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More and Better Education in Developing Countries

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The UN MDG Review High Level Event to be held in New York in September 2010 will provide us with the opportunity to take stock of progress on MDGs thus far, and clarify direction for the remaining years up to 2015 and beyond. This SWD along with other thematic papers on, Health, Food Security, Gender, Tax Governance and the overall 2010 spring Development package (covering Staff Working Papers on MDGs, Monterrey report, aid effectiveness, PCD Work Programme and Aid for Trade), will feed into preparing a common EU position for the forthcoming HLE.

The data available shows that progress on MDGs has been uneven geographically and between population groups, and that although there are shortcomings across the world, in Education Africa is the region where most progress remains to be made. Given this, the EU activities to speed up progress towards MDGs should be implemented as the first priority in those countries most off-track, especially in Africa. The Joint Africa-EU Strategy has the potential to act as a platform for advancing shared analysis of issues and co-ordination of policy responses to step up the pace towards MDGs; it also allows for joint EU-Africa advocacy on Education at the international level and fosters discussion on the ownership of MDGs as useful development targets at national level.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this Staff Working Document is to map the challenges to more and better education in developing countries as we approach the UN General Assembly Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Review Meeting and to explore how European Member States and the Commission can more systematically interpret and operationalise our European development policy framework under the Lisbon Treaty¹ to address these challenges. The document will inform the EU's contribution to the debate on education and the MDGs in preparation for the MDG Review in September 2010.

The context in which the EU supports education in developing countries has changed significantly since 2002². The EU now has enhanced opportunities, and in the light of the recent food, fuel and financial crises, there is an increased need to draw on the EU's considerable collective experience, expertise, geographical and sector spread and to collaborate to ensure more and better education in developing countries.

The recent financial crisis has emphasised the inter-dependency of all countries across the globe. Education has a pivotal role to play in enabling long-term growth and improvements in productivity, eradication of poverty, improving health status, empowering women, reducing inequality and contributing to state-building. If issues of access, quality, inclusion and financing of education are not effectively addressed now, then not only will this MDG goal

1 The treaty on the functioning of the European Union
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:115:0047:0199:EN:PDF>

2 The last Commission policy statement on the subject:
Education and training in the context of poverty reduction in developing countries – COM(2002) 116
http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/development/sectoral_development_policies/r12511_en.htm

not be met, but millions of people could lose the opportunity which education could have provided to overcome poverty, lead healthy and productive lives and contribute to global stability and prosperity.

Although there has been good progress in many countries, millions of children are still not able to go to school and stay in school. Achieving the MDG of Universal Primary Education is not sufficient - all children need access to quality education at all levels. Primary education is no longer enough to ensure personal prosperity and a balanced education sector is necessary for national growth.

Millions of children in developing countries are leaving school without basic skills because educational quality is insufficient³. Defining and measuring quality is difficult. It requires an enabling environment both in and out of school, including nutritional and health aspects, a relevant curriculum, school leadership, community involvement and accountability. Teachers are key and there are significant shortcomings to overcome in both the quantity and quality of teachers if universal primary education is to be achieved by 2015⁴.

Due to increasing access to education and demographic changes, quality education for all is beyond the budgetary capabilities of many developing countries. Mobilisation of more diversified sources of financing would help to increase relevant national budgets. Gains in efficiency and effectiveness by all development partners are also needed if governments are to be able to reconcile policy aspirations with financial resources. Countries experiencing fragility require specific attention.

The EU has built up a great deal of collective expertise in the sector. Further, the EU aims for coherence in the strategies it uses to support quality education in developing countries. The EU has developed policies and instruments which could allow the use of EU resources, experience and staff in a much more effective way to deliver the best results and effectively support more and better education in developing countries.

Support for basic (primary and lower secondary) education as the foundation for further learning and skills development is important. Supporting basic education means improving quality and developing effective ways to measure and monitor improvement as well as widening access to basic education to deliver MDGs 2 and 3⁵. But this must not be at the expense of adequate policy and resource engagement with other sub-sectors. **Joint working on a whole sector approach** which starts with early childhood development, embraces lifelong learning and strengthens links between education and the world of work should be reinforced.

3 Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2010.
<http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/GMR/pdf/gmr2010embargo/gmr2010-summary.pdf>

4 Projecting the global demand for teachers: Unesco institute for Statistics (2009)
http://www.uis.unesco.org/template/pdf/EducGeneral/Technical_Paper_No3_EN.pdf

5 MDG Goal 2 – Achieve Universal primary education; MDG Goal 3 – promote gender equality and empower women.

Delivering more and better education is complex. **Appropriate links must be made with other sectors** to address elements that impact upon access, quality and inclusion in education. Attention must be paid in particular to links with food security and nutrition to ensure that children entering and attending school are not disadvantaged by malnutrition; with public sector reform to address teacher management and conditions; and with decentralisation bodies to ensure that decentralisation of education management is adequately resourced.

The European Union's considerable experience and influence could **enlarge and expand the range of available financing possibilities**, mobilising a wider and more predictable resource base to ensure quality education for all, including for those living in countries experiencing fragility. First steps to achieve this could include ensuring that all Member States fulfil their aid commitments, encouraging wider use of Budget Support and MDG contracts, requiring mutual accountability to support the expansion of quality education systems; continuing to improve the effectiveness and coverage of the Education For All Fast Track Initiative (FTI), and jointly supporting further exploration of innovative sources of finance for education including the potential of increased partnerships with the private sector.

More systematic use of EU policies on division of labour, complementarity, coherence and delegated support could ensure that EU aid to education is more effective. In countries where assistance is provided through general budget support, joint mechanisms would maintain informed policy dialogue in the education sector. In countries in situations of fragility, the *EU Action Plan for situations of fragility and conflict*⁶ could be used to design more effective support for education.

It should also be ensured that the results of EU contributions to more and better education in developing countries are effectively monitored.

2. CHALLENGES TO MORE AND BETTER EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The last ten years have seen more children in school, more children completing primary education and improved gender parity, but huge challenges still remain in providing quality education for all children.

