

An international strategy to operationalize the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All (EFA)

Executive Summary

The vision

In the *World Declaration on Education for All*, adopted in 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand, the world community adopted an expanded vision of what basic education means, calling for a learning environment in which everyone would have the chance to acquire the basic elements which serve as a foundation for further learning and enable full participation in society. This vision implied both access to education for everybody, and meeting the diverse learning needs of children, youth and adults. It focused on learning societies, and saw broader and deeper partnerships at every level as the way forward.

So why an '*International Strategy*'?

If EFA is about partnership, governments, civil society, NGOs and international organisations need to know how best to support each other in pursuing EFA strategies. The *International Strategy* presents five major actions which are essential in the common thrust towards EFA, and lists ways in which the international community should support the implementation of national EFA plans.

How will the *International Strategy* be used?

Governments, bilateral and multilateral agencies, NGOs and civil society networks will use it as a reference guide to the essential elements of EFA and to the kinds of mutual support that they can expect.

The Dakar *Framework for Action*

In Dakar in 2000, the World Education Forum re-affirmed this vision, and adopted a *Framework for Action* that emphasized the need for quality in basic education as well as access to it. Focus was placed squarely at the national level and on the responsibility of national governments towards education. The Dakar *Framework* clearly states the commitment to create the right conditions for EFA in each country, recognizing that some countries will need help in doing so, and recognizing, too, the responsibility of those with the means to make such help available. In a globalized world, it is not only unacceptable, it is dangerous to allow a situation of educational 'haves' and 'have-nots' to persist.

Where did the *International Strategy* come from?

The *International Strategy* was specifically requested by the EFA High Level Group in October 2001, with the aim of clarifying:

- the major actions to be taken within specified time-lines;
- the roles and responsibilities of partners;
- the linkages among activities, including a clear description of how flagships are to be integrated into country-level activities; and
- a consensus on the global initiative.

What is the *Strategy*?

The *International Strategy*:

- complements the Dakar *Framework for Action*
- maps key EFA processes and mechanisms
- focuses on support to the national level
- specifies roles and responsibilities
- is a living document
- reflects and fosters collective ownership

The *International Strategy* is not:

- a repetition of the Dakar *Framework for Action*
- a blueprint for what countries should do
- merely a list of 'should's' 'ought's' or 'must's'
- a particular agency's view of EFA
- a once-and-for-all statement

Outline of the *Strategy*

- Part I spells out what the *Strategy* is and what it is not and proposes a way of making it a living – and therefore relevant and useful – document.
- Part II presents five major actions which are essential to achieving the Dakar goals and which will be the content of partnerships at national, regional and international levels.
- Part III addresses the implementation of the twelve Dakar strategies, enumerating the links between the national and international levels.
- Part IV discusses the time-line associated with achieving the Dakar goals.

The appendices trace the broader context and background of EFA and add some detail to complement the main text; they also present a summary mapping of donor interventions by theme and by location.

Major actions

The key principle in the international co-ordination of EFA is partnership. All the recommendations and approaches of the *International Strategy* must be viewed through this lens. Partnerships between the national and international actors, and among the international community focus on five major actions:

- planning for EFA: plans developed in EFA forums at national level which are inclusive — with civil society participating; plans in context of poverty reduction and of the entire educational sector.
- advocacy and communication: pro-active advocacy strategies at national and international levels, using the web, media, dissemination of materials, global EFA week, awareness-raising at international events.
- financing EFA: international co-operation in a financing framework, first to tackle primary education, then all six Dakar goals; World Bank Action Plan to close four gaps: data, policies, capacity, finance, including a 'fast-tracking' initiative.
- monitoring and evaluation: reinforce national monitoring; work to improve/extend indicators; produce authoritative annual *EFA Monitoring Report*.
- international and regional mechanisms: focus the work of the EFA Working Group and High Level Group at international level; utilize 'flagship programmes' to focus energy on

overcoming special obstacles to EFA; strengthen inclusive national EFA forums as places of policy formulation.

Implementing the twelve Dakar strategies

The *International Strategy* presents actions to implement each of the twelve strategies of the *Dakar Framework for Action*, emphasising for each one two aspects:

- i) international action to support national implementation, and
- ii) action to enhance coherence and co-operation among international partners.

Targets and timelines

Date	Target/Event
June 2002	EFA Financing Framework to be in place
Sept 2002	Financing for 'fast-track' initiative in place
Dec 2002	EFA plans in place at national level, as part of education sector plan, PRSP, or other
Jan 2003	Start of UN Literacy Decade
2005	eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education
2005	Regional EFA evaluation conferences
2010	International EFA evaluation conference
2015	ensuring that 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
2015	achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults
2015	achieving gender equality in education, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
2015	International EFA assessment

The full text of the *International Strategy* is available at:

http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/global_co/global_initiative/strategy_2002.pdf
with Appendix 6 (Mapping of donor assistance by thematic areas and country) at
http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/global_co/global_initiative/apendix.pdf