Programme) www.wfp.org

Global Partnership to Roll Back Malaria www.rbm.who.int/

Education International www.ei-ie.org

HIV/AIDS and Education

In less than two decades, HIV/AIDS has become a development disaster. Infection rates in Africa have reached alarming proportions, but they are also growing rapidly in Asia, the Caribbean and Eastern Europe. It is a severe obstacle to the EFA goals. Protecting a new generation from HIV/AIDS is integral to the future of education systems.

The scope of the problem

Infection and death rates are high among the skilled, trained and educated, draining countries of their intellectual resources and the groups most vital for development. AIDS has cut a deadly swathe through the teaching profession: up to 10 per cent of teachers are expected to die in the worst-affected African countries over the next five years.

Often the graduation rate from teacher-training colleges barely replaces the sick and dying workforce. Teacher deaths due to AIDS in Zambia in 1998 were equivalent to two-thirds of the number of newly qualified teachers, and those who die are often the most skilled and experienced. Consequently teacher morale is often low; though the teachers themselves may not be infected, colleagues or family members might be. Education officials and planners, who keep the system running are also liable to be affected by the disease.

Fewer children can afford to attend school. Many drop out to look after infected family members or because they experience shame or stigma through association with the disease. In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, it is estimated that by the year 2010, there will be 778.000 maternal and double orphans, of which nearly three-quarters will be orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS. The pattern is much the same -or even worse -in Benin, Burkina Faso and Guinea.

Current strategies to combat the effect of HIV/AIDS

Some countries have launched ambitious programmes to combat the effect of HIV/AIDS.

Sri Lanka introduced AIDS preventive measures, adding "population and family life education" to the school curriculum in 1993.

Cambodia has translated educational material about HIV/AIDS prevention into Khmer and set up intensive teacher-training programmes.

The Daughters of Education project in Thailand funds the education of girls who would otherwise be sold into the sex trade.

Brazil has introduced a vast national prevention programme aimed at young people in and out of school, especially those difficult to reach.

In sub-Saharan Africa, a major effort in Senegal has prevented an epidemic and maintained one of the lowest infection rates in the region; reproductive health and sexuality are now taught in schools. After HIV infection rose to 10 per cent of adults in Uganda, the government introduced urgent measures to raise awareness, promote healthy behaviour and direct attention to people living with HIV/AIDS. New cases among the young have now fallen considerably.

Development partners are supporting these efforts. UNESCO and the World Health Organization (WHO), for example, have organized AIDS-awareness seminars for educational

planners and developed resource materials on school health education to prevent AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases.

Recent initiatives to accelerate action

The World Education Forum set the stage for a renewed drive to fight the pandemic. UN agencies, civil society organizations and NGOs, schools and pupils are involved in this effort. One key focus is finding solutions to the severe shortage of trained teachers. Another is identifying good practices and easily adapted innovative approaches to curtail the spread of the disease.

Several recent initiatives have been launched to address these issues:

UNESCO 's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)has established a research unit related to the impact of HIV/AIDS on education systems and developed a strategy for HIV/AIDS preventive education. This strategy is based on the assumption that preventive education works if properly implemented, and focuses on five core tasks: advocacy at all levels; customizing the message and tailoring it to recipients; changing risk behaviour; caring for the infected and affected; and coping with the institutional impact of HIV/AIDS.

The UNAIDS inter-agency working group on AIDS, Education and School (comprising UNDP, UNDCP UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank),has developed a global strategy framework with the aim of cutting HIV-infection rates among young people in the most affected countries by 25 per cent by 2005 and worldwide by 2010.

Partners

UNAIDS www.unaids.org

UNESCO www.unesco.org

IIEP www.iiep.unesco.org

UNDP www.undp.org

UNDCP www.undcp.org

UNFPA www.unfpa.org

UNICEF www.unicef.org

WHO www.who.int

World Bank www.worldbank.org

The Role of Civil Society

In pledging their support for civil society involvement in educational policy-making, participants at the World Education Forum gave international recognition to the role civil society plays in education.

Who makes up civil society?

The definition of civil society is the subject of much debate. In the context of EFA, civil society can be understood as all non-governmental and non-profit groups and associations involved in the education for all drive. It embraces NGOs and campaign networks, teacher unions and religious organizations, community associations and research networks, parents' associations and professional bodies, student groups, social movements and others.

Civil society 's role in education

Though the state has the ultimate responsibility for and authority over education, civil society organizations play a major role. Three distinct roles can be identified:

- *service providers* where state provision is absent or insufficient. Civil society organizations are more flexible than the state and closer to the grassroots and local cultures. In many developing countries they take on responsibility for non-formal education programmes and are particularly successful in reaching the marginalized and excluded through approaches attuned to the needs and life conditions of the poor. They are particularly effective in areas such as community participation, empowerment, literacy, community schools, reproductive health and early childhood education.

- *innovators* and sources of 'new' thinking and practices -important if the EFA concept is to evolve and respond to change. In other words, they help fill the 'ideas gap'.

- *informed critics and advocates* on a whole range of development issues. Collective NGO campaigns in recent years have lobbied in favour of free and compulsory quality education for children and for education programmes for out-of-school young people and adults.

What 's new?

Civil society organizations are increasingly organizing themselves to present a coherent voice and build systematic relationships with governments and international agencies. This is evident at national, local, regional and international levels.

Communities are becoming more involved in educational issues, and national networks and campaigns, notably in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, are gaining more prominence.

Regional networks are emerging or growing. The African Network Campaign on EFA (ANCEFA), the Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE) and the Arab Resource Collective for Early Childhood Education are some examples.

The Global Campaign for Education has continued to lobby for greater resources for education for all.

A major step forward was made at the annual meeting of the NGO Collective Consultation on Education for All, in Bangkok, in July 2001, where around 100 NGOs agreed to set up a new partnership mechanism for EFA. Its aim: to improve dialogue with UNESCO and other actors and to carry out joint activities in research, capacity building, policy formulation, and monitoring and evaluation.

At a special session on the Involvement of Civil Society in Education for All, convened by UNESCO's Director-General during the 46th session of the International Conference on Education (Geneva, 5-6 September 2001), education ministers from Ghana, Mozambique, Nepal and Yemen, joined by a civil society organization from three of these countries, presented experiences of State/NGO partnership for EFA. Participants underlined the importance of government leadership in co-ordinating civil society efforts and of establishing mechanisms for systematic dialogue at national and local levels.

From service providers to partners

Now that civil society's participation in policy-making is written into the Dakar Framework for Action, it remains to ensure that it becomes reality at country level. This will entail broadening policy dialogue and developing more inclusive approaches to EFA policy formulation.

In some countries, scope for civil society organizations to engage fully in EFA may be very limited, and authorities need encouragement to develop more democratic and open political processes.

It is increasingly clear that EFA will only be achieved if it is rooted in a broad-based societal movement and nourished by effective government/civil society partnerships.

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