2.1. The challenge of Access

Primary school enrolment increased across the developing world from 83% in 2000 to 88% in 2006, secondary school enrolment rose from 52% to 58% over the same time period. Gender parity has also significantly improved, with two out of three countries having achieved gender parity at primary level.

⁶ Council Conclusions on An EU Response to Situations of Fragility

Nevertheless, beneath these figures there are huge inequalities both within and across countries⁷. Children out of school tend to be poor, from rural areas and live in the most disadvantaged regions of their country. Many of them are from minority ethnic groups and those with disabilities are disproportionately affected. Half of all children out of school live in countries affected by conflict⁸. These countries have some of the lowest enrolment rates and will be largely responsible for not achieving the MDG globally. Girls make up more than half of the children out of school and their education is also hampered by social norms which assign them domestic and care responsibilities, encourage early marriage and condone gender-based violence.⁹

ACCESS to primary education:

12% (75 million) of the world's primary school-age population are not in school. 55% of them are girls.

Africa has only 19% of all children in this age range, but has almost half of the total out of school children.

In Nigeria, which has 23% of the total of out of school children for Sub Saharan Africa, 48% of girls from the poorest quintile in the poorest state have never attended school (GMR 2009).

Save the Children estimates that in countries affected by conflict some 40 million children have no access to primary education.

One third of the children out of school have a disability and 90% of all disabled children do not go school (International Disability and Development Consortium, 2009)

Many children who have succeeded in completing primary education have encountered significant barriers to access secondary education. In Latin America, Brazil has the highest secondary Gross Enrolment Rate (GER)¹⁰ at 106% but in Guatemala only 51% of students enrol beyond primary education¹¹. Secondary participation rates in Sub-Saharan Africa are much lower: less than one primary school graduate in two enters lower secondary school and less than one in four enters upper secondary school¹². The global secondary attainment rate (percentage of population aged 15 – 24 that has attended secondary school) for developed and developing countries is around 60%¹³. Again the disadvantages of poverty, gender, disability

and geography prevail and projected population growth by 2015, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa (see table in Annex 1) will present even greater challenges.

Whereas the primary school completion gap between rich and poor countries has diminished, the gap in the proportion of the population with secondary education has widened in the past 40 years¹⁴. In countries experiencing fragility these issues are magnified. In these countries,

⁷ For graphic representations of these disparities, see the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010 <http://www.unesco.org/en/efareport/reports/2010-marginalization/>

⁸ Save The Children. Rewrite the Future. <http://www.savethechildren.org/campaigns/rewrite-the-future/challenge.html>

⁹ For a brief summary of the issues involved see: EQUATE TECHNICAL BRIEF: Addressing School-related Gender-based Violence: http://www.globalaidsalliance.org/page/-/PDFs/USAID_SRGBV_Technical_Brief.pdf

¹⁰ GER –Total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education in a given school-year.

¹¹ USAID EQUIP2 (2008) Working paper The Expansion of Secondary Education and the Need for Teachers: How big is the gap? http://www.equip123.net/docs/e2-SecondaryExpansion_WP.pdf

¹² ADEA Biennale 2008 conference report. http://www.adeanet.org/adeaPortal/publications/Biennale%202008/BiennaleSynthesis_2008_final_web.eng.pdf

¹³ EFA Global monitoring report (GMR) 2009. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0017/001776/177609e.pdf>

¹⁴ World Bank 2005, Expanding Opportunities and Building Competencies for Young People: A New Agenda for Secondary Education http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1099079877269/547664-1099079967208/Expanding_Opportunities_Secondary.pdf

children and young adults face significant difficulties to gain entry to primary or secondary school or to other pathways to education appropriate to their age and situation.

But access is about more than just getting children into school. Children need to be able to remain in school and benefit from their time there. Not all children are able to do so. It is estimated that across 12 grades of school (primary, lower secondary and upper secondary), only around 30% of all children in developing countries are able to enrol, attend regularly and achieve learning in school¹⁵. A further 40% are 'silently excluded' – enrolled but not benefiting because school environments and teaching are not gender-sensitive or because they exclude disabled children; because instruction is in a language they don't understand, teaching materials and methods are inappropriate for their age, or because ill-health, malnutrition, violence, distance to school or family circumstances, hinder their attendance and learning. The final 30% enrol and permanently drop out or never enrol at all.

The challenge of access has therefore changed for most countries, from a challenge of access to school, to a challenge of access to *learning* at pre-primary, primary and post primary levels. Countries emerging from conflict or in other situations of fragility continue to face all aspects of the challenge of access.

More needs to be done within the education sector to remove the barriers to learning and to ensure that children are not excluded. Addressing these barriers requires improvements which are outside the responsibility of the education sector. Appropriate links are required with many different institutions such as the social welfare sector, health professionals, water and sanitation and legislators, which have an impact on poverty reduction and the wellbeing of children.

2.2. The challenge of Quality

Whilst recent years have seen many more children able to attend school, learn important life skills and gain pathways out of poverty, there are still millions of children who have not had the same experience. For many of them, primary education has not given them basic literacy, life and numeracy skills and secondary education or skills training have not offered them the possibility of further educational attainment or successful entry into the world of work.

Children and young adults leaving school without basic skills are at an obvious disadvantage: they lose the protection and potential that education and skills could afford them, and their country loses potential for social and economic growth. Girls' education has shown inter-generational effects: educated girls tend to have fewer, healthier children spaced further apart and are more likely to ensure that their own children are educated. A quality education can mitigate the impact of conflict on children and help to prevent conflicts.

¹⁵ GMR 2009, CREATE Policy brief 1, March 2008
http://www.create-rpc.org/pdf_documents/Policy_Brief_Zones.pdf

Research shows a strong correlation between the attainment of basic and high level cognitive skills and increases in economic growth¹⁶. In this situation, good quality primary education as a foundation for further learning is even more important.

Expansion at primary level has left many developing country education systems struggling to cope: they do not have the facilities, the teachers or the resources to provide quality education to everyone across all levels of education. In many countries, post-primary education does not provide its graduates with the cognitive, relevant and contemporary skills that they need for lifelong learning to benefit themselves and their societies.

