

The next generation: why the world's children need a Global Fund for Education For All

Introduction – Education For All: a dream for the 21st Century

Nine years ago, in the warm breeze of a Dakar Spring, representatives of 164 governments gathered at the World Education Forum. An in-depth assessment of the state of education revealed that the 1990s – the first decade of Education For All – had seen little if any progress on education rights. Faced with this stark reality and the increasingly vocal demands of campaigners, governments of rich and poor countries joined together to strike a new deal which went well beyond the warm words and good intentions of the past.

The Six EFA goals set for 2015:

- Expand early childhood care and education.
- Ensure all children, especially girls, complete free and compulsory, good quality primary education.
- Ensure equal access to learning and life-skills training for young people and adults.
- Achieve a 50% improvement in adult literacy rates.
- Achieve gender equity in primary and secondary education.
- Improve the quality of education – especially in literacy, numeracy and life-skills.

The Dakar Framework For Action committed its participants to a unique 'global compact' on education, encapsulated in this groundbreaking pledge:

'We affirm that no countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by a lack of resources.'

Almost one decade later, that promise – as yet unfulfilled – has never been more relevant.

We live in a time of immense challenges. As climate change looms large on the horizon, a major economic downturn is taking hold, threatening to reverse many fragile development gains made during the early part of the 21st century. Poor countries face an economic contraction of between \$270-\$700 billion as commodity prices decline, global trade collapses, trade finance and private capital flows dry up and remittances drop¹. Combined with the effect of high food and fuel prices during 2008, these factors will force an additional 200 million people into poverty². Progress in reducing infant mortality is expected to slow, leading to as many as 400,000 unnecessary deaths each year³.

For education, the prospects are no less daunting. Of 43 countries listed by the World Bank at risk of 'high exposure' to the crisis, 29 are already facing serious challenges in achieving

¹ UN Millennium Campaign Policy Overview for the G20 meeting 30 March 2009 <http://endpoverty2015.org/files/G20%20policy%20paper%20-%20UN%20Millennium%20Campaign.pdf>

² ILO. 2009. "Global Employment Trends for Women" http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/dgreports/dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_103456.pdf

³ Presentation to the UNESCO Futures Forum, Global Monitoring Report team, 2009

the Education For All goals⁴. Today, 75 million children, more than half of them girls, are out of primary school, and 776 million adults are illiterate. Additionally, 226 million adolescents are not attending secondary school. There remains a dramatic global divide not only in access to education, but also in learning achievement. International learning assessments reveal a major divide between richer and poorer countries. Two-thirds of all children arrive at primary school under-nourished or with a disability that will likely impair their education achievement throughout their lives. Unless urgent action is taken, tentative progress made in the field of education over the last 8 years will be undermined and another generation of children will be condemned to a life of poverty, hard labour and ignorance.

At the same time, there is hope from some quarters. The new United States President has indicated a commitment to creating a Global Fund for Education with an investment of at least \$2 billion from the US. Now advocates must seize this opportunity and ensure that it is delivered as part of a high-quality, multilateral and multi-partner effort backing national education plans. This commitment also provides a unique chance to leverage much-needed change in the international financing architecture for education. Now is the time to make the case for a bolder, bigger and more effective global initiative for education, building on the substantial achievements already made through the Education For All Fast-Track Initiative (FTI). A Global Fund For Education For All should not be a parallel or separate initiative, but should evolve from FTI to secure the gains made and extend them further and with more ambition.

This paper lays out the argument for and principles which should be adhered to in the development of a new global initiative. GCE will welcome new initiatives only if they adhere to these principles. GCE is mindful of the possibility that in times of change, many propositions with similar titles and broad aims can emerge. The purpose of this paper is to set out GCE's position on what a Global Fund for Education For All should deliver – this will form the basis of our on-going advocacy work and will inform our response to any initiatives in the forthcoming period.

A class act – education should be a priority now

Education provides one of the smartest, most cost-effective and most equitable ways forward out of this crisis. The links between education and other development benefits have been well-known to development experts for a long time, perhaps the reason why not one, but two of the EFA goals – universal primary education by 2015 and gender parity in education by 2005 – were adopted in the Millennium Development Goals.

