Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Regional Thematic Consultation
Western European and North American States
(Group I countries)
UNESCO, Paris, France
5-6 December 2013
Meeting Brochure
Background and Rationale

As we approach two important milestones in 2015 – the target date for achieving the EFA goals and the MDGs, debates on the post-2015 development agenda are accelerating.

Numerous consultations on the post-2015 development agenda as well as on the vision, shape, scope and position of the post-2015 education agenda were undertaken at global and regional levels within and outside of the UN system.

As part of the ‘Global Conversation’ initiated by the UNDG, UNESCO and UNICEF have been co-leading the Global Thematic Consultation on Education in the post-2015 Development Agenda through online discussions, a series of regional meetings held in the African, Arab, Asia and Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean regions, consultative meetings with NGOs and the private sector, and a global meeting held in Dakar in March 2013.

In this view, a regional thematic consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda is being held for Western European and North American States (UNESCO Group I Countries ¹) on 5 to 6 December 2013 at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, co-hosted by UNESCO and UNICEF and supported by several development partners, including France, Germany and Canada.

The meeting will discuss challenges and requirements of education for the future among Group I countries; debate on how these could be reflected in the post-2015 education agenda based on future policy priorities from a regional perspective and reflect on their implications for the post-2015 education agenda from an aid perspective.

The objectives of the consultation are to:

- Exchange information on major challenges and achievements in education, notably in relation to the education-related MDGs and EFA;
- Identify key education priorities to be included in the post-2015 education agenda from a regional perspective;
- Discuss how to best articulate and position education as a critical part of the overall development agenda post 2015; and
- Discuss the modalities of the follow-up and monitoring of post-2015 education agenda at national, regional and global level from the perspective of Western European and North American countries.
- Discuss the role of Group I countries as donors in the post-2015 education agenda. How can aid become more strategic and effective and what new partnerships can be built to support countries lagging behind?

¹ Group I countries include: Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.
Expected Outcomes

- Information made available on good practices in education policies and practices in Group I countries
- National and regional priorities for future orientations for education identified as well as key areas to be included in the post-2015 education agenda
- Recommendations made on possible modalities of the follow-up of a post 2015 education agenda as regards
  - Policies and practices at national and regional levels
  - The role of Group I countries as donors
  - Monitoring
  - Aid

Format and participation

This regional thematic consultation meeting will be held from 5 to 6 December 2013 and bring together high-level technical experts from education ministries and bi-lateral development agencies supporting global education development of UNESCO Member States from Group I countries (Western European and North American States), the EFA convening agencies, the Global Partnership for Education, United Nations and regional organizations, the teaching profession, academia, civil society organizations (CSOs), youth, research institutes and private foundations.
## Draft Agenda

**DAY 1 – 5 December 2013**  
**Venue: UNESCO, Paris, Fontenoy Building, Room X**

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<td>8.30- 9.00</td>
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| 9.00 – 9.30| **Welcome and Opening Remarks**  
*Qian Tang*, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO  
*Marilena Viviani*, Associate Director of Programme Partnerships, UNICEF |
| 9.30 – 9.45| **Introduction to the meeting and presentation of the agenda**  
*Olav Seim*, Director, EFA Global Partnerships Team, UNESCO |
| 9.45 – 10.15| **Coffee break**                                                          |

### Session I: Presentations of outcomes of previous consultations on education post-2015 and roadmap of future consultations

**Expected Outcome:** Participants informed on the outcomes of previous consultations on the post-2015 education agenda.

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<th>Time</th>
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| 10.15 – 11.15| **Chair: Olav Seim**, Director, EFA Global Partnerships Team, UNESCO  
Global Thematic Consultation on Education in the post 2015 development agenda; HLP report, SG report; ongoing SDG consultations  
*Jordan Naidoo*, Senior Education Advisor, UNICEF  
Overview of the Commonwealth Ministerial Group’s recommendations on and contributions to the post-2015 development goals  
*Alex Wright*, Member, Commonwealth Working Group  
Overview of the recommendations on and contributions to the post-2015 development goals of the International Organization of la Francophonie (OIF) and CONFEMEN  
"Conférence des ministres de l'éducation des Etats et gouvernements de la Francophonie"  
*Barbara Murtin*, Director of Education and Youth a.i., OIF  
Overview of the discussion on the post-2015 education agenda of the 37th Session of the General Conference of UNESCO  
*Margarete Sachs-Israël*, EFA Global Partnerships Team, UNESCO  
Questions and Answers |
**Session II:** Discussion and development of recommendations on thematic priority areas for education for the future

**Expected Outcomes:** Thematic priority areas for future education policy and programmes in Western European and North American countries identified.

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<tr>
<td>11.15 – 11.45</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to Theme 1: Equity in Education</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Chair:</strong> Prof Phyllis Magrab, Georgetown University, UNESCO Chair for EFA&lt;br&gt;<strong>Panelists:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Jean Toussaint, Deputy Director-General, ATD Fourth World&lt;br&gt;• Pauline Rose, Director Global Monitoring Report (GMR), UNESCO&lt;br&gt;• Prof Elaine Unterhalter, University of London (TBC)</td>
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<td>11.45 – 12.30</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to Theme 2: Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Chair:</strong> Jean-Michel Valantin, High Commissioner for Sustainable Development, Ministry of Education, France&lt;br&gt;<strong>Panelists:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Education for Sustainable Development (ESD):&lt;br&gt;• Walter Hirche, President, German National Commission to UNESCO&lt;br&gt;• Jean-Michel Valantin, High Commissioner for Sustainable Development, Ministry of Education, France&lt;br&gt;Global Citizenship:&lt;br&gt;• Scott Pulizzi, Team Leader, Section of HIV and Health Education, UNESCO</td>
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<td>12.30 – 14.00</td>
<td><strong>Lunch break</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Side event:</strong> Information session on National EFA reviews. (Salle Ségur, 7th floor Fontenoy building)</td>
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<td>14.00 – 15.15</td>
<td><strong>3 parallel Break-Out Sessions on Equity, ESD and Global Citizenship</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Moderator of the Session on Equity:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Prof Elaine Unterhalter, University of London (Room X)&lt;br&gt;<strong>Moderator of the Session on ESD:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Prof Charles Hopkins, York University (Room IX)&lt;br&gt;<strong>Moderator of the Session on Global Citizenship:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Sobhi Tawil, Chief, Education and Foresight Section, UNESCO (Room VIII)</td>
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<td>15.15 – 15.45</td>
<td><strong>Coffee break</strong></td>
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<td>15.45 – 16.15</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to Theme 3: Quality of Education and Learning Outcomes</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Chair:</strong> Prof Mark Bray, The University of Hong Kong, UNESCO Chair for Comparative Education&lt;br&gt;<strong>Panelists:</strong>&lt;br&gt;• David Edwards, Deputy General Secretary, Education International (EI)&lt;br&gt;• Michael Davidson, Head of the Early Childhood and Schools Division, OECD&lt;br&gt;• Prof Aaron Benavot, University at Albany-SUNY</td>
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### Introduction to Theme 4: Skills and Competencies for Life and Work in a Lifelong Learning Perspective

**Chair:** Ms Monique Fouilloux, President of the Board, Global Campaign for Education (GCE)

**Panelists:**
- Prof. Walter Van Trier, Ghent University
- Alison Crabb, Deputy Head of Unit, Vocational Training and Adult Learning, European Commission
- Arne Carlsen, Director of UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning (UIL)


**Moderator of the Session on Quality:** Prof Valle, Vice-Dean, University of Madrid

**Moderator of the Session on Adult Literacy, Skills and Life-Long Learning:**
- Uwe Gartenschlaeger, Deputy Director, dvv International