There is no universally agreed set of descriptors for quality in education. Just as different countries have adopted different paths to economic growth and development, they also have different interpretations of quality education, reflecting their different values. But there are a number of particular factors which are seen as important contributors to quality. These include government capacity to develop and implement policy, an enabling school environment, a relevant curriculum, good teachers using an agreed pedagogy of ideas and practice, school leadership, community engagement and accountability¹⁷. A child's home situation also has a significant impact.

Measures of quality:

Globally 83% of the relevant age group complete basic education (9 years). In Africa, only 62% of children complete grade 6 of primary school.

More than 70% of children in Nicaragua do not achieve minimum learning standards in 3rd and 6th grade.

(Angel-Urdinola, Diego F. F. & Laguna, José Ramón Opportunities for Human Development: Access and Quality of Education in Nicaragua May 2008).

In many developing countries, less than one in ten graduates of lower secondary education is able to pass a low benchmark of basic literacy in maths and science (defined as a score of 400 or more in TIMMS testing (Hanushek and Wossman 2007).

The quality of schooling is found to account for 38-42% of the income difference between the richest and poorest quintiles of countries, as opposed to the 21-24% that accounts only for years of schooling. (Schoellmann, 09)

Measurement of educational quality – in terms of measuring cognitive, creative and emotional skills – is rarely done. What is generally measured is enrolment and attainment¹⁸, although more countries are setting up national assessments through regional assessment programmes such as PASEC¹⁹ (West Africa) or SACMEQ²⁰ (Southern Africa) or joining international assessment programmes such as TIMSS²¹ or PIRLS²² which allow them to judge their progress in certain subject areas against other countries.

¹⁶ See, for example, E. A. Hanushek, Education & Economic Growth, Hoover Institution 2008 http://edpro.stanford.edu/hanushek/admin/pages/files/uploads/hanushek_woessmann%20%2020010%20international%20encyclopedia.pdf and Hanushek & Kimko, 'Schooling, labour force quality, and the growth of nations', American Economic Review 90 (2000). <http://edpro.stanford.edu/hanushek/admin/pages/files/uploads/growth.aer.dec2000.pdf>

¹⁷ Tikly:2008; Alexander:2009; Barret:2009; Lewin 2008; Alexander 2008

¹⁸ The highest grade completed and/or the highest level of education completed

¹⁹ Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Educatifs de la CONFEMEN.

²⁰ Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality

²¹ Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (administered by the International Association for the Evaluation of Education Achievement (IEA) <http://www.iea.nl/>

²² Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (also administered by IEA)

2.2.1. *An enabling environment*

The environment created within the education system itself, and the environment in which the education system is embedded should enable good quality education. The degree of prominence that education enjoys within national plans and policies (Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes or similar national poverty reduction plan), the overall macro-economic environment, government capacity and the governance of the sector all have an effect. To effect good learning outcomes, education systems need to be configured to develop appropriate education policies, to resource and monitor their implementation and to adapt to changing circumstances. The capacity of the Ministry of Education for public financial management as well as for educational planning and monitoring is essential as is an ability to effectively negotiate with the Finance Ministry.

A child's home situation, the level of education of the parents, especially the mother, the family's food security, and the access a child has had in early childhood, to health, care, nutrition and education are all important influences on learning outcomes. Indeed nutrition in the first two years is particularly important in preventing stunting and consequent limitations to cognitive and social development²³. Schools need to be healthy, safe and protective as well as gender responsive and inclusive.

Improved quality in education relies therefore not just on the education system but on progress against all of the MDGs – on poverty, access to school, gender sensitivity, maternal health and absence of disease, access to safe water and sanitation and a healthy, sustainable physical environment.

2.2.2. *A relevant curriculum*

Most developing countries are either undergoing curriculum reform or have done so in the last five years. Many of them have faced particular challenges in resolving dichotomies for curriculum reform such as: tradition versus innovation, global versus local needs, academic versus vocational, catering to the most as well as the least advantaged students, ensuring relevance in the face of extremely heterogeneous local needs, etc. Finding a path through the political and practical issues of language of instruction has proved to be particularly difficult. New curricula produced as a result of debate on these issues include improved teaching and learning methods, more holistic personal development of the child beyond cognitive and academic, and preparation of students for life in a globalised and digitalised society.

2.2.3. *Good teachers*

²³ Mendez Michelle A. and Adair Linda S. *Journal of Nutrition*. 1999;129:1555-1562. Severity and Timing of Stunting in the First Two Years of Life Affect Performance on Cognitive Tests in Late Childhood <http://jn.nutrition.org/cgi/content/abstract/129/8/1555>

Some consider pedagogy to be the most important aspect of quality in education²⁴. The trend has been for the introduction of constructivist, learner-centred practices. Learner-centred pedagogies have proved highly effective in many areas of many countries, but taking these to scale has been challenged by lack of financing, environments of huge class sizes, high stakes testing, authoritarian traditions and lack of incentives for lesson planning and preparation.

The *sine qua non* for quality is the availability of a corps of competent teachers. But shortages of teachers are widespread. Globally, some 10.3 million additional primary teachers will be needed before 2015 if the MDG for education is to be met²⁵. Some

studies estimate that teacher absence due to sickness, travel to collect salaries, the need for a second job, lack of motivation etc is around 20%²⁶ on any one day. Some countries have tried to address shortages of teachers by contracting temporary and / or unqualified teachers or by reducing the time required for pre-service training, but have been unable to put in place a more permanent solution.

In countries without a policy for teacher supply, training and deployment, teacher training intake often bears no relation to need and there may be little clarity with regard to the goals, methods or costs of creating and maintaining an appropriate teaching force and developing clear career paths for teachers.

There is enormous variation in the entry point, length of initial training, the period of practicum and existence, frequency and duration of continuous professional development and support. Recent research in Pakistan concluded that the amount and quality of in-service training and support given to teachers has a greater effect on children's learning outcomes

The Teacher Gap

1.3 million teachers need to be recruited worldwide every year from 2007 to 2015 amounting to a global total of 10.3 million over the eight-year period.

