

Global Campaign for Education Press Release

Immediate Release (New Report Launch 9 am EST 25th April 2009)

Make or Break: IMF's new lease on life must benefit Education for All

The Spring Meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) are a 'make or break' moment for whether the G20 deal will benefit the millions of children and adults struggling to get an education, according to a new policy report from the Global Campaign for Education (GCE). "Education on the Brink" shows that without significant changes to the IMF architecture and removal of conditionalities, the poorest nations will remain unable to lift themselves out of recession. Education systems will be left to languish without desperately-needed funds and the teacher workforce, already squeezed, is likely to face further pressure. The future of millions of children and illiterate adults now rests on whether the new cash injection given by the G20 to the IMF is accompanied by a substantive overhaul of macroeconomic policy frameworks, say GCE members.

"A good education is everyone's human right, essential for individual growth as well as the economic growth of every nation. Paying teachers is not a luxury expenditure, nor is it optional. There's not a single IMF worker who got to their position without a good education and a bunch of great teachers. Everyone should have this chance, and that means making the resources available to recruit, train and pay teachers", commented Kailash Satyarthi, GCE President.

There are 75 million children out of school and 776 million illiterate adults today. Yet, educated and healthy people have the best opportunities to participate in and make lasting contribution to their societies. Investment in education is thus the strongest line of defence for any country's economic survival and comeback. A person's earnings increase by 10% for each year of schooling they receive – translating to a 1% annual increase in GDP if good quality education is given to the entire nation. With estimates of unemployment increasing by 30 – 50 million in the developing world, and 200 million more people being pushed into extreme poverty, it's crucial that funding education is not constrained.

Whilst rich countries have launched fiscal stimulus packages to promote economic growth, this luxury is denied to poor nations. As long as IMF conditions continue it is unlikely that the poorest countries will be able to build on the fragile gains made in education over recent years. Poor countries must be allowed the flexibility in macro-economic policy to continue the good work they've started. Children waiting at the school gates should not be left out because of the short-sightedness of global institutions. It is crucial that the IMF carries out the review on loan conditionalities in poor countries that has been promised by Dominique Strauss Kahn. Richer countries should insist that the new mandate and lease of life they have given to the IMF is accompanied by a real commitment to reform the institution.

"Education is a long-term investment with long-term gains. Yet the Fund insists on rigid macro-economic conditions to ensure short-term financial 'stability' – defined only on their terms. Funding for education, from both domestic budgets and aid, must be substantial, long-term and predictable, so that education ministries can employ, train and pay the teachers that are needed to teach their citizens", said David Archer, GCE Board Member.

At the same time, the \$16 billion in external financing needed annually to reach 'Education for All' must be made available, for the long-term and in a predictable way.

"The world's poorest were not the cause of the financial storm battering the globe, yet they stand to lose the most in this global crisis. The money needed for education is a drop in the ocean of the hundreds of billions allocated for current bank bailouts, it must be made effectively available to allow everyone, no matter their age, to have the chance of a good quality education", commented Maria Khan, GCE Board Member..

Notes to Editors

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Report Details: **"Education on the Brink: Will the IMF's new lease on life ease or block progress towards education goals?"** authored by Global Campaign for Education, April 2009 is available on www.campaignforeducation.org. Contact alex@campaignforeducaiton.org for copies of the report, photos or more information.

Report Launch: *Saturday April 25, 2009 9-10:30 AM --MC C1 100 WB HQ 1818 H St NW, Washington DC (NB. this event is inside WB HQ during IMF/WB Spring Meetings, attendees will have to pre-registered to attend those meetings)*

Available for Interview:

Amy Gray, is the author of the report and the IFI Policy Officer for the Global Campaign for Education. She has worked on IMF and World Bank reform since 2000 in various roles with Interaction, Bank information centre, ActionAid, Oxfam and Public Services International. She has extensive experience in the Human Rights legal aid field in Central America.

Imad Sabi, is a GCE Board Member and representative of Oxfam Novib.

David Archer is GCE Board Member and Head of Education at ActionAid International. David has worked on literacy programmes since the 1980s, co-authored the REFLECT manual for participatory approaches to learning. His advocacy on education and adult literacy continues and he has spearheaded international research on IMF's affect on Education for All.

The **Global Campaign for Education**, founded in 1999, brings together major non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and teachers' unions in **more than 120 countries**. GCE promotes access to education as a basic human right and raises public awareness to create the political will for governments and other leaders in the international community to fulfil their promises to provide at least a free, public basic education for all children. Every April GCE organizes a week of campaigning on education called Global Action Week. This year's Action Week is called 'The Big Read' 20th – 26th April www.campaignforeducation.org/bigread