

Highlights of the EFA Report 2010

Ten years have passed since the international community adopted the six Education for All goals in Dakar in 2000. The record since then has been mixed. While much has been achieved over the past decade, many of the world's poorest countries are not on track to meet the 2015 targets. Failure to reach the marginalized has denied many people their right to education. With the effects of the global economic crisis still being felt, there is a real danger that much of the progress of the past ten years will stall or be reversed. Education is at risk, and countries must develop more inclusive approaches, linked to wider strategies for protecting vulnerable populations and overcoming inequality.

Minimizing the impact of the financial crisis on education

The international community needs to identify the threat to education posed by the economic crisis and the rise in global food prices...

- Human development indicators are deteriorating. An estimated 125 million additional people could be pushed into malnutrition in 2009 and 90 million into poverty in 2010.
- With poverty rising, unemployment growing and remittances diminishing, many poor and vulnerable households are having to cut back on education spending or withdraw their children from school.
- National budgets in poor countries are under pressure. Sub-Saharan Africa faces a potential loss of around US\$4.6 billion annually in financing for education in 2009 and 2010, equivalent to a 10% reduction in spending per primary-school pupil.

...and develop an effective response:

- Provide up-front, sustained and predictable aid to counteract revenue losses, protect priority social spending and support progress in education.
- Convene a donor pledging conference in 2010 to close the Education for All financing gap.

Reaching the Education for All goals

There has been progress...

- The number of children out of school has dropped by 33 million worldwide since 1999. South and West Asia more than halved the number of children out of school – a reduction of 21 million.
- Some countries have achieved extraordinary advances. Benin started out in 1999 with one of the world's lowest net enrolment ratios but may now be on track for universal primary education by 2015.
- The share of girls out of school has declined from 58% to 54%, and the gender gap in primary education is narrowing in many countries.
- Between 1985–1994 and 2000–2007, the adult literacy rate increased by 10%, to its current level of 84%. The number of adult female literates has increased at a faster pace than that of males.

...but much remains to be done:

- Malnutrition affects around 175 million young children each year and is a health and an education emergency.
- There were 72 million children out of school in 2007. Business as usual would leave 56 million children out of school in 2015.
- Around 54% of children out of school are girls. In sub-Saharan Africa, almost 12 million girls may never enrol. In Yemen, nearly 80% of girls out of school are unlikely ever to enrol, compared with 36% of boys.
- Literacy remains among the most neglected of all education goals, with about 759 million adults lacking literacy skills today. Two-thirds are women.
- Millions of children are leaving school without having acquired basic skills. In some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, young adults with five years of education had a 40% probability of being illiterate. In the Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Guatemala, fewer than half of grade 3 students had more than very basic reading skills.
- Some 1.9 million new teacher posts will be required to meet universal primary education by 2015.

Reaching the marginalized

Governments are failing to address the root causes of marginalization in education. The new Deprivation and Marginalization in Education data set highlights the level of exclusion in eighty countries...

- In twenty-two countries, 30% or more of young adults have fewer than four years of education, and this rises to 50% or more in eleven sub-Saharan African countries.
- In twenty-six countries, 20% or more of young adults have fewer than two years of schooling and, in some countries, including Burkina Faso and Somalia, the share is 50% or more.
- Inequalities often combine to exacerbate the risk of being left behind. In Turkey, 43% of Kurdish-speaking girls from the poorest households have fewer than two years of education, while the national average is 6%; in Nigeria, 97% of poor Hausa-speaking girls have fewer than two years of education.
- Failure to address inequalities, stigmatization and discrimination linked to wealth, gender, ethnicity, language, location and disability is holding back progress towards Education for All.

...and the need to create inclusive education systems:

- Increase access and improve affordability for excluded groups by lowering cost barriers, bringing schools closer to marginalized communities and developing 'second-chance' programmes.
- Improve the learning environment by deploying skilled teachers equitably, targeting financial and learning support to disadvantaged schools, and providing intercultural and bilingual education.
- Expand entitlements and opportunities by enforcing laws against discrimination, providing social protection programmes and redistributing public finance.
- Develop disaggregated data collection systems to identify marginalized groups and monitor their progress.

Meeting the cost of Education for All

The record on aid for education is disappointing...

- Overall aid has been increasing, but commitments are falling short of the US\$50 billion increase pledged in 2005. Africa faces the greatest projected shortfall, estimated at US\$18 billion.
- Aid to education has been rising, but commitments have recently stagnated. Aid commitments to basic education fell by 22% to US\$4.3 billion in 2007.
- Aid to education is not always reaching those who need it most. Some donors continue to give insufficient priority to basic education. Countries affected by conflict are not receiving enough support, undermining prospects for recovery.
- Education lacks a strong multilateral framework for accelerated progress, suffering from a narrow donor base and an absence of funding from private sources.

...donors and recipient governments must both increase resources available to education and improve aid governance:

- Low-income countries could themselves make available an additional US\$7 billion a year – or 0.7% of GDP. Even with this effort, large financing gaps will remain. The Report estimates the financing gap to meet the EFA goals in low-income countries at US\$16 billion annually.
- Donors should strengthen efforts to implement the Paris agenda on aid effectiveness and review the balance of their support for the different levels of education.
- Donors must also scale up aid to countries affected by conflict, finding innovative ways of providing longer-term, coordinated support.
- The international multilateral framework for cooperation in education needs to be strengthened through fundamental reform of the EFA Fast Track Initiative.
- The United Nations should convene an emergency pledging conference in 2010 to mobilize the additional financing required and to fulfil the Dakar commitment. ■