1.1 million teachers are needed before 2015 to maintain current levels in Africa.

A further 1.3 million teachers are required to reach Universal Primary Education in Africa.

By 2015 Tanzania will need the most additional teachers (239,000), followed by the Democratic Republic of the Congo (166,000), Uganda (95,000), Burkina Faso (81,000) and Kenya (80,000).

(UIS 2009, Teachers and Educational Quality – Monitoring Global Needs for 2015)

In some countries less than 20% of teachers in rural areas are female. (GMR 2010 statistical tables)

²⁴ Verspoor, M. Adriaan (ed.) 2005. The Challenge of Learning: Improving the Quality of Basic Education in Sub-Saharan Africa. Paris: ADEA. And Tikly, L.: 2008; Education quality -research priorities and approaches in the global era

²⁵ Unesco Institute of Statistics (UIS) 2009 Based on an “ideal” pupil teacher ratio²⁵ of 40:1 and including factors relating to population growth, increases in school provision and teachers leaving the profession (attrition), the figure does not take into account those teachers who are on the payroll but not present in class for some or all of the school year. http://www.uis.unesco.org/template/pdf/EducGeneral/Technical_Paper_No3_EN.pdf

²⁶ A number of researchers have examined the problem of absence among education and health providers in recent years (Alcázar and Andrade 2001; Banerjee, Deaton, and Duflo 2004; Begum and Sen 1997; Chaudhury and Hammer 2003; Das, Dercon, Habyarimana, and Krishnan 2005; Glewwe, Kremer, and Moulin 1999; King, Orazem, and Paterno 1999; Kingdon and Muzammil 2001; Pandey 2005; Pratiche Education Team 2002; Sen 1997; World Bank 2003; 2004). Chaudhury et al 2005)

than a teacher's academic qualifications prior to entering the profession²⁷. Nonetheless, the importance of a vibrant, accessible third level education system providing opportunities for the training of teachers and of other professionals who can lead developing countries out of poverty, cannot be overestimated".

Qualified and experienced teachers are often to be found in urban areas. Teaching in remote areas is not made very attractive, especially for women. The fact that in some countries less than 20% of the teachers in rural areas are female, has a negative effect on girls' schooling. Incentives for good teachers to teach in remote rural schools range from legislation (Zambia) to a range of monetary or social rewards (Guyana, Mexico, Nigeria, Malawi). Where only a few experienced teachers are available they are often deployed in examination classes, with the result that vital first learning experiences are often characterised by over-crowded classrooms supervised by inexperienced teachers or para-teachers.

Even though there is a significant drift of primary teachers to secondary where the status and rewards are greater, there are also insufficient secondary teachers. In addition to the shortages caused by increased primary graduation, the need for specialisation and a lack of long term planning often result in too many teachers of some subjects and shortages in others.²⁸

Significant numbers of teachers are also leaving the profession²⁹ due to retirement, illness - particularly HIV and AIDS-, family responsibilities, dissatisfaction with the status and working conditions of the profession and better economic opportunities elsewhere. Of the 10.3 million teachers needed to reach Universal Primary Education, 8.1 million will be required to compensate for attrition³⁰.

2.2.4. Good School Management

Increasing numbers of governments have introduced the concept of school-based management (SBM), to decentralise education decision-making to school level and to encourage demand, increase the involvement of parents and the wider community in school and learning, and ensure that schools reflect local priorities and values. By giving a voice and decision-making power to local stakeholders, decentralization can improve educational outcomes, increase user satisfaction, increase accountability and create a stronger constituency for education³¹.

However, decentralisation or devolution does not always result in more power for poor people and their schools. It requires a certain level of local democracy and political accountability to

²⁷ Aslam, M.& Kingdon.G (2008). What can Teachers do to Raise Pupil achievement? <http://recoup.educ.cam.ac.uk/publications/WP19-MAs.pdf>

²⁸ For discussions on this in an African context see Mulkeen.A (2007). Recruiting, retaining, and retraining secondary school teachers and principals in Sub-Saharan Africa / Aidan Mulkeen. [et al.]

²⁹ Various studies give figures of between 4% and 12 %. The 2009 Unesco Institute for Statistics report used 5% for Africa. http://www.uis.unesco.org/template/pdf/EducGeneral/Technical_Paper_No3_EN.pdf

³⁰ Unesco Institute for Statistics 2009. http://www.uis.unesco.org/template/pdf/EducGeneral/Technical_Paper_No3_EN.pdf

³¹ Abolishing School fees in Africa World Bank. Unicef (2009) http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Aboloshing_School_Fees_in_Africa.pdf

avoid elite capture and ensure efficient resource transfer. Capacity-building of local stakeholders is also important to safeguard continuing credibility and enthusiasm. There are now many established programmes to train head teachers and senior school staff in school management, recognising that the skill set required of a good school manager differs from that of a good teacher.

2.2.5. Accountability of governments with regard to education

There has been an increase in national level accountability mechanisms. The existence of Education Parliamentary Committees which monitor budget allocations, disbursements and policy implementation is growing. Many countries have anti-corruption bureaux and there are also increasing numbers of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) set up to monitor the resourcing and management of the education sector and its outcomes. National NGOs which are often networked with community based organisations are increasing the voice of parents and children as well as accountability of schools and the education system.

2.3. THE CHALLENGE OF A *BALANCED* EDUCATION SYSTEM

There are many examples of countries with a stated national vision of what they would like their education system to deliver. Tanzania wants to produce *educated people sufficiently equipped with the requisite knowledge to solve the society's problems, meet the challenges of development and attain competitiveness at regional and global levels.*³² Rwanda wants to *combat ignorance and illiteracy and to provide human resources useful for the socio-economic development of Rwanda through the education system.* Other countries may be less explicit but have included education within their national plans or Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). Whilst basic education seems to be well covered in these documents, this is not always the case with other sub-sectors, especially skills development and technical and vocational training. Until recently it was accepted that with high returns to primary education, primary schooling – even where it was terminal – represented a profitable investment in terms of poverty reduction. There is now evidence that this is changing³² and progression to higher levels may be necessary to enjoy the same rates of return.