**Moderator of the Session on Skills and Competencies for Work:**
- Borhene Chakroun, Chief, TVET Section, UNESCO

### 19.00 – 21.00

**Reception (Venue: Cafeteria, 7th Floor)**
# DAY 2 – 6 December 2013

**Venue:** UNESCO Fontenoy, Room X

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<td>Report to Plenary and Discussion</td>
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<td><strong>Session III:</strong> Discussion and Development of Recommendations for education in the post 2015 agenda in the context of Group I countries</td>
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<td>10.30 - 10.40</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to Theme 5:</strong> Priority areas to be included in the post-2015 education agenda based on future policy priorities from a regional perspective</td>
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<td><em>Prof Aaron Benavot,</em> University at Albany-SUNY</td>
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<td>10.40 – 10.50</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to Theme 6:</strong> Implications of the post-2015 education agenda from an aid Perspective</td>
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<td><em>Pauline Rose,</em> Director, GMR</td>
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<td>10.50 – 11.15</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
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<td>11.15 – 12.15</td>
<td>2 Parallel Break-out sessions on Theme 5 and Theme 6</td>
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<td>Moderator of <strong>Theme 5:</strong> <em>Prof Aaron Benavot,</em> University at Albany-SUNY (TBC) (Room X)</td>
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<td><strong>Expected Outcomes:</strong> Agreement on priority areas to be included in the post-2015 education agenda.</td>
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<td>Moderator of <strong>Theme 6:</strong> <em>Marja Karjalainen,</em> Deputy Head of Education, European Commission (Room XIII)</td>
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<td><strong>Expected Outcome:</strong> Implications of an expanded 2015 education agenda regarding the level and effectiveness of development aid identified.</td>
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<td>12.15 – 13.00</td>
<td>Report to Plenary and Discussion</td>
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<td><strong>Session IV:</strong> The future role of group I countries in the Implementation of the post 2015 education agenda</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.30 – 15.15</td>
<td><strong>Theme 7:</strong> Role of group I countries in mobilizing resources for the post-2015 education agenda Chair: <em>Birger Fredriksen,</em> former Director of Human Development for Africa, World Bank</td>
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<td><strong>Expected outcome:</strong> Recommendations formulated of the role of group I countries in terms of identifying innovative solutions to fill the financing gap for the post-2015 education agenda and supporting reforms nationally and globally in terms of increased funding for education.</td>
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<td>15.15 – 16.15</td>
<td><strong>Theme 8:</strong> Implications for national education policies and modalities of the follow-up and monitoring of post-2015 education agenda including governance, financing and accountability</td>
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<td>16.15 – 16.30</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
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| 16.30 – 17.15 | Theme 9: How can education be best articulated and positioned in the global development agenda?  
**Chair:** Emmanuel Lebrun-Damiens, Deputy Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France  
**Expected Outcome:** Recommendations formulated on the positioning of the post-2015 education agenda within the global development agenda, on a possible overarching goal, and on the process towards 2015. |
| 17.15 – 17.50 | Chair: Olav Seim, Director, EFA Global Partnerships Team, UNESCO  
Summary of the outcomes of the Consultation  
Presentation by main rapporteur  
Discussion in Plenary |
| 17.50 – 18.00 | Closing |
Introduction to the thematic discussion on:
Equity in Education

Context
The principle of equity is inextricably linked with the principles of non-discrimination and of equality of educational opportunity. The 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education expresses theses fundamental principles and places upon the States Parties the obligation to “undertake furthermore to formulate, develop and apply a national policy which, by methods appropriate to the circumstances and to national usage, will tend to promote equality of opportunity and of treatment in the matter of education” (Article 4). The principle of equity is therefore crucial to ensuring inclusive education for all.

Equity requires securing all children’s right to education, and their rights within and through education to realize their potential and aspirations (UNESCO, 2010, EFA GMR). Equity is about being fair and as such, also requires implementing and institutionalizing arrangements that help ensure all children achieve these aims. Equity and inclusion are closely intertwined. There should be a fair treatment of students in the education system, regardless of their background. At the same time, as Opheim (2004) emphasizes, pupils and students are different in several dimensions with an impact on their need for learning and follow-up in the education system. Therefore, equity in education is not simply about “providing equal distribution of educational resources to all pupils and students” but is about ensuring that the content and support in the learning processes can be adapted to learners’ needs, giving them the opportunity to achieve their full development and learning potential through an inclusive approach to education.

Key issues
Education must be accessible to all, in law and in fact. As UNESCO’s normative instruments demonstrate, equality of opportunities, equal access and non-discrimination are often interlinked. Despite overall progress in more children entering school over the past decade, insufficient attention has been paid to eliminating inequalities in education. Tackling inequality needs to be a central focus of goals being set after 2015, with specific measures included to reach those disadvantaged by factors such as gender, poverty, location, ethnicity or disability.

A majority of Group I Member States has reported on measures taken to give full effect to the principles of non-discrimination, non-differential treatment and equity, within the framework of the recent Eighth Consultation of Member States on the measures taken for the implementation of the Convention against Discrimination in Education.

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) estimates that in the region of Western Europe and North America, the total gross-enrolment ratio in pre-primary education was 85 per cent in 2011. For primary education, the total gross enrolment ratio was estimated to be 103 per cent the same year, and for all programmes of lower secondary education, it was estimated to be 106 per cent. Further, the gender parity index was close to 1 for all levels. Data on enrolment ratios is however missing from several countries in 2011.

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4 As stipulated in UNESCO’s Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education “inclusion is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children youth and adults through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing and eliminating exclusion within and from education” (UNESCO 2009)
5 Inequalities in Education, WIDE, EFA GMR
7 UIS, Table 5: Enrollment ratios by ISCED level, retrieved from: http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=182
the region. Still, they show that there are generally high enrolment ratios in basic education in Western Europe and North America, compared to other regions of the world. Thus, most students in this region have access to education and there is no difference between girls and boys.

However, there is evidence that personal or social circumstances prevent certain groups of students in North America and Western Europe from achieving their full educational potential in school. Results from the 2009 PISA test signal that almost one out of five youngsters across OECD countries lacks basic literacy skills. In some countries this proportion even exceeds 25 per cent. Further, much evidence shows that students’ background has an impact on their academic achievement, and this is the case across OECD countries. Results from the 2009 PISA test show that students with low parental education, low socio-economic status, first or second generation immigrant background, as well as boys are at higher risk of low performance. In addition, other assessments suggest larger performance gaps linked to socio-economic status exist in Central and Eastern Europe and in North America and Western Europe than in developing countries. This indicates lack of fairness in education. The OECD report *Equity and Quality in Education* (2012) argues that lack of inclusion and fairness in education fuels school failure, and dropout is the most visible manifestation of this. Although the situation varies markedly, the percentage of 25-34 year-olds who have not attained upper secondary education reaches almost 20 per cent across OECD countries.

**Measuring inequity and marginalisation in education**

While equity, or rather the lack thereof has been identified as a key concern for the future education agenda, measuring marginalization in education is inherently difficult, as notes the Global Monitoring Report (GMR 2010). Measurement of marginalization is key to develop policies and interventions. In this view, the GMR proposed that Governments could start by setting targets for narrowing equity gaps and monitoring progress towards these targets. In order to facilitate measurement of marginalization, the GMR developed the World Inequality Database on Education (WIDE) which can be used by governments and other stakeholders. Measuring inequity and marginalisation in education

**Implications for future education policies and programmes**

The right to education needs to be upheld more emphatically, and its inclusive dimensions need to be brought into prominence in order for all those who remain deprived of it to become its beneficiaries. In fact, promoting the right to education universally in that perspective is an obligation of governments.

The principles of non-discrimination and equal access are fundamental conditions and components for ensuring equal educational opportunities. Equity can dictate the necessity to strive for equal opportunity and treatment, especially for groups of people who have suffered marginalization or discrimination. Given the effects of past discrimination and disadvantage, positive action measures may also be needed to secure equality of opportunity.

Lack of equity in education in the Western European and North American region therefore seems to be primarily related to insufficient educational outcomes, rather than lack of access to education. Thus, despite high enrolment rates, there is a need to focus on the quality of education. This has to be addressed from an equity and inclusion perspective, giving particular attention to those students who struggle most in achieving their educational potential. The challenge is to ensure that the various learning needs of all

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8 In the table used by UIS, there are twenty-nine countries in the North America and Western Europe region. Data on gross-enrolment ratios in pre-primary education is missing from eight countries. Data on net enrolment ratios in primary education is missing from eleven countries and data on net enrolment ratios in secondary education is missing from thirteen countries.


10 Ma X (2008), cited in EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009, Paris: UNESCO, p.113


students are met. There are no quick and easy solutions to this issue. Still, some ideas will be presented as a conclusion of this section.

Opheim (2004) argues that the analysis of equity in education should ask the question of why socioeconomic background, place of residence, ethnic background, and gender have an effect on educational performance. Such a discussion needs to include both characteristics of the individual pupil and student as well as characteristics of the environment and of the education system, as inequity in education may be caused by structural and economic differences within the education system as well as differences between pupils and students.  

Early childhood education is the first stage of lifelong learning. The foundations of children’s language, cognitive and social skills are laid in the earliest years of life. Research demonstrates that quality early childhood education enhances school readiness, learning outcomes, educational efficiency and prospects for future earning and employment, and that it yields a greater investment return than any other levels of education and training. Importantly, research shows that poor and disadvantaged children stand to benefit most from quality early childhood education: through its compensatory effect on disadvantage in the family, quality early childhood education can give such children an equal start in primary schooling vis-à-vis their advantaged peers. Timely and appropriate early detection and intervention in early childhood can reduce and prevent learning difficulties and disabilities. Given that the basic attitudes, values and behaviours are shaped before primary school, early childhood education has an important role to play in promoting respect for diversity, empathy, living together and inclusive treatment for all without distinction. For these reasons, early childhood education should be considered as one major strategy for effectively addressing the equity issues in education.

**Guiding questions for the discussion on Equity in Education:**

- What are the specific challenges related to equity in education in the region?
- What are the most important and effective policy levers to address the issue of equity, and how should future education policies further pursue efforts to achieve equity and inclusion in education, starting from early childhood?
- How should equity in education be assessed and monitored?

**Guiding question for the discussion on priority areas to be reflected in the post-2015 education agenda:**

- In what ways should concerns regarding equity in education be reflected in the post-2015 education agenda from the viewpoint of Group I country requirements?

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14 GMR Strong Foundations, 2006; GMR Policy Paper on expanding equitable access to ECCE is an urgent need, 2012; Consultative Group on ECCD, 2012
Panelists

Jean Toussaint has been a member of the International Movement ATD Fourth World for more than 30 years. This organization for solidarity with very disadvantaged communities is particularly committed to access to knowledge, access to rights and the participation of the most isolated.

Working for more than 20 years on the ground alongside families coping with poverty as well as, overwhelmingly, academic failure and illiteracy, he held national positions of responsibility in ATD Fourth World as regards France, and is now a member of the international general delegation.