- Educated people are healthier people. HIV/AIDS infection rates are halved among young people who finish primary school. If every girl and boy received a complete primary education, at least 7 million new cases of HIV could be prevented in a decade⁵.
- Education combats hunger. Gains in women's education made the most significant difference in reducing malnutrition between 1970-1995, a more important role than increased food availability⁶.
- Education saves lives. A child born to an educated mother is more than twice as likely to survive to the age of five⁷.

Perhaps most striking in the current context is the economic case for education.

⁴ *Ibid*

⁵ GCE, *Learning to Survive: How education for all would save millions of young people from HIV/AIDS* (London: GCE, 2004).

⁶ L. Smith and L. Haddad, 'Explaining Child Malnutrition in Developing Countries.' *International Food Policy Research Institute Research Report No. 111* (Washington DC: International Food Policy Research Institute).

⁷ D. Abu-Ghaida and S. Klasen, 'The Economic and Human Development Costs of Missing the Millennium Development Goal on Gender Equity,' *World Bank Discussion Paper 29710* (Washington: World Bank, 2004).

Good quality education equips people with the knowledge and skills they need to gain employment and increase their incomes, which in the right conditions can have a real impact on overall poverty and growth at a national level. Studies have consistently shown that more schooling is associated with improved economic performance at both an individual and societal level. 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 offered to the entire population⁸. Not only that, if done right, it can lead to a more equitable development for societies striving to ensure that benefits accrue to everyone⁹. All of this builds a compelling case that education is one of the soundest investments any country can make.

Experience over the last 8 years since Dakar has shown that Education For All is indeed an achievable dream. A combination of stronger political will in some developing countries, and aid and debt relief from rich countries has delivered real results. Enrolment rates increased by a remarkable 36% in Africa between 2000 and 2006. Fourteen African countries have abolished fees in education and average expenditure on education in low-income countries has risen significantly, reaching an average of 20% share of total domestic expenditure¹⁰. The gender gap in enrolments, if not in quality and completion, is slowly closing¹¹. From 2000 to 2004 aid to basic education increased steadily, making a real and tangible impact; in countries as diverse as Madagascar, Kenya and Guyana, national efforts have been bolstered by external resources matched to government plans. Regrettably, as will be seen, below, this level of effort by donors has not been sustained.

Yet these significant steps forward must not lead to complacency, especially in the current climate. Progress in primary enrolment is fragile, and the achievements made have been tarnished by the neglect shown to other key aspects of education provision. GCE's 2008 Global School Report 'No Excuses' showed that at the mid-point to 2015 a number of key challenges remained:

- Education quality has not kept pace with enrolment. Only fourteen nations are in the happy position of graduating 90% or more of all children from primary school. Tragically, the School Report analysis showed that in over fifty countries, around half of all children never complete primary school, whether by dint of never having enrolled, or because they drop out before reaching the final grade.
- An unacceptable proportion of the population reach adulthood without even acquiring the most basic reading and writing skills. Over 770 million adults are illiterate. One in four women cannot attain even the most minimalist definition of literacy. Just a few countries account for the largest proportion of the problem – according the 2008 Global Monitoring Report, more than three-quarters of the world's illiterate people live in only fifteen countries, including eight of the nine high population countries: Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Nigeria and Pakistan.
- The situation of pre-primary education is especially desperate, with no more than a quarter of all countries managing to give the majority of their children the best start in life. Early childhood care and education is one of the biggest determinants of equity in educational outcomes, so this is a striking signal of how education policy and expenditure currently fails to give children from poorer households having the same chance of success as their richer peers.
- Secondary education fares slightly better than early childhood care and education in most parts of the world, but in sub-Saharan Africa the picture is devastating, with 22

⁸ Hanushek, E.A. and Woermann, L. *The Role of Education Quality for Economic Growth*. World Bank, 2007

⁹ EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009 *Overcoming inequality: why governance matters*. UNESCO 2009

¹⁰ FTI Progress Report 2007

¹¹ *ibid*

countries offering secondary education to less than one-quarter of the school-aged population.

- Only 18 out of 113 countries that missed the gender parity goal at primary and secondary level in 2005 stand a chance of achieving it by 2015, on current trends. In 54 countries, less than 50% of girls enrol in secondary education.

The evidence is clear that progress in education is possible and that it will deliver real results for global development and growth. GCE therefore believes that the time is now ripe for a redoubling of international effort on global education, backed by major donors in recognition of the need to fulfil their prior commitments. By moving quickly to defend the gains already made in education and extend them further, rich and poor countries can work together to secure a better, fairer, safer future for all children and adults.