The education sector is complex: encompassing as it does early childhood development, formal, non-formal, primary, academic and vocational secondary, and including particular pathways through the system for those not able to follow conventional routes. In many cases the inter-related nature of the entire education sector is not well articulated and the effect that each sub-sector has on the next is not always taken into account. For instance, specific competences such as those in science, technology or the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) may appear in the PRSP as a prerequisite for a country's growth, but then are not integrated into the system at appropriate levels to ensure training and skills development are sufficiently subscribed and effective.

³² Colclough, Kingdon, Patrinos (2009) Returns to Schooling, Ability and Cognitive Skills in Pakistan <http://recoup.educ.cam.ac.uk/publications/WP20-MAs.pdf>

Those countries which have grown fastest have more balanced patterns of investment across different levels of education than those with heavily skewed distributions³³. Despite apparent consensus on the need for a comprehensive and balanced approach to the whole sector, there has been uneven development of the various sub-sectors. Primary education has received much needed attention and external assistance, but some countries complain that post-basic education has not received the levels of support required. Some countries have not resolved the boundaries of state responsibility for post-primary education and others have similar issues with regard to greater participation in early childhood development. The sector wide approach which has dominated donor support to education in developing countries in recent years, has mainly concentrated on basic³⁴ education. Governments however, have real and increasingly pressing decisions to be made with regard to relative weights and allocations across the entire education sector and with increasing numbers of primary graduates and pressure to expand the system to match the demand, these decisions – and the need for accompanying resources – become more acute.

2.4. THE CHALLENGE OF FINANCING

Even though national expenditure on education in developing countries is increasing, financing quality education for all is beyond the budgetary capabilities of many developing countries. Many will continue to require long-term and predictable external assistance so that they can make the necessary investments in infrastructure and human resources. Although partner governments have made efforts to protect education budgets many have grave concerns regarding their ability to sustain educational expansion and maintain quality³⁵. Valuable contributions can be made through instruments like the EU's Vulnerability-Flex³⁶ instrument. Decreases or stagnation of domestic education budgets in developing countries as well as uncertainties of official development assistance (ODA) present real threats to the progress made so far against Education for All and MDG targets.

Financing:

It is estimated that at least \$US 16 billion of additional aid is required annually to finance UPE, early childhood programmes and literacy in low income countries. Much more is required if all EFA goals are to be met. (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010)

Since 2003/4 aid to education has been stagnating. Aid to *basic* education dropped by 22% or \$1.2bn in 2007. (UNESCO, 2009)

In Sub Saharan Africa budgets for teachers' salaries will have to grow by 50% relative to 2007 levels if we are to achieve UPE. (UIS, 2009)

In 1996 The Delors report – Learning the Treasure Within, set a benchmark of 6 % of GDP for spending on education.

³³ World Bank (2005) Expanding Opportunities and Building Competencies for Young People: A New Agenda for Secondary Education. World Bank, Washington 2005
http://extop-workflow.worldbank.org/extop/ecommerce/catalog/product-detail?product_id=4720973&.

³⁴ Generally understood to be 9 years of primary and lower secondary education

³⁵ Report for Unesco General Assembly 2009

³⁶ This is a mechanism of €500 million under the 10th European Development Fund which aims to support measures to mitigate the social consequences of the crisis and to maintain expenditure in social sectors.

Before the financial and economic crisis, the share of national income devoted to education ranged from less than 2% of GNP (Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea) to nearly 11% (Lesotho, St Kitts & Nevis) with a median for sub-Saharan Africa of 4.4 %. For countries with a large subsistence sector and a small modern sector and where tax to GDP ratios are less than 20% (2008 median for sub-Saharan Africa), 'affordable' levels for the total education budget are only 2.8% - 3% of GDP³⁷, of which only 1.75% – 2% could be allocated to basic education. Reaching higher levels therefore requires substantial external input. Furthermore, this affordable level reflects only what countries are able to spend, not what is required to provide a quality education to all children. Current estimates put the overall gap in finances between that which is needed to reach international basic education goals (EFA and MDG goals) and what is available, at around \$16bn per annum³⁸.

Allocations within the education sector are just as important as the overall financing envelope. Intra-sectoral allocations are influenced by enrolment: countries with low levels of post-primary enrolment have higher proportions of their overall budget allocated to primary (typically around 50%). Spending on teachers dominates with more than 75% of the recurrent budget allocated to teacher remuneration common in less developed countries. In some countries, less than 5% of the recurrent budget is left for essentials such as textbooks. Yet UNESCO's Institute of Statistics (UIS) estimates that by 2015, budgets for teachers' salaries in sub-Saharan Africa will have to grow by 50% relative to 2007 levels if we are to have sufficient teachers to achieve Universal Primary Education.

The provision of quality basic and post-basic education is severely constrained in the context of present levels of resources devoted to education. Add to this the fact that the economic effects of the financial crisis of 2008 are now beginning to translate into lower education budgets, lower levels of aid and less ability on the part of poor people to subsidise education, and it quickly becomes obvious that many developing countries will not have the economic capacity to guarantee or to sustain access to quality basic and post-basic education for all for some decades to come. In addition, the high transaction cost of dealing with several different donors can drain government capacity and inhibit ability to secure and use external finance effectively. Greater efficiency and effectiveness is required, by both national governments and international partners, to finance increases in access and quality. Mobilising more diversified sources of financing and making changes in intra-sectoral budgetary allocation would enable governments to better reconcile policy aspirations with financial resources and deliver quality education to all of their citizens.

External funding sources for education in developing countries have diversified in recent years. A number of new and emerging non-DAC³⁹ donors, an increase in the number and magnitude of private foundations and NGOs, the advent of the EFA Fast Track Initiative

³⁷ Foster. M (2008) Achieving Quality Primary Education for All by 2015

³⁸ GMR, 2010

³⁹ The Development Assistance Committee (DAC), www.oecd.org/dac is the principal body through which the OECD deals with issues related to co-operation with developing countries. Not all donors are members.