He took part in the work to assess the impact of the Millennium Development Goals, participatory research which involved almost 2,000 people living in extreme poverty in 12 countries. The question of education figured prominently in this work as a result of the insistence of families in situations of poverty, in the north and in the south.

Elaine Unterhalter is Professor of Education and International Development at the Institute of Education, University of London. Her work focuses on themes concerned with gender, race and class inequalities and their bearing on education. Her specialist interests are in the capability approach and human development and education in Africa. Her current concerns are with education, poverty and global social justice. She has worked on education policy and provision in South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, Bangladesh and India and the EU Marie Curie project Eduwel looking at youth, poverty and education in selected countries. She has an extensive publication record.

Pauline Rose became Director of the EFA Global Monitoring Report in August 2011. Prior to taking up this post, she was Senior Policy Analyst with the GMR team for three years, leading the research on the themes of governance, marginalization and conflict.

Before joining the GMR, Pauline was Reader in international education and development at the University of Sussex. She has worked closely with international aid donors and non-governmental organisations, providing evidence-based policy advice for the past 20 years on a wide range of issues aimed at fulfilling commitments to Education for All. She has worked on large collaborative research programmes with teams in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Pauline is author of numerous publications on issues that examine educational policy and practice, including in relation to inequality, financing and governance, democratization, and the role of international aid.
Introduction to the thematic discussion on: Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Why ESD?
There is an increasing international consensus that we need to put our world on a more sustainable development path. The fight against poverty continues to be high on the international agenda with more than 1 billion people living in extreme poverty, while human impacts detrimental to the environment have reached alarming levels. Looming climate change challenges and accelerating environmental, geopolitical and demographic change – and associated risks and disasters – threaten to reverse development gains and pose new challenges to sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development requires a change in the way people think and act, and this is where education has a crucial role to play. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) aims at providing everyone with the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to cope with existing and emerging challenges and shape resilient and sustainable societies.

Implications for education policies and programmes
1. ESD has both short-term and long-term implications.
   1) Making education systems prepared for, and responsive to, existing and emerging challenges will involve specific dedicated measures as well as the integration of ESD into existing education and development processes. The immediate tasks include ensuring safe learning environments in countries which are most vulnerable to climate change impacts, integrating disaster risk reduction (DRR) into their education systems. The longer term task – common to all countries – is to improve and reorient education systems to foster the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to deal with current and future challenges. This latter task strongly resonates with a quality education agenda.
   2) ESD has to go far beyond inserting new thematic content into overcrowded curricula. Instead it stresses the importance of participatory and solution-oriented learning that encourages systems and critical thinking, engages with uncertainty and complexity, and draws on learners’ cognitive, affective and practical potential both in and out of the classroom.
   3) ESD implementation means (i) integrating sustainable development into education policies and national quality standards and indicator frameworks that establish standards for learning outcomes; and (ii) integrating education and learning in sustainable development efforts through cross-sector and inter-ministerial approaches. More specifically, this implies:
      ▪ integrating key sustainable development issues (e.g. climate change, DRR, biodiversity, sustainable production and consumption) into curriculum, teacher education and teaching and learning methods at all levels (from early childhood to higher education); and
      ▪ reflecting the role of all types of education and learning in national policies related to the three Rio Conventions (Climate Change; Biodiversity; Combating Desertification) as well as the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), in line with the important role the Conventions and the Strategy ascribe to education, training, and public awareness.
2. **ESD mandate**: ESD could be included in the post-2015 agenda as part of an education goal and cutting across all other goals. At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in 2012, countries acknowledged the importance of ESD in the outcome document, making a commitment to strengthening ESD beyond the end of the UN Decade of ESD (DESD, 2005-2014). As Lead Agency of the DESD, UNESCO has been actively promoting the role of education in the follow-up to Rio+20 and the current process for setting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As a follow up to the DESD, UNESCO developed a **Global Action Programme on ESD**\(^{15}\) to be endorsed by the UN General Assembly, which will focus on scaling-up and generating ESD action in relevant areas of education and sustainable development.

**Guiding questions for the discussion on Education for Sustainable Development:**

- How are questions of sustainable development reflected in educational policy orientations?
- How do these policy orientations translate into different domains such as programmes (curriculum), teachers training, management?

**Background for reflection on**: Priority areas to be included in the post-2015 education agenda based on future policy priorities from a regional perspective

**ESD in the post-2015 agenda**

3. **Universality of the ESD agenda**: ESD is an undertaking that exemplifies the international consensus that the post-2015 agenda must be of universal relevance to developed and developing countries alike. Western European and North American countries can advocate **integrating ESD into the international education and development agenda** as a key driver and essential enabler for sustainable development. A global transition to sustainability cannot be achieved by technological solutions or financial instruments alone. It requires informed citizens, workers and consumers who can translate and take action for the post-2015 agenda.

4. **National and regional ESD implementation**: Western European and North American countries have been at the forefront of ESD implementation. Some of their representative ESD undertakings include eco-school/whole-school approaches, skills development for green jobs/greening Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), and education for sustainable consumption (which is an important education component in the **10YFP**\(^{16}\) coordinated by UNEP).\(^{17}\) Integrating ESD into all levels and all types of education and learning is crucial for fostering a critical mass of responsible citizens and consumers who can trigger political and market pressures to move the sustainable development agenda forward.

5. **From an aid perspective**: As donors, Western European and North American countries can support ESD in developing countries (i) as an integral element of quality education in the EFA


\(^{16}\) The 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP), adopted at Rio+20, is a global framework of action spanning 2012-2021 to enhance international cooperation to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production in both developed and developing countries.

\(^{17}\) NB: The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) has developed regional strategies for ESD. For more information, see Learning from each other: The UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development; Report of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development on its seventh meeting; and Implementing the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development post 2015.
agenda and/or (ii) as a measure to address sustainability challenges and contribute to low-emission climate-resilient development.

Guiding question for the discussion on priority areas to be reflected in the post-2015 education agenda:

- In what ways should Education for Sustainable Development be reflected in the post-2015 education agenda from the viewpoint of Group I country requirements?

Panelists

Walter Hirche is President of the German Commission for UNESCO. He has been a member of the German Commission for UNESCO (DUK) since 1969, and has been President of the Commission since 2002. Previously, from 2000 to 2002, he served as Vice President of the DUK, and from 1984 to 1988 was as a member of the Programme Committee on Communication. From 1986 to 1990 he was Minister for Economy, Transport and Technology of Lower Saxony, and from 1990 to 1994 Minister for Economy, Medium-Sized Businesses, and Technology of Brandenburg. From 1994 to 1998 he was Parliamentary Secretary to the Federal Minister for Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety. From 1994 to 2002, he was a member of the German Bundestag, and from 1998 to 2002 a member of the Foreign Relations Committee. From 1994 to 2006, Walter Hirche was Chairman of the Free Democratic Party (FDP) of Lower Saxony. From 2003 to 2009 he was Minister for Economy, Labour and Transport, and Deputy Prime Minister of Lower Saxony.

Abstract

Why is ESD important for education in the post-2015 development agenda?

Technical solutions, political regulation or financial instruments alone cannot achieve sustainable development. It requires a change in the way we think and act and consequently a transition to sustainable lifestyles, consumption and production patterns. Only education and learning at all levels and in all social contexts can bring about this critical change. Education for sustainable development (ESD) is a learning approach that allows every human being to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future. ESD means acquiring knowledge about key sustainable development challenges such as climate change, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity, poverty reduction and sustainable consumption while also changing the traditional perception of educational processes as it promotes whole-institution approaches and innovative pedagogical techniques. Ensuring quality education with a strong focus on content and skills based learning are equally important as access to education across the world in the 21st century. On the grounds of its transformative, inclusive and holistic nature, ESD plays a key role in forging the post-2015 development agenda and has the potential to accelerate global progress towards sustainable development.
Jean-Michel Valantin

Jean-Michel Valantin is the High Commissioner for Sustainable Development at the French Ministry of Education. Since 2007, he has been responsible for setting ministerial policy on the universalization of education for sustainable development. He is in charge of national coordination with the education authorities and the various departments of the Ministry of Education concerned with this transdisciplinary education. The nature of this work also involves interdepartmental and partnership cooperation and, in this capacity, he managed the “education” group of the Grenelle environment forum, was co-rapporteur for the Grenelle maritime forum and coordinated the Ministry’s participation in the mobilization of careers and training for a “green economy” and in the new national strategy for biodiversity. He also co-organizes the annual national forum on education for sustainable development and is in charge of several partnerships and exchanges with other State departments and civil society.

Abstract

The relations between societies’ modes of development and planetary biological, geophysical and chemical processes now determine the fate of this century.

Education for sustainable development must enable future citizens to make responsible choices that incorporate the complex logic of sustainable development, and to act locally and globally in both their personal lives and in the public sphere.

In order to rise to these challenges, the Ministry of Education is rolling out education for sustainable development in all its dimensions – social, economic, environmental and cultural – and at every level – local, national, European and international.

Education for sustainable development is explicitly associated with education in development and international solidarity and with other cross-cutting education topics such as health, all of them issues that form part of sustainable development.

To achieve these ends, the themes and problems relating to sustainable development are being included in curricula, education for sustainable development committees are being established at the educational authority level, and there are an increasing number of school and establishment projects in conjunction with local partners and bodies (local authorities, voluntary organizations, decentralized government departments, economic stakeholders, and so on).