At the crossroads: why Education For All needs a new global effort

The global compact agreed at Dakar in 2000 implied a major shift in relations between donors and partner countries, both reflecting and contributing to a wider trend in thinking about development assistance. The Millennium Development Goals and later the Monterrey Conference on Financing For Development secured further commitment by donors to scaling up aid linked to policy performance and development outcomes. Building on these, in 2002 the Education For All Fast-Track Initiative was initiated by the World Bank with the support of the governments of the Netherlands and Canada. Much has been accomplished through and within the Education For All Fast-Track Initiative, which continues to evolve in response to changing circumstances and opportunities.

Nevertheless GCE believes that a major new drive both to increase external financing of education and re-structure the global system for mobilising it, is needed to return to and revive the original vision of a global compact on education. Now is the time to build on the achievements of the post-Dakar period to do more, do it better and do it faster.

GCE is now convinced that a breakthrough in global education can best be achieved by bringing together and enhancing existing financing initiatives under the banner of a 'Global Fund for Education For All,' to improve mutual accountability and focus on results. Building on Gene Sperling's seminal paper of 2008, setting out the case for a Global Fund for Education¹², this briefing sets out the rationale for a GCE call for such an initiative, and lays out key principles and ways forward to achieve it.

Promises to keep: more major donors must step up commitments to meet external financing need

Campaigners looked forward with optimism to a new era in funding basic education in the period after 2000, and agreements in the global arena seemed to support this position. And indeed, it must be noted that progress was made in mobilising additional external finance for basic education since Dakar. This is especially remarkable when compared to the previous decade, which actually saw a drop in aid for this vital sector. However, closer analysis of aid data shows clearly that the system put in place to deliver the global compact on education has not fully succeeded in ensuring accountability by donors to their side of the bargain. While some have performed well, lack of support from the major economies of the world has prevented any true breakthrough in global education provision. This,

¹² *A Global Education Fund, Toward a True Global Compact on Universal Education. Gene Sperling, Center for Universal Education, 2008*

despite repeated commitments in the G8, UN conferences and other important fora. The Education For All Global Monitoring Report estimates that a total of \$11 billion per year is needed to ensure universal primary completion and make progress in early childhood care and education and adult literacy. GCE uses the estimate of \$16 billion per year generated by the UK government¹³ which includes extra provision for inclusion of hard-to-reach children and contribution to lower secondary education. However, aid to basic education has never reached anywhere near these totals, leaving many countries unable to truly deliver on the EFA goals. The Preliminary Report of the Mid-Term Evaluation of FTI¹⁴ has provided a useful overview of the situation, some of which is summarised here.

Aid commitments

Aid commitments to basic education climbed steadily from 1999, reaching a high of over \$5 billion in 2005¹⁵. This encouraging trajectory did not continue, however. Commitments to basic education fell back sharply in 2005 and have continued to disappoint since then. GCE's analysis (see table below) shows that under \$4 billion was committed in 2007, the latest year for which data is available. It appears that donors have backed away from their side of the Dakar compact.

Aid disbursements

Aid disbursements have followed a slightly steadier growth pattern, and have increased each year to 2007¹⁶. But disbursements traditionally lag behind commitments by some years and therefore are likely to suffer a similar decline. The 2009 Education For All Global Monitoring Report notes that 'there is a risk that the slowdown in growth in commitments since 2004 will soon be reflected in slower growth or stagnation of disbursements.'

Donor profile

Another factor that gives cause for concern is the fact that growth in aid to basic education actually depends on very few donors, and does not include the richest nations which should bear a greater portion of the total global burden. Table 1 shows that most countries in the G8 have shown poor progress in meeting their fair share of the financing required for basic education, collectively giving less than 25% of the UN-estimated EFA external financing requirement of \$11 billion. This paltry performance suggests a failure of political will on the part of these countries to invest in the future prospects of developing countries.