(FTI) and the development and use of new financial instruments, have all had an impact on the architecture of aid to the education sector. It is difficult to quantify the aid from non-DAC donors but estimates, which put the overall volume of disbursements for all sectors at equal to around 8.5% of DAC ODA flows, signal a growing importance.

In 2002, the FTI was launched as a compact between donors and partner countries to 'ensure that all countries with a serious commitment to achieving UPE⁴⁰ can receive support to realise their aims'. The FTI is an example of a platform for aid effectiveness in education, a framework to align support to national education sector plans, and to help mobilise funding for these plans. The EU (Members States and the Commission), a driving force behind the Initiative both politically and financially since its inception, has a critical role to play in the strategic development of the Initiative. Following an independent evaluation, governance adjustments and replenishment of the resources available, the FTI needs to fulfil its potential for much greater impact. This will entail not only assisting well-performing countries with a credible sector plan but also addressing the education needs in countries experiencing fragility.

The EFA Fast Track Initiative

40 countries endorsed to date: Albania, Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), Djibouti, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Moldova, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, Timor Leste, Vietnam, Yemen, and Zambia.

Financing to support FTI endorsed national sector plans is channelled through bilateral cooperation complemented by a global level trust fund, the FTI Catalytic Fund. The latter is supported by eighteen donors, thirteen of them EU Member States. Total pledges to the Catalytic Fund (2003-2013) as of Oct 5, 2009: US\$ 1.6 billion, 90 % of this from the EU (Member States and the Commission).

There has also been a growth in non-traditional forms of external aid financing, such as those pioneered by the Leading Group on Innovative Financing for Development. Founded in 2006, the Leading Group has had a number of notable successes such as the Innovative Financing Mechanism for Immunisation and the Advanced Market Commitment for pneumococcal vaccines which together have raised more than \$2bn. Currency transaction taxes, air ticket levies and other mandatory, market-led, public guaranteed or voluntary contributions are being considered, but to date most of these have concentrated on assisting the health sector. The education sector has only recently been included with consideration of possibilities for harnessing the now significant, levels of remittances to generate more funding.

Private participation in the financing of education infrastructure, service provision, assessment services, teacher training and management services is increasing. As well as the long-established involvement of faith-based organisations in education provision, there is also increasing contracting out of other aspects such as school management, school construction and maintenance, school meals, teacher training, textbook provision and design etc to the private and / or non-profit sector. Subject to adequate legislation, management and regulation

⁴⁰ UPE = Universal Primary Education

the private sector can be an effective way of extending service provision, improve the quality of education and if properly targeted, to address equity issues.

But whilst the numbers and variation of sources of external aid have multiplied, overall cash transfers to developing countries have not significantly increased⁴¹. Total aid to basic education remained fairly static between 2004 and 2006 but reduced by 22%, or around \$1.2bn in 2007. Aid to education is unevenly distributed. Out of 147 countries receiving aid for education, 50 are classified as least developed. From 2000 to 2005 their share of total aid rose from 33% to almost 36%. Countries experiencing fragility received only 14% of all education aid, reflecting what the Education for All Global Monitoring Report calls 'very limited commitment to needs-based aid financing'.

Addressing these four challenges – of access, quality, balance and financing is imperative if we are to deliver the Education MDGs and the wider EFA goals and assure poor people the opportunity given by education to overcome poverty, lead healthy and productive lives and contribute to global stability and prosperity.

3. THE EU AND EDUCATION

3.1. EU Aid to Education

The Commission and EU Member States are major supporters of education in at least 140 developing countries: The EU collectively accounted for 57.7% of total (DAC) aid commitments to education in 2007. However, if all EU Member States were to fulfil their Monterrey commitments and achieve their EU target of 0.56% of EU GNI in 2010, then instead of the current total of €4.8 billion (US\$ 6.961 bn), the EU could collectively contribute some €8.3 billion (US\$ 12.028 bn) – thereby filling more than half of the projected US\$16 bn annual financing gap calculated by the Global Monitoring Report.⁴²

There is a high degree of coherence across the policies of many EU Member States with overall priority on increasing access at all levels and for all children; the requirement for improvements across a number of areas to increase quality; that teachers are key; and that inclusion in education is essential for poverty reduction, prosperity and growth. More recently there has also been more widespread emphasis on the importance of lifelong learning and strengthening links between school and the world of work.

Despite consensus on the need for a comprehensive and balanced approach to the whole sector, the latest report from the Education For All Global Monitoring Report (GMR) shows that in 2007, only 14.8% of total EU direct aid to education was allocated to basic education and 10% to secondary. Less than 25% of EU direct aid to education goes to basic and secondary education and for some EU Member States 80% of their direct aid to education is

⁴¹ Severino, Jean-Michel and Ray, Olivier The End of ODA: Death and Rebirth of a Global Public Policy. CGD Working Paper 2009 <http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/1421419/>

⁴² 0.56% of 2009 EU GNI – €68874.6 billion; Total EU aid to education (2007) = 12% overall EU aid.

for tertiary education. Basic education accounted for 27.4% of the total aid to education when aid given through budget support was factored in.

The last five years have been characterised by some systematic adjustment on the part of many Member States and the European Commission. Budgetary constraints, political considerations and a desire to be more strategic and effective with their aid, have prompted some Member States and the Commission to make changes to the numbers of countries in which they support education, as well as the magnitude and modalities of that support. For some this has resulted in more countries being supported but little or no change in their overall levels of support. Others have reduced the number of countries at the same time as increasing their overall education financing.

EU Member States have highlighted the particular situation of sub-Saharan Africa⁴³ and countries experiencing fragility⁴⁴, and emphasised their need for more coordinated support to education through both country level financing mechanisms and the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (FTI). However, the picture is still one of imbalance with education sectors in low income countries, especially those experiencing fragility, continuing to be relatively under-supported. The sector has difficulty in securing support during conflict and often requires significant levels of sustained assistance once conflict is over to re-establish a viable education system and deal with the special circumstances of children who may have missed many years of schooling. The FTI is finalising an assistance modality based on their progressive framework⁴⁵ to assist countries affected by fragility which are not in a position to develop a full, endorsable sector plan.