In France, the school reform law means that these issues have been included conclusively in the Education Code and in teacher training and have been brought before the Higher Curriculum Council.
Why global citizenship education?
The education community is paying increasing attention to the relevance of education in understanding and resolving social, political, cultural and global issues. The Global Education First Initiative, launched in 2012 by the UN Secretary-General, includes global citizenship education as one of the three priorities, urging education to play a more active role in building a more just, tolerant, peaceful and sustainable world. Advances in ICTs, transnational migration, increase in global trade and continuing conflicts in the global community require people to think and act locally and globally at the same time.

What is global citizenship education?
GCE aims to empower learners to engage and assume active roles both locally and globally to face and resolve global challenges and ultimately to become proactive contributors to a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure and sustainable world. GCE is built on a lifelong learning perspective and can be delivered in all modes (formal, non-formal and informal) and venues of delivery and targets, including not only children and youth, but also adults. It can be delivered as an integral part of an existing subject or as an independent area. GCE content includes knowledge and understanding of global issues and trends; respect for universal values; critical thinking; non-cognitive skills (e.g., empathy, openness); and interpersonal and communicative skills are important. The two latter skills are of particular importance.

Open political, societal, cultural and religious climate are crucial facilitating factors for GCE implementation. Policy support and pedagogical guidance are also needed and linkage with communities is essential. Early learning about GCE is more effective, and youth is a particularly important target group. Key tensions identified within GCE include: “How to promote global solidarity when the countries’ economic and education systems push for global competitiveness”, “How to reconcile local and global interests and identities”, and “To what extent do countries’ formal education systems support the learners’ active participation in processes concerning various reality issues facing their societies and countries.”

What needs to be done
Priorities for GCE in all countries, including those in Western Europe and North America, include reflecting the goal of global citizenship education in countries’ curricula, developing transformative pedagogy that encourages learners to think critically and act proactively and to support youth-led initiatives.

Guiding questions for the discussion on Global Citizenship Education:

- What is the particular relevance of GCE to the Western Europe and North America? What should it aim to achieve?
- What would be the effective curriculum and pedagogical approaches of implementing GCE in the context of Western Europe and North America?
Guiding question for the discussion on priority areas to be reflected in the post-2015 education agenda:

- In what ways should Global Citizenship Education be reflected in the post-2015 education agenda from the viewpoint of Group I country requirements?

References

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Panelist

Scott Pulizzi is a Team Leader in UNESCO’s Section of HIV and Health Education. He has twenty years of experience in education as an educator, researcher and curriculum developer. Since 1998 he has been working in school health with members of the Focusing Resources on Effective School Health Partnership. Prior to joining UNESCO, he worked in civil society with teachers’ organizations and governments in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean to improve the education sector responses to HIV and promote Education for All. He is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa.

Abstract

**Global Citizenship Education (GCE)** is an emerging topic that is reflective of shifts in the education discourse. This shift locates education within a global context and emphasises the importance of values, attitudes and communication skills as a critical complement to cognitive knowledge and skills. This is driven by the understanding that education makes significant contributions to resolving social, political, cultural and global issues. This includes the role of education in supporting peace, human rights, equity, tolerance, and sustainable development. This presentation will provide a rationale for GCE, propose a working definition, describe the conditions needed to implement it, and then pose questions about the relevance and feasibility of GCE for the Western Europe and North America context.
Introduction
In all regions of the world, concern over the quality of education and student learning grows. The 2012 EFA Global Monitoring Report estimates that 250 million primary school-age children have not learned to read or count, whether they have been to school or not. A recent Brookings Institution report (2011, p.3) highlights a ‘global learning crisis’ that affects children and youth within and outside schools and in both developed and developing countries. Early learning deficits clearly have lifelong impacts. In the European Union, for example, 73 million adults have only a low level of education while 160 million adults in OECD countries have insufficient reading skills to complete a job application. There is a growing consensus among many governmental, non-governmental and international stakeholders that quality education and learning should be core constructs of the post-2015 education agenda.

What are the components of quality education?
Despite the growing consensus on emphasizing quality issues in education policy, views differ about the nature and determinants of quality education, as well as the most effective policy levers for enhancing learning outcomes and targets. What is clear is that context plays a powerful role in influencing "quality" education.

The World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal, April 2000) identified the key elements of quality education as: well-nourished and motivated students; well-trained teachers employing active pedagogies to support personalized learning; adequate facilities and instructional materials; clearly defined, effectively taught and accurately assessed curricular knowledge and skills; and a healthy, safe, gender-sensitive learning environment that makes full use of children’s local language skills.

Today, additional elements of quality are being emphasized by many European and North American stakeholders. For example, quality education involves: fostering practices that promote sustainability in local, national and global communities; acquiring skills for competently navigating a technology-intensive world; promoting political and civic engagement and intercultural dialogue; instilling a passion for learning throughout life; and nurturing innovative and creative producers of new knowledge.

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20 And only 8.9 per cent participate in lifelong learning, source http://ec.europa.eu/education/ews/reshinking/com669_en.pdf.
How to measure and monitor quality education?

Since quality education constitutes a key component of the post-2015 education agenda, measuring learning levels and targets are central to the emergent global agenda. In past decades, monitoring the quality of education primarily meant tracking the level of inputs into schools: for example, per pupil educational expenditures, well qualified and adequately compensated teachers, reasonably small class sizes, and sufficient instructional time to convey prescribed curricular contents. In recent years, there has been a proliferation of national, regional, international and community-based assessments to monitor basic skill acquisition and track trends in learning outcomes. Despite the growing frequency of such summative assessments, and the information they provide, national authorities still lack consistent, reliable and valid data measuring what actually happens inside the classroom--namely, how and what learners learn from intended curricular contents and teaching practices. In addition, equating improved quality with higher average achievement in selected content domains (typically language, mathematics, sciences) does little to contribute to improvements in learning overall, and to addressing the uneven spread of learning outcomes across regions, households, ethnic or socio-economic groups and, most importantly, in diverse schools and classrooms.

There is a pressing need for shared understandings and viable strategies to measure learning in ways that ensure all children and youth, regardless of their circumstances, receive a good quality education.25

Quality of Education in the context of Group I countries

Member States of the Western European and North American region (Group I countries) are generally known to provide high levels of quality education if viewed according to input factors such as amount spent on education, number of qualified teachers, availability of textbooks and teaching-learning material, or physical infrastructure, etc. However, to the extent that quality focuses on educational outcomes, then quality of education remains a critical issue in nearly every high-income country. Indeed, recent results in TIMSS (2011), PISA and PIAAC (OECD 2013) indicate that there is considerable room for improvement, especially among students from low-income households or minority groups. Learning outcomes in many Group I countries are sub-par: in the TIMSS survey 5-10% of 8th graders in many countries did not obtain the lowest benchmarks in mathematics and science; in the PISA survey, nearly one student in five did not reach the reading proficiency of baseline Level 2 on average (OECD, 2010)26.

With these findings in mind, how should future policies and programmes of Group I countries ensure that quality education is provided to all?

Responses to this question would need to take into account:

- that learning begins at birth. ECCE lays a solid foundation for children’s healthy development, school achievement and future learning but the quality\textsuperscript{27} of ECCE provisions in North America and Western Europe are uneven and necessitate further development\textsuperscript{28};
- the new digital platforms on which teaching and learning are taking place and through which knowledge, skills and values are developed, transmitted, validated, and applied by young people;
- the way in which international and intra-national migration patterns, diversification of family forms, and cultural globalization affect and transform the cultural identities of young people;
- the on-going privatization and appropriating of cultural knowledge
- the evolving role and status of teachers and the teaching profession;
- the changing patterns of educational governance and finance, and the increasing involvement of new non-State actors and stakeholders, and how these changes alter the boundaries between public and private education; and
- the enormous economic, demographic, political and social transformations occurring the world over and their implications for quality education.

**Guiding questions for the discussion on Quality Education and Learning:**

- What are priority areas for improving the quality of education and learning in Western European and North American countries in schooling? How would this depend on context?
- What are the most important and effective policy levers to ensure student learning? Which of these are consistent across countries and which are more sensitive to context?
- How should quality education be assessed and monitored? What types or domains of learning should be assessed (and how)? To what extent should transversal skills (e.g., communication, problem solving, teamwork, creativity, critical thinking, learning to live together, respect for cultural diversity); livelihood skills and entrepreneurship, be assessed?

**Guiding question for the discussion on priority areas to be reflected in the post-2015 education agenda:**

- In what ways should concerns regarding quality education and learning be reflected in the post-2015 education agenda from the viewpoint of Group I country requirements?

\textsuperscript{27} Quality defined in terms of: relevance of ECCE provision for poor and migrant families and whether it is socially inclusive; varying degrees of quality among different ECCE services even when regulatory frameworks are in place; better professional status, education and training, and working conditions of ECCE workforce; and measurement and systematic monitoring of ECCE quality that can encourage children’s wellbeing, learning and participation.

**Panelists**

**David Edwards** is Deputy General Secretary of Education International where he is responsible for EI’s work in the areas of Education Policy, Employment and Research. Prior to joining EI in 2011, David was Associate Director of Governance and Policy and head of International Relations, at the National Education Association (NEA) of the United States. Before NEA, David worked as an Education Specialist at the Organization of American States (OAS), a project coordinator and activist in Bolivia, and began his career as a public, high school foreign language teacher. David is dedicated to promoting, strengthening and defending the teaching profession, ensuring quality education for all students and building a strong and vibrant labor movement focused on social justice and human rights.