EU Member States and the Commission use a wide range of modalities and instruments to support education, ranging from general budget support through sector support and pooled funds to project and technical support. The Commission, DK, FR, IE, NL, SW and the UK all give substantial support to the sector through Budget Support – either general or sectoral - and the European Commission also introduced its MDG Contract in 7 countries during 2009⁴⁶. For most of the other EU Member States, project aid predominates. In addition, 13 EU Member States and the Commission also support the EFA Fast Track Initiative's trust funds.

3.2. Aid Effectiveness and EU aid to Education

Experience with the FTI whereby donors have coordinated their efforts to assist partner countries to develop feasible sector plans that can attract additional funding, has shown that

⁴³ EU Agenda for Action on MDGs <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/08/st11/st11096.en08.pdf> and - The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership - A Joint Africa-EU Strategy http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/EAS2007_joint_strategy_en.pdf

⁴⁴ Council Conclusions on An EU Response to Situations of Fragility <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/07/st15/st15118.en07.pdf>

⁴⁵ See http://www.educationfasttrack.org/media/library/FS_progressiveframeworkmay07.pdf

⁴⁶ The MDG Contract is aimed at ensuring greater predictability without undermining the focus on results or the desire to have a graduated response to performance. It exchanges greater predictability in return for greater commitment to and focus on MDG-related results by the beneficiary country.

the education sector is amenable to the practical application of many aspects of the Paris and Accra agendas. There is now a wealth of experience amongst EU Member States and their partners of working in coordination towards agreed results and in working to more closely align to country systems. In 2008⁴⁷ at Accra, the EU agreed on four key areas where the Union could really make a difference: Division of labour, Use of country systems, Predictability of aid, and Mutual accountability for results, including less conditionality. Although these areas were not sector-specific, it is worthwhile to look at progress which has been made within the sector as it illustrates future opportunities and challenges.

3.3. Division of labour

The *EU Code of Conduct on division of labour in development policy* (2007) outlines a set of measures to address the increasing problems of fragmentation of aid and proliferation of missions, the unnecessary administrative costs, the overlaps and duplications, as well as the differences in donor requirements, rules and conditionalities. The measures encourage the concentration on a limited number of countries and focal sectors; working in partnership with national governments to focus on Member States' comparative advantages and ensuring an adequate EU presence in strategic sectors, priority and orphan countries.

Joint donor assessment and analytical work is growing and there are many examples of EU Member States and the Commission coordinating through the Local Education Group, or the Local Donor Group in Education⁴⁸. There have been a number of Division of Labour exercises (e.g.: Cambodia, Zambia and Tanzania) where EU Member States and partner countries jointly mapped activity and engagement in various sectors. In some of these countries this process has resulted in agreements to rationalise EU engagement in the education sector, with EU Member States representing each other in policy dialogue, but only a few cases are formalised through Memorandums of Understanding.

There is a definite appreciation of the need to reduce fragmentation and high transaction costs for partner governments through greater concentration and division of labour. Whilst these exercises have been generally regarded as positive, reports from participating Member States' education sector experts⁴⁹ highlight some of the potential difficulties which need to be overcome:

- In many cases when a Member State withdraws from the education sector, financing is also removed from the sector (Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique)
- Division of Labour at country level has sometimes engendered a choice for Member States on which social sector to continue to support (One member state reports that in most cases health is favoured over education)

⁴⁷ Accra Agenda for Action – Guidelines for EU participation
<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/08/st12/st12080.en08.pdf>

⁴⁸ E.g. Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Benin, Niger, Jordan, Nicaragua

⁴⁹ Stakeholder Meeting – Education Experts October 2009

- With the withdrawal of key donors from the sector, sector specific expertise is often also reduced, which can compromise the ability of the donor group to carry on effective sector dialogue (Zambia).
- Division of Labour amongst the EU Member States sometimes leaves the local donor group unbalanced with high representation from those donors which are not so able to conform to Accra principles.
- In many countries, EU Member States' representatives working in the sector appreciate that Division of Labour could greatly improve overall EU effectiveness in education but they lack sufficient direction from their headquarters to advance on the issue.
- Some EU Member States require better knowledge regarding potential partners for delegated cooperation, to increase their use of these arrangements.

In some countries division of labour operates informally *within* the education sector: where one Member State has traditionally been more active in perhaps, secondary education or vocational education and training than others that have concentrated more on basic education.

EU financial rules were updated in 2007 to allow co-financing by EU Member States and the Commission through various delegated cooperation or transfer arrangements covering specific sectors. Some partner countries have embraced these new possibilities and there are now arrangements for delegated cooperation either from or to the Commission in the social sectors, in a number of countries including Mozambique (MDGs), and Nepal (education). There are also examples of Delegated Cooperation between EU Member States within the education sector⁵⁰. However, a 2007 survey by the Commission found that in at least ten countries, 10 or more EU Member States were still active in the sector. Although there are no formal agreements or policies regarding division of labour amongst non-EU donors, there is also potential for this with like-minded donors, UN agencies and the World Bank.

3.4. Use of country systems

There has been an increased use of programme based aid – sector budget support, pooled funding or general budget support on the part of EU Member States, as more and more countries develop sector or sub-sector plans. However, both the 2008 FTI survey⁵¹ and the Monterrey monitoring report have found that even where Public Finance Management systems improved, donors were not progressing towards greater use of country systems. There is a continued concern regarding fungibility of aid, corruption and inefficient government procurement systems. Increased emphasis on results and outcomes of education, rather than inputs, as well as increased work on Public Finance Management and monitoring of results are seen as addressing these issues, but are not always universally welcomed by partner countries.

⁵⁰ E.g. UK and France have delegated cooperation arrangements in Niger; whilst the Netherlands has similar arrangements with Germany in Pakistan;

⁵¹ 2008 Survey on Monitoring the Paris Declaration Indicators in Selected FTI Countries. Making Aid More Effective by 2010. FTI.

Whilst there is a general agreement in line with the Accra Agenda for Action, that greater use of budget support can increase country ownership and reduce transaction costs, there are concerns amongst some education specialists, that increases in General Budget Support have been at the expense of direct support to the sector. In some cases the way in which General Budget Support is managed has reduced the opportunities for quality policy dialogue within the sector and some of the education expertise available at country level is being eroded as a result. There is a continuing need for EU Member States, the Commission and other development partners to ensure that Budget Support arrangements are fully backed by policy dialogue and efficient education sector monitoring to ensure that they translate into more and better education service delivery and outcomes. Experience in Mozambique suggests that where this is the case, budget support can be very successful in leveraging positive education policy reforms.

3.5. Predictability of aid

A survey of partner governments found that predictability of aid and depth of commitment were key factors determining their perceptions of the effectiveness of donors⁵². Predictable aid was described as aid delivered on time, which honours commitments made and which is over a time period that is commensurate with the intended result.

Some Member States have extended the length of their agreements in respect to financing for the education sector up to as much as 10 years⁵³. Not all Member States are able to make such long-term commitments but many have made undertakings to provide more long term, predictable funding to partner countries in the future. The Commission has introduced its MDG-Contract which potentially guarantees funds for 6 years or more. The attractiveness of MDG-Contracts would be further enhanced by providing rolling commitments, such that partner countries always have a more predictable longer term horizon within which to plan and the opportunity to harmonise support with PRSP cycles.

The strategically reformed FTI could play an important role in encouraging greater predictability in education financing. The FTI Catalytic Fund, which can currently make allocations for up to three years, is looking into ways to increase the predictability of its support. The timing of disbursement is also continuously being improved to better align with need.

3.6. Mutual accountability for results, including less conditionality

There is an increasing emphasis on wider stakeholder involvement in education sector plans and budgeting. There is also general acknowledgement of the importance of more civil society involvement in monitoring results, especially in countries where support to the education sector relies on General Budget Support. The need for capacity building of national

⁵² Overseas Development Institute (ODI), August 2009 Overseas Development Institute Briefing Paper 55 (2009) -Aid Effectiveness through the Recipient lens. <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/2746.pdf>

⁵³ E.g. UK and NL

civil society organisations and the degree of freedom afforded to them by national policies remain important issues to be addressed.

Mutual accountability for results entails trust as well as dialogue on the results and outcomes required, and the contributions from various partners to those results. Monitoring results and contributions requires good data. EU Member States have supported the generation of data at country level through Education Management Information Systems and through support for the work of the UNESCO Institute of Statistics and many are ensuring that more of their support to the sector is on budget.

The education sector has gained a reputation for good practice in applying aid-effectiveness principles but these do not go far enough. There is still a great deal of fragmentation of aid to education, duplication in effort or conflicting approaches to the same issue and high transaction costs for partner governments. Although difficulties have been identified in extending positive experiences into more countries, these are not seen as insurmountable.

4. A EUROPEAN APPROACH

The 'Accra Agenda for Action' gives a global framework for progress and EU Member States and the Commission have collectively built up a great deal of expertise in aspects of aid effectiveness. But drawing more systematically on European policies and instruments already in existence could allow us to use our resources, our experience and our staff, together with our non-EU partners, in a much more effective way to support more and better education in developing countries. The large gaps that exist in funding to education and the estimated extra costs to the sector of donor fragmentation⁵⁴ together speak eloquently of the need to do so.

To inform the debate at the UN MDG Review meeting in September, further discussion around the European Approach to More and Better Education may be necessary. Among the existing policy areas and initiatives which could usefully be examined, within the already existing instruments of the EU budget, would be:

- **Support to basic education as the foundation** for further learning and skills development, ensuring that there is adequate policy and resource engagement with other sub-sectors.
 - *Improve quality and develop ways to measure and monitor improvements*, as well as widen access to basic education to assist partners **in delivering MDGs 2 and 3**.
 - *Explore possibilities to increase and improve the global teacher stock*
 - Engage broadly with the debate around *appropriate provision of education after completion of basic education*.
- **Reinforcing joint work on a whole sector approach** which starts with early childhood development, embraces lifelong learning and strengthens links between education and the world of work, taking into account demographic changes.

⁵⁴ Carlsson, Schubert and Robinson (2009) estimated the cost of fragmentation across all sectors as between USD 2.8 and 5.9 billion.

- **Making appropriate links with other sectors** to address the elements that impact upon access, quality and inclusion in education, in particular:
 - with *food security and nutrition* to ensure that children entering and attending school are not disadvantaged by malnutrition;
 - with the provision of *safe water and sanitation*, to ensure that girls in particular are not prevented from attending school because of the lack of appropriate facilities, and to include hygiene education in the curriculum;
 - with *public sector reform* to address teacher management and conditions; and
 - with *decentralisation bodies* to ensure that decentralisation of education management is adequately resourced.
- **Enlarging and expanding the range of available financing possibilities** to mobilise a wider and more predictable resource base to ensure quality education for all, including those living in countries experiencing fragility, in particular:
 - Ensure all *EU Member States fulfil their Monterrey and EU commitments*;
 - Encourage *wider use of Budget Support and MDG contracts* requiring mutual accountability to support the expansion of quality education systems;
 - Continue to *improve the effectiveness and coverage of the EFA Fast Track Initiative*; and
 - Jointly support further *exploration of innovative sources of finance for education* through the Leading Group and explore the potential of increased partnerships with private sector.
- **Ensuring that our aid is more effective and cut transaction costs**
 - *Increase division of labour and complementarity* within the education sector through formalised delegated EU education sector support in countries where the EU is over-represented
 - Use the framework of the EU Response to situations of fragility⁵⁵ to *design more effective support to education in situations of fragility*.
 - Strengthen development of joint mechanisms to *maintain informed policy dialogue in the education sector in countries where we work through general budget support*
 - Strengthen development of co-ordinated complementary and cost-effective *capacity development mechanisms*.

Monitoring of European progress in contributing to delivery of more and better education through use of improved instruments such as the EU donor atlas.

⁵⁵ Council Conclusions on An EU Response to Situations of Fragility
<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/07/st15/st15118.en07.pdf>