**Abstract**

The research is clear - for education ministries seeking to improve educational quality the single, most powerful in-school variable worthy of investment, deep consideration and engagement is the teaching profession. In OECD member countries over the past four years, Education International and the OECD have annually convened leaders from the teaching profession and the ministries of education to go in depth on what matters for improving and sustaining excellence and equity in national education systems.

These International Summits on the Teaching Profession have led to frank and informed discussions key teacher policies that make a difference as well as agreed action steps between governments and teachers to improve the profession on everything from induction and training to appraisal and development. This presentation would highlight the main lessons from the Summits as they relate to priorities for EFA and the Post 2015 Education Agenda.

**Michael Davidson** is Head of the Early Childhood and Schools Division, in the OECD’s Directorate for Education and Skills. Michael is responsible for overseeing the following OECD activities: PISA, the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), the work of the Centre for Effective Learning Environments, reviews on evaluation and assessment frameworks for improving school outcomes and reviews on early childhood education and care. Prior to his current acting position Michael was project leader for TALIS and then PISA.

Before joining the OECD in 2003, he worked as a statistician for over 20 years in the UK Civil Service with postings in the Ministries of health, trade and industry before joining the education ministry in 1989.

**Abstract**

Michael Davidson, Head of the *Early Childhood and Schools Division* of the OECD and the overall manager of the OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) will present a summary of the latest findings from the PISA 2012 survey, focusing on North American and European countries (largely OECD members). His presentation will also briefly identify some of the
highlights of some of the education systems that have improved the most over different PISA cycles, particularly with regards to student performance in mathematics and some of the main factors associated with performance. Mr Davidson will conclude his presentation by briefly describing the OECD’s recent initiative PISA for Develop that aims to enhance PISA instruments, methods and analyses to make them more relevant to developing countries in different regions of the world to support improvement in the quality and equity of learning outcomes.

Aaron Benavot (Professor in the School of Education at the University at Albany-SUNY) is interested in global education policy and comparative education research. Before taking up his current position, he served four years as Senior Policy Analyst on the EFA Global Monitoring Report team in Paris. Benavot’s scholarship explores educational problématique from comparative, global and critical perspectives (albany.academia.edu/AaronBenavot). Specifically, he has examined the expansion of primary education; the prolongation of compulsory schooling; the convergence of official curricular policies; the diversification of secondary education; school implementation of curricular directives; the changing status of vocational education; the growth and power of international and national learning assessments; international policy scenarios in the post-2015 period; and the dynamics and conceptualization of adult literacy. He has co-authored or edited five books including School Knowledge for the Masses; School Knowledge in Comparative and Historical Perspective; and PISA, Power, and Policy: The emergence of global educational governance.

Abstract
Calls to improve the quality of education—particularly in terms of measurable learning outcomes—have been prominent in Group I countries for several decades now. Different rationales have been advanced to justify the focus on quality improvement—typically, the need to: increase overall levels of student learning or reduce achievement gaps between more and less advantaged students; improve teacher effectiveness and teacher status; enhance the relevance of the intended curriculum and textbooks to knowledge-based economies and the changing skills demands of the labor market; better align pedagogical practices to the needs of increasingly diverse student populations; improve the efficiency of educational expenditures; secure the support of non-governmental stakeholders (e.g., parents, community leaders, civil society organizations, teacher associations) following decentralization reforms; and reduce repetition or dropout rates among low achieving, low income, and/or culturally marginalized students. Many of these rationales share a concern over the substance and enabling conditions of learning in the classroom.

This presentation provides critical reflections about how learning is currently being assessed, and how little it tells us about teaching and learning processes inside the classroom. Substantive progress in the provision of quality education involves concentrated attention to the overall aims and purposes of education as well as the knowledge, skills, competences, values and worldviews conveyed by the curriculum and textbooks.
**Introduction**

Continued slow economic growth and high unemployment rates in the Western Europe and North America, brought on by the global financial crisis, are accompanying several intertwined economic, demographical and educational shifts. These include, for example, the emergence and consolidation of a global knowledge economy, the integration of new information and communications technologies into the workplace, the diversification of higher education provisions, the increasing mobility of capital and labour across national borders, the ageing of the labour force and the increasing postponement of the age of retirement.

**Youth skills development and transitions to the world of work**

The labour market position of young people in Group I countries has been particularly impacted by these on-going shifts. Youth unemployment rates are persistently high (23.3% in Europe), job seekers and job-holders are experiencing prolonged periods of insecurity, and wage levels in the youth labour market are deteriorating. In Europe alone an estimated 14 million youth are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs). For the young people who experience such fragile labour markets, there are likely to be negative effects on their subsequent careers, which may exacerbate, in the long-term, problems of social integration and social cohesion. Despite high unemployment and weak prospects for economic growth in some countries, labour market bottlenecks are already visible for some occupations. Even in countries still in recession, unemployment coexists with unfilled vacancies (e.g. there are over 2 million unfilled vacancies in the EU and around 3.5 million jobs going unfilled in North America in the second quarter 2013), indicating structural imbalances between skills supply and demand.

These realities challenge decision makers to reconsider existing education and training systems. There is an acute need to identify policy options that effectively enlarge the relevant skill sets of youth, improve education to work transitions, and enhance adult up-skilling and reskilling. Reducing the disjuncture between the qualifications and credentials supplied by education and training systems and the required skills and competencies in the current labour market is particularly important. To be sure, finding ways to invest in youth and adult skill acquisition during times of tight budgets is not easy. Nevertheless many European and North American countries have decided to place labour market relevant education at the centre of their policy strategies for economic recovery and sustainability. In particular, programmes in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) at all levels have become a key aspect of Europe’s response to the economic and youth unemployment crisis. In particular those that include a strong work-based learning component appear to facilitate the transition of young people from education to work. TVET-focused strategies are less prominent in North America.

**Adult up-skilling and reskilling in fast changing labour markets**

Not only do TVET policies speak to the challenges of youth employability and unemployment, but they also address the consequences of ageing labour forces in the region and rapidly changing skill needs. Well-designed TVET systems can enable adult workers to keep their skills current, improve their productivity, and thereby contribute to extended careers of productive employment. They may also represent an important facet in the broader strategy to develop a greener, more sustainable economy. The most pressing policy challenge is to support workers, especially low-
skilled workers, adapt to changes in the economy by making access to lifelong learning more equitable.

Key components of TVET and skills development strategies

In sum, the fundamental challenge for policy-makers is to develop an over-arching lifelong learning policy framework, which improves the linkages between ‘education and training’ and ‘employment’. More effective policy interventions in this area are thought to better serve the needs of citizens, enterprises, and society by easing access to the labour market and providing opportunities to update individuals’ skills and competences. Success will depend on both the political will of the Member States and the capacity of the private sector to create opportunities for young people and adults.

Combining short- and long-term considerations is a way of developing TVET systems’ agility and relevant policy responses in the face of changing and sometimes unanticipated future developments. Addressing immediate youth unemployment challenges goes hand-in-hand with the need for attractive and flexible education and training paths that recognise and validate non-formal and informal learning and that offer opportunities for all, and allow combining different types and levels of education and training throughout life.

Developing a comprehensive framework for skills needed for work and life

The Global Monitoring Report 2012 provides a comprehensive concept of skills development which identified three main types of skills that all young people need which includes foundation, transferable and technical and vocational skills. Skills can be acquired through various pathways which range from formal schooling to second chance education and training for persons with low skills who are unemployed or working for very low pay, and qualifications to work-based training throughout life. Such a comprehensive concept can possibly inform policy considerations on skills development for young people of Group I countries.

Guiding questions for the discussion on Skills and Competencies for Life and Work:

- What are the most important and effective policy measures to ensure a successful transition(s) from school to work?
- What set of skills could possibly safeguard young people from un(der)employment?
- Which elements of lifelong learning frameworks are essential in order to enhance skills outcomes for greater youth employability and employment?
- How can we diversify the sources of funding to ensure quality learning opportunities for all including low-skilled youth and adults?

Guiding question for the discussion on priority areas to be reflected in the post-2015 education agenda:

- In what ways should concerns regarding skills and competencies for work be reflected in the post-2015 education agenda from the viewpoint of Group I country requirements?
Walter Van Trier has a PhD in sociology (Catholic University of Leuven) and is attached to the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration of Ghent University and to the Higher Institute for Work and Society of the Catholic University of Leuven. Since 1997, he co-ordinates an interdisciplinary and interuniversity research team on the transition from school to work in Flanders. As part of this task, he organized a series of school-leaver surveys. He participated in several international projects and chairs the Scientific Committee of the European Research Network on Transitions in Youth. He is a member of the steering committee of the Belgian CEDEFOP Refernet.

Abstract

Skills and the transition from school to work

Slightly more than one year ago, on May 11th, 2012 to be exact, the European Union adopted a specific benchmark for the employability of graduates as part of its overall labour market monitoring framework. Although defined in terms of the percentage of young people being unemployed up to three years after graduation, the conclusions of the Council as preparatory documents put a lot of emphasis on the fact that using this benchmark should not prevent one from considering as (probably even equally) important second indicator, i.e. whether a young persons’ education fits his employment. Concerns about the fit between (the level and subject of) one’s education and (the level and content of) one’s job are not new and attempts to measure the incidence of over education or mismatch go back to the 1970’s.

Against this background of the match between education and work as an important target for policy action in addition to combatting youth unemployment, I will ask three sets of questions:

1. Why is looking at a successful transition from school to work important as well from an individual as from a societal point of view? And what makes ‘school-leavers’ or ‘first time labour market entrants’ special?
2. Which recent labour market trends are important to take into account when considering the skill needs of the future? Do we know anything about the portfolio of skills safeguarding young people from un(der)employment? What do we know about the factors explaining the differences in mismatch on the country level?
3. Is a match between education and work to be equated with a match between supply and demand for skills? What model is most appropriate to think about ‘skill production’ and how can we introduce skill appropriation before and after the transition from school to work period?
**Alison Crabb**, is Deputy Head of Unit, “Vocational training and adult learning; Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig”, European Commission, Directorate General for Education & Culture. She has been working at the European Commission since 1999 and in the Directorate General for Education and Culture since 2001. Her former responsibilities include: 2007-2011, Deputy Head of Unit, Culture Policy, Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue; 2001-2007, responsible for the decentralised actions of the Comenius (school education) and Grundtvig (adult education) EU programmes, including staff training, school partnerships and language assistants.

**Abstract**

Investment in education and training for skills development is essential both to boost growth and competitiveness and to foster active citizenship and well-being. "Education and Training 2020" is the EU’s strategic framework for cooperation in these fields, with priorities for action including making lifelong learning and mobility a reality, and improving the quality of education and training. The 2012 European Commission policy document on "Rethinking Education" identifies priorities for action to respond to the skills challenge facing Europe today. In the field of vocational education and training (VET), the spotlight is currently on reform of initial VET in order to bring training closer to labour market needs. Reform or creation of apprenticeship-type training or other forms of work-based learning is one major field of cooperation. Beyond VET, investment is needed in adult learning to ensure that all citizens have the opportunity to update their skills and – if needed – a second chance to acquire basic skills. Recent PIAAC results indicate the scale of the challenge in some countries. As well as supporting exchange of experience and policy development, EU cooperation encompasses funding programmes for smart investment in education and training, notably the European Social Fund and – for multilateral cooperation – the future programme Erasmus+.

**Arne Carlsen** is Director of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) since 2011. UIL is specialised in lifelong learning with a focus on adult and continuing education, literacy and non-formal basic education. Arne Carlsen was director in the 1990es of the Nordic Council of Ministers Nordic Folk Academy in Sweden which undertook training of leaders and teachers in adult education from the five Nordic and the three Baltic countries. He was also consultant to OECD, EU-Commission and UNESCO, vice-rector for education at the Danish University of Education, and responsible for Denmark’s studies in PIRLS and TIMSS. He is chairman of the Editorial Board of the International Review of Education – Journal of Lifelong Learning, and member of the Advisory Board of the Global Monitoring Report for Education for All. He has been visiting professor at universities in China, Malaysia, Romania, Lithuania, and Germany. He is honorary professor or honorary doctor at research institutions in Hungary, Russia, Latvia, India, and Vietnam.

**Abstract**

In the increasingly globalised, fast-changing world, everyone needs continuous learning from cradle to grave to be empowered to learn to know, learn to be, learn to do and learn to live together. Lifelong learning for all contributes to competence development at all levels, to social cohesion, and fosters a more equitable society, harnessing cultural diversity, enhancing well-being, and ensuring sustainable socio-economic development.

To make lifelong learning a reality for all implies not only holistic and sectorwide educational
reform in which all sub-sectors and elements of the education system should be designed to cater to lifelong learning, but also the creation of learning opportunities in all settings or modalities (formal, non-formal and informal) for people of all ages (infants, children, adolescents and adults). Diverse learning opportunities responding to a wide range of learning needs must be developed and made accessible to all – whether girls or boys, women or men, or marginalised groups in society. Furthermore, lifelong learning for all in the 21st century requires a paradigm shift towards the concept of learning, with a focus on learning for empowerment, and learning of core competences. Literacy and basic skills is the foundation for lifelong learning.
Introduction

Demographic changes and economic transformations have consistently driven policy debates on the new skills needed in society. Globalization, rapid technological change, highly mobile populations and, more recently, the financial crisis, have spurred governments to address the learning needs with regard to basic and complex skills among their youth and adult populations. One increasingly recognized concern is low levels of youth and adult literacy skills. In Europe, many of the 73 million low-educated adults (25-64 year-olds) are likely to experience literacy problems potentially affecting their personal, social, and economic lives (European Commission, 2012)\(^29\).

Adult literacy in Western Europe and North America

As noted in the background paper to this Meeting, countries in Western Europe and North America have reached the universal spread of schooling long ago and with this high levels of illiteracy are consigned to the distant past. Yet direct assessments indicate that as many as one in five adults in the high income countries, equivalent to around 160 million adults, have poor literacy skills. This means, they are unable to use reading, writing and calculation effectively in their everyday lives.\(^30\) While national literacy assessments are not comparable from country to country, they confirm that poor literacy skills are a wider problem that is often recognized. In Germany, for example, a 2010 assessment found that 14.5% of the population aged 18-64, or about 7.5 million persons, were functionally illiterate.\(^31\) Similar surveys in France (2004/05)\(^32\) and Scotland (2009)\(^33\) estimated that 9% of the French population aged 18 to 65 and 8% of the Scottish population aged 16 to 65 were at the lowest literacy levels. Poor literacy skills are more likely to be found among the disadvantaged populations. Surveys in Canada and in the United States show particularly low literacy skills among indigenous populations, while in Europe Roma are affected by poor literacy skills.\(^34\)

International surveys of adult literacy skills provide cross-country comparable data. The OECD recently released the first results of the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) collected in 2011 and 2012 from 166,000 adults aged 16-65 in 24 countries, including 16 of Western Europe and North America. The survey focused on measuring literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills as relevant to working in ‘technology-rich environments’. The survey found that one in six adults have poor literacy skills, and one in five have poor numeracy skills.\(^35\)

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The report further showed that inequalities are much larger within countries than between them. Consequently, governments should not only be concerned with the average score of their country, but also ensure that skills gaps are reduced. Categories significantly more likely to have low skills include adults with educational attainment below upper secondary level, adults whose parents had low educational attainment, workers in elementary occupations, immigrants with a foreign-language background, as well as older adults. The educational attainment gap is extreme in France and in the United States, where adults with less than upper secondary education score just slightly above Level 1 on average, while those with tertiary education score in the top of the range of Level 3.

Adults with poor skills face multiple sources of disadvantage. They are more likely to be out of the labor force, or to be unemployed; those employed receive lower wages. They also find it more difficult to participate in society, e.g. they are more likely to have lower levels of trust in others, to believe that they have little impact on the political process and not to participate in associative or volunteer activities. Finally, they are more likely to be in poor health.

The PIAAC report also shows a clear relationship between the extent of participation in organized adult learning activities and average proficiency in key information-processing skills. Those adults who engage more often in literacy- and numeracy-related activities and use ICTs more have greater proficiency in literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills. The 2nd Global Report on Adult Learning and Education – Rethinking Literacy, published by UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, which is monitoring the progress with member states’, shows that in Europe, participation in adult learning varies greatly and the average is well below the EU target (15% by 2020 for adults aged 25-64). In fact, participation has been declining since 2005: in 2011, the average participation was 8.9%, despite of the growing demand for high skills and the declining number of low-skilled jobs. Those population groups that are most disadvantaged and with the lowest levels of skills, are particularly difficult to reach with literacy and skills programmes. It is therefore important to study carefully the factors that inhibit or prevent their participation and develop target-specific strategies.

Strategies to raise adult literacy levels at regional level

In 2011, the Council of the European Union passed a resolution on a renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning, which aimed to raise adult literacy and numeracy levels and to broaden learning provision for low-skilled Europeans. In light of the Report of the EU High-Level Group of Experts on Literacy which pointed out that the majority of 73 million adults (people aged between 25 and 64 years) with literacy problems have received at least compulsory schooling but emerged without sufficient competences in reading and writing, the Council resolved to develop ways of improving literacy programmes and to take measures to keep the literacy issue in the public eye.

Adult literacy for Western Europe and North America in the post-2015 education agenda

The 2012 Education for All Global Monitoring Report emphasized the need for interventions targeting functionally illiterate adults, starting with an official recognition of the extent of the issue and the definition of a national strategy backed by adequate financing. Successful programmes include those leading to secondary school qualifications, family or intergenerational literacy programmes, and workplace-based programmes. Difficulties encountered are the lack of proficiency in literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills.

36 European Commission (2012), ibid.
professional development for literacy trainers, and low expressed demand due to the stigma attached to recognising oneself as illiterate.

The EU High Level Group of Experts on Literacy, in their report (2012) developed a threefold vision for Europe: 1) All citizens of Europe shall be literate; 2) radically improved literacy will boost innovation, prosperity, social participation and cohesion and raise the life chances of all citizens; and 3) Member States will view it as their legal obligation to provide all the support necessary to realise our vision, and this support will include all ages. Several recommendations made by the OECD based on the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) concern incentives on the labour market and the organization of work, but others are directly relevant to the post-2015 education agenda in Western Europe and North America and include to: ‘provide high-quality early childhood education and care at reasonable cost’, ‘continue to promote educational attainment’ and ‘take stock of the skills held by unemployed adults’. The European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) has analysed the PIAAC results and also proposed a set of recommendations including the need for public investment in adult learning, close cooperation between governmental and civil society organisations in order to raise awareness and develop appropriate measures, reaching out to under-represented groups, and the establishment of coherent lifelong learning systems.

Towards adult literacy and learning in a lifelong learning perspective

The 2nd Global Report on Adult Learning and Education has argued that while there is still no common understanding of how to approach literacy as a continuous learning process, lifelong learning offers the most successful lens to address the literacy challenge. Literacy policy must focus on raising and developing basic skills as a whole, to enable everybody to actively participate in society. In Europe, discussion of key competencies is rooted in the European lifelong learning strategies, while in the USA, the policy debate on 21st century skills is embedded in the development of the K-12 system. Due to the diversity and scope of adult learning provision, and given the varying needs of learners, there is a need to focus more on the quality of the provision, on how to make funding more efficient, on developing more partnerships, and on more effectively mobilizing adult learners and facilitating their access to learning.

Moreover, addressing adult literacy through the lifelong learning lens gains renewed focus today in the context of the increasing emergence of new professions and associated higher levels of skills needs which require learners to continue to acquire and master entirely new skills throughout life. There is a need to develop more responsive education and skills policies that include greater diversification and flexibility and that allow for the adaptation of skill supply to rapidly changing needs and ensure that individuals are better equipped to be more resilient and can learn to develop and apply the required competencies most effectively.

Operationalizing the concept of lifelong learning requires a sector-wide education reform as well as the creation of learning opportunities in all settings for people of all ages. This will support the ultimate goal to build coherent lifelong learning systems and learning societies.

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Guiding questions for the discussion of Adult Literacy, Skills and Lifelong Learning:

- What are the most effective policy levers to address the issue of adult literacy and skills?
- How can flexible and varied access to learning opportunities reach out to the most marginalised groups and increase participation in basic skills programmes?
- Which funding mechanisms can secure long-term funding for appropriate measures to address low literacy skills?
- In which way could lifelong learning systems be developed at national and regional levels which ensure multiple entry points to learning and recognition of non-formal learning? What partnerships are required to build and sustain such systems?

Guiding question for the discussion on priority areas to be reflected in the post-2015 education agenda:

- In what ways concerns regarding adult literacy and skills could be reflected in the post-2015 education agenda from the viewpoint of Group I country requirements?
Introduction

Even though domestic spending remains the most important source of financing for education, aid plays a vital contributing role, particularly for the poorest countries furthest from achieving EFA. In those cases where countries have made faster towards goals, the role of external financing has been instrumental. Moreover, aid from the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) member countries has been the main source of external finance, with private sector and non-DAC donor contributions remaining a very small part of the financing picture for education.

Despite the important role that DAC donors have played in promoting EFA, their failure to meet the commitment they made at Dakar in 2000 that no country will be prevented from achieving education for all by a lack of resources is an important contributing factor to the goals not being met. As a result of this failure, the poorest countries continue to face major shortfalls in resources needed to achieve Education for All, with an estimated financing gap for basic education of US$26 billion annually, once domestic spending and current aid levels are taken into account (UNESCO, 2013).

In order to inform discussions on the role of aid in supporting a post-2015 development and education framework, this paper analyses trends in aid to education, identifying both the amount that donors are spending as well as whether these resources are being allocated effectively. It draws largely on the Education for All Global Monitoring Reports, which each year include analysis on financing in the context of achieving education goals.

Aid flows have increased since 2000, but with a reversal in trends from 2010

Since 2000, there has been an overall positive trend in aid to education, mirroring improvements in aid levels overall. However, there are signs of stagnation or even decline even though a large financing gap remains. Aid disbursements by DAC donors to the education sector more than doubled from US$6.7 billion in 2002 to US$14.4 billion in 2010, but declined by 7% between 2010 and 2011 to US$13.4 billion (UNESCO, 2013).

The share of education has been around 13% of sector-allocable aid over the past decade, but because some donors are de-prioritising education within their aid budgets, education’s share of total aid is at risk of falling (UNESCO, 2012). The reduction in aid to education between 2010 and 2011 of 7% was considerably more than the 3% reduction in total aid over the period.

In order to assess the contribution that financing makes to achieving EFA, it is important to assess flows by the level of education to which aid is directed and the type of recipients (by income group and region).

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38 Policy Paper by the EFA Global Monitoring Report prepared for the Consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda: North America and Western Europe region
39 The information included in the paper is provided by the OECD Creditor Reporting System which can be found at https://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/idsonline
Aid disbursements by education level: Over the last decade aid disbursements to basic education have comprised around 43% of total aid to education. Aid to the sub-sector doubled from around US$2.8 billion in 2002 to US$6.2 billion in 2010 (Figure 1). However, aid to basic education fell between 2010 and 2011 by 6% to 5.8 billion, the first time there has been a reduction since aid disbursement data were first published in 2002 (Brookings Institution and UNESCO, 2013). This decline is occurring at a time when there are still 57 million children of primary school age out of school, with the numbers stagnating in recent years.

Despite concerns that the MDG focus on primary education could be at the cost of higher levels, aid disbursements to secondary education doubled over the decade from US$1.1 billion in 2002 to US$2.2 billion in 2011, although this sub-sector also witnessed a decline between 2010 and 2011.

Aid to post-secondary education, which has similarly doubled over the decade, is on par with aid levels to basic education. While aid to higher education can in some circumstances play an important role in supporting capacity development, it unfortunately rarely reaches developing countries. Around three-quarters of aid for tertiary students is spent on the costs of them studying in the donor country, via scholarships and student imputed costs. This spending, which is equivalent to around one-quarter of total direct aid to education, is excluded from OECD-DAC’s definition of ‘real’, or country programmable, aid (UNESCO, 2012).

Figure 1: Total aid disbursements to education, 2002 to 2011


The top five bilateral donors to basic education are the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, France and Japan (Figure 2). Reflecting the general trend, three of these (United States, France and Japan) reduced their aid to basic education between 2010 and 2011.

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40 In the OECD-DAC classification, ‘basic education’ covers pre-primary education, primary education and basic life skills for youth and adults. Almost all aid to ‘basic education’ (92%) is directed to primary education.
Aid disbursements by income group: In 2011, lower middle income recipient countries accounted for the largest proportion of aid disbursed to the education sector (40% of the total), and to the basic education sub-sector (45% of the total). Low income countries, which account for 37% of out-of-school children, received 26% of total aid to education and 32% of total aid disbursed to basic education. Low income countries were hardest hit by the reduction in aid to basic education between 2010 and 2011, facing a reduction of 9% while aid to lower middle income countries increased by 6% over the period (Figure 3).

Aid disbursements by region: In 2011, sub-Saharan Africa, which is home to over half of the world’s out-of-school children, accounted for the largest share of education aid, receiving 27% of aid disbursed to the sector and 30% of aid to the basic education sub-sector (Figure 4). South and West Asia, the second largest recipient of total aid to education (18%), received 25% of aid for basic education in 2011. East Asia and the Pacific received 15% of total aid disbursements to the education sector. The majority of this is to secondary and post-secondary education, with aid disbursements to basic education being only 9% of the total.

Figure 3: Total aid allocated to basic education by country income groups, 2010–2011


Figure 4: Total aid to basic education by region, 2010-2011

Although sub-Saharan Africa receives the largest share of aid to education, the largest recipients of aid to education are countries in South and West Asia and East Asia and the Pacific. Amongst the top recipients are countries with large populations, including China, India, and Pakistan. The United Republic of Tanzania and Ethiopia are the only two African countries to make it into the top 10 recipients of aid to education in 2010 but featured near the bottom of the list.

A similar pattern is true of aid to basic education except that China is not a top recipient. Palestine and Jordan receive large volumes of aid to basic education, largely due to disbursements by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA). The top recipients of aid to basic education are in South and West Asia. Ethiopia and Mozambique are the only two countries from sub-Saharan Africa, which make it onto the list of countries receiving the most aid to basic education in 2010.

Is aid to education being channelled in ways that promote country ownership?

The Dakar Framework for Action called for joint planning, monitoring and facilitation of aid coordination towards country leadership, ownership and implementation. For this to be effective, donors need to channel their funds via government systems wherever possible. In a similar vein, as part of the High Level Forum Aid Effectiveness Agenda, there was a move towards promoting the delivery of aid through general budget support (GBS), as well as sector wide approaches.

The EFA movement has encouraged country-led education planning. As national planning processes have been strengthened, donors increasingly reported through government systems and, in several cases, pooled their funding to support national education plans, producing impressive results (UNESCO, 2011). There is a danger, however, that donors are now moving away from such approaches back towards project-based support which allow results to be attributed directly to them.

In recent years, it is increasingly possible to track the actors through which bilateral aid to education is channelled. These data reveal that DAC donor governments tend to provide less aid through recipient governments, with a larger share being channelled through their own government and as unearmarked aid through multilateral organisations. This means that a large part of aid to education is not under the direct control of recipient governments despite the promise made in Dakar to support national education plans.

Not only is the share going through governments relatively small, but also appears to be declining in recent years. Between 2008 and 2011, the share of total aid to education by DAC donors disbursed through the public sector – including both recipient and donor governments - fell from 42% to 36% (Figure 5).

There are wide variations between donors. Some smaller donors, including Finland, Sweden and Switzerland, channel less than 20% of their aid through the public sector, favouring channelling their funds through multilateral organizations. Some of the largest donors to education, such as France, Germany and the United Kingdom, disburse a larger share of their aid through the public sector. But a closer analysis reveals that, for some of these donors, a significant proportion of aid to education channelled through the public

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41 The data allow track the following actors through which aid is channeled to be tracked: public sector (including the donor government itself and the recipient government), non-government organizations, multilateral organizations, and others (such as via universities or public-private partnerships).

42 The analysis begins in 2008 as prior to this reporting by many donors on how aid is channeled was much less robust with a lot of aid disbursed reported as being channeled in ‘unspecified’
sector is often within donor countries themselves. For instance, of the aid that France disburses through the public sector, the majority is through French government agencies leaving only 7% channelled through the recipient government agencies. For some donors, channelling of funds in this way is likely to reflect their spending on scholarships and imputed student costs. Japan and the United Kingdom were the two countries with the largest share of aid to education channelled through recipient governments in 2011, in excess of 30% (Figure 6).43

Figure 5: Distribution of bilateral aid to education by channel, 2008 and 2011

![Figure 5: Distribution of bilateral aid to education by channel, 2008 and 2011](image)

Note: In 2008, aid channelled through the public sector cannot be disaggregated between recipient or donor government channels; therefore, it is all classified as unspecified.


Figure 6: Distribution of bilateral aid to education by the top 10 donors, by channel, 2011

![Figure 6: Distribution of bilateral aid to education by the top 10 donors, by channel, 2011](image)


43 In some cases, such as for Germany and the United States, it is not possible to distinguish whether aid through the public sector is channelled through the donor government or through the recipient government. Moreover, in both countries, a large share of aid to education was channelled through ‘other’ actors.
One of the ways that governments channel funds directly to recipient governments is through general budgetary support (GBS). This type of aid delivery enables governments to prioritize how to spend the funds to implement their programmes, including in education. This approach is in line with the aid effectiveness agenda that has become prominent over the past decade. Despite this emphasis, overall disbursements of GBS have fallen from a high of US$3.5 billion in 2009 to US$2 billion in 2011. As a share of total bilateral aid, GBS has fallen from 4.8% in 2003 to 3.5% in 2009 and 2% in 2011. It is expected to fall further in coming years as many donors are scaling back on their earlier commitment to deliver aid through GBS. In the early part of the decade, the United Kingdom was by far the donor providing the highest share of its total aid through GBS, almost reaching 20% in 2003. But the United Kingdom has gradually moved away from this approach and, by 2011, this was down to just 5% - which is still one of the highest proportions of all bilateral donors.

On average, 7-8% of aid from DAC donors has been channelled via NGOs between 2008 and 2011. Some donors, such as Canada, Spain and the United States, channel a larger share of their funds through this route. While this can be an important means to reach children in difficult circumstances, it is unlikely to help to strengthen government systems in the longer term.

Multilateral organizations receive an important share of total bilateral aid to education. They receive funds via two routes – unearmarked for which the multilateral agency makes decisions on their allocation which may or may not reflect bilateral agency priorities; or funds that are earmarked by bilateral donors for particular purposes (such as education and/or for specific countries).

Unearmarked funding is the most important source of funds from bilateral to multilateral agencies. Between 2008 and 2011, these funds increased from 21% to 27% as a share of total education aid. A number of bilateral donors, including Japan, the Netherlands, Spain and the United States, have almost doubled the share of their aid channelled through multilateral organisations over this short period (Figure 7). There may be different reasons for these changes, including decreasing priority assigned to education which may result in bilateral donors being less committed to directly managing their aid programme.

**Figure 7: Share of bilateral aid to education channelled through multilateral organisations (unearmarked), by donor, 2008 and 2011**

![Graph showing the share of bilateral aid to education channelled through multilateral organisations (unearmarked), by donor, 2008 and 2011.](image)

*Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report team analysis based on OECD Creditor Reporting System (2013).*
Some donors, such as Australia, Canada, the Netherlands and Norway, choose to channel their aid to multilateral organizations through earmarked funding. In some of these cases, funding is earmarked for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the only pooled global funding mechanism for the sector.

Established in 2002 as the EFA Fast Track Initiative, GPE’s goal has been to accelerate progress towards education by promoting sustained increases to aid and more efficient spending, together with sound sector policies and adequate and sustainable domestic financing. While it does not report to DAC, an assessment of its data suggests that it has increased in size, jumping from being the 13th-largest donor in 2007 to being the 5th-largest donor in 2011, when its disbursements were at an all time high. However, the GPE’s funding has been smaller than hoped, and considerably smaller than comparable global funds in health. The 2011 replenishment generated US$1.5 billion for the years between 2011 and 2014, compared with the US$2.5 billion requested (Brookings Institution and UNESCO, 2013).

Are donors coordinating their efforts to support the achievement of education goals?

Strong global coordination by donors is important in education given that the sector has a very narrow donor base. In 2011, for instance, the top ten donors provided almost three-quarters of overall aid to education, and just three donors provided close to one-third of aid to basic education (Brookings Institution and UNESCO, 2013; UNESCO, 2012). In recent years, many bilateral donors have begun to concentrate their aid on fewer partnerships, with nearly all EU donors reducing the number of partner countries under the agreed EU Code of Conduct on Division of Labour and Complementarity.

However, the decision by donors on which recipient countries to prioritise and which to withdraw from has essentially been an inward looking process with little or no coordination at the global level. The Netherlands, for example, was amongst the top three donors to basic education over the past decade but decided to cut its aid to education in 2011 due to changing political and strategic priorities. This has not led to other aid donors filling the gap in countries from which the Netherlands has withdrawn its support, however. In Bolivia, Burkina Faso and Zambia, for example, both Denmark and the Netherlands are terminating education aid simultaneously, despite having been significant donors to these countries (GPE, 2013).

Whilst numerous mechanisms exist for coordination between different donor agencies, both internationally and within countries, this appears to have not influenced direct decisions on where donors should work and how, importantly, aid could be used to fill resource gaps to reach those children most in need (Brookings Institution and UNESCO, 2013). In Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, India, Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania, at least 16 bilateral DAC donors are active, while the Central African Republic, Chad, Eriteria and Guinea only have no more than five.

When a country has many donors, there is a concern about the pressure placed on governments to coordinate. This is especially true in the case of where many of the aid partnerships are identified as non-significant. In all those countries with at least 16 bilateral donors present, at least one-third of their aid partnerships are classified as non-significant (Figure 8).

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Based on OECD definition of significant aid partnerships which is either where (a) the donor is among the top donors that cumulatively provide 90% of education aid to that country and/ or (b) where the donor provides a larger
Note: The 41 countries included are the 36 low income countries plus five middle income countries with the largest number of out-of-school children.


Insufficient coordination amongst bilateral donors in determining their aid spending is also highlighted by the highly variable distribution of aid resources by primary-school aged child. The EFA Global Monitoring Report has calculated that it would cost around US$130 per primary-school aged child to provide an acceptable quality of education (UNESCO, 2010). On average, low income countries allocate US$41 per primary school aged child from their own budgets, and receive US$16 per child from aid donors, but with wide differences between countries. In Afghanistan, for instance, aid to basic education was US$39 per child in 2011; in Chad, however, it was just US$4 per child despite Chad having some of the poorest education indicators in the world. Haiti received US$63 in basic education per child whilst the equivalent in the Democratic Republic of Congo was just US$7. Kenya and Niger, two countries amongst the 10 with the highest out-of-school populations, receive less than US$10 per primary school aged child. Overall, 25 of these countries receive less than US$10 per child in basic education aid from DAC bilateral donors (Figure 9). There is a need for bilateral donors to coordinate better to ensure that countries in need of external resources are not left behind.
Figure 9: Aid to basic education per primary school child, 2011

Note: The 41 countries included are the 36 low income countries plus five middle income countries with the largest number of out-of-school children.

Conclusions

Domestic financing is the most important source for achieving education goals, and should remain so. Widening the tax base and ensuring an appropriate share of public spending is allocated to education would significantly increase resources to the sector. However, even with such reforms, poor countries are unlikely to be able to afford all the costs of education for the foreseeable future, particular given the financial needs associated not only with expanding access to education but also with improving educational quality. Innovations in financing from the private sector and contributions from non-DAC donors are currently very small, and not necessarily aligned with EFA objectives. Aid from DAC donors is, therefore, likely to remain an important part of the way forward for these countries to achieve education goals after 2015. The recent reduction in aid to education, therefore, urgently needs reversing.

In recent years, not only have bilateral donors reduced the share of their total aid that they allocate to education, but the amount of their aid to education channelled through recipient governments has also declined, while increasing the amount given as unearmarked aid to multilateral organizations. General budget support is rapidly losing its share in total aid. This means that some of the biggest achievements in the period since 2000, notably the focus on alignment behind national education plans backed by the use of pooled financing mechanisms, are in danger of being reversed. The aid effectiveness agenda which has been championed in conjunction with the focus on the MDGs not only needs to be revitalized, but also needs to be a more specific aspect of any post-2015 development framework.

The stocktaking exercise offered by the consultation process on the post-2015 development agenda presents an opportunity to reflect on the lessons learned, remind governments of the commitments made, and encourage the use of existing coordination mechanisms to ensure no country is left behind for lack of resources. The energies being rallied to consider what plans and targets should be set for the future of our children must ensure sufficient financing to achieve
them. This is why the EFA Global Monitoring Report is calling for the post-2015 education goals to include a specific target for financing by aid donors. Otherwise, disadvantaged children in the poorest countries will continue to pay the price.

References


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