¹³ *From Commitment to Action: Education. UK Department for International Development/Treasury 2006*

¹⁴ *Draft Mid-Term Evaluation of the EFA Fast Track Initiative, Preliminary Report. Cambridge Education, Mokoro, Oxford Policy Management. 2009*

¹⁵ *Ibid*

¹⁶ *Ibid*

Country	Annual aid commitments to basic education in 2007, US\$ million current	Donor GNI as % of Total OECD GNI	Fair share of \$11 billion based on donor GNI, \$ million	% of fair share actually committed	Fair share of \$16 billion based on donor GNI, \$ million	% of fair share actually committed
Norway	195.5	1.1	116	169%	168	116%
Netherlands	331.7	2.1	227	146%	330	100%
New Zealand	49.2	0.3	35	139%	51	96%
Ireland	86.4	0.6	64	136%	93	93%
Luxembourg	11.5	0.1	12	94%	18	65%
United Kingdom	703.3	7.6	838	84%	1,218	58%
Sweden	94.0	1.2	137	69%	199	47%
Spain	218.8	3.7	412	53%	600	36%
Australia	116.2	2.2	244	48%	354	33%
Canada	188.9	3.8	415	45%	604	31%
Denmark	41.0	0.8	93	44%	136	30%
France	323.7	7.0	767	42%	1,116	29%
Belgium	51.3	1.2	135	38%	196	26%
Finland	24.9	0.7	73	34%	107	23%
Germany	315.6	9.0	987	32%	1,435	22%
Switzerland	27.3	1.2	134	20%	195	14%
Portugal	12.8	0.6	63	20%	92	14%
Austria	19.8	1.0	107	19%	156	13%
United States	703.9	37.3	4,102	17%	5,966	12%
Japan	202.9	12.1	1,333	15%	1,938	10%
Italy	46.1	5.6	616	7%	896	5%
Greece	6.2	0.8	91	7%	132	5%

Source: OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System (See Annex 1 for Note on calculation)

Aid distribution

The period since 1999 has shown some mildly encouraging trends concerning the profile of aid distribution by need. At the start, middle and higher-income countries accounted for the largest share of aid commitments for basic education, but by 2006 priorities had shifted, with the least developed countries taking over this position. This is a clear signal that donors have begun to re-orient aid to where the need is greater. The geographic profile is more mixed. Sub-Saharan Africa, containing almost half the world's out-of-school children did experience significant growth in aid to basic education immediately after Dakar, but the trend since 2002 has been downwards. The region with the second largest out-of-school population, South and West Asia, received a disproportionately low share of between 10% and 20% of aid for the period¹⁷.

Millions like Freeman are missing out on the chance to enter the school gates because of this miserliness.

¹⁷ Ibid

Freeman's story

Freeman Gadri is 15 years old. Until his recent liberation, he was enslaved to work 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year as a fisherman's assistant in the Volta Region of Ghana. He did this from the age of 6 years old. His daily routine involved rising at 4am, in the cold of the morning, to lay nets in the lake. Because of his age and size, much of his day would be spent bailing out water from the bottom of his master's boat. Freeman was also made to dive deep into the cold water to disentangle trapped nets, keeping him in the water for hours. Beatings and abuse were a regular part of his life.



Freeman's life was transformed when he was rescued from labour 4 years ago, and reunited with his mother. He finally fulfilled his dream of attending school, and is now studying building at college.

A global architecture fit for a global compact: Has the Education For All Fast-Track Initiative (FTI) fulfilled its potential?

Origins

After the disappointment of the 1990s, civil society activists, governments and education donors were determined to put in place an effective global architecture to make good on the promise that countries with viable education strategies should have sufficient good-quality financing to deliver them. GCE's platform at the Dakar conference called for a Global Initiative for EFA, to put in place structures and approaches to hold governments and donors mutually accountable for increased funding and for results.

As noted above, the FTI was partly designed as a response to this call. It took the groundbreaking approach of centring efforts on 'credible' national country plans for achieving universal primary completion. Governments were to take the lead in developing these plans and shoulder the majority of the burden for financing them. The FTI Partnership was set up to both encourage and respond to governments' commitment to improved performance. This would happen through a transparent, performance-based framework in which recipient and donor countries worked together, based on an analysis of key factors leading to success in achieving universal primary completion in a number of successful countries¹⁸. Specifically, it set out to fill four 'gaps': data, policy, capacity and financing. Particular attention was paid to the questioning of financing, with the original FTI Action Plan calling for:

- A significant increase in aid to basic education in poor countries most in need, especially sub-Saharan Africa
- Increased assistance to recurrent budget support
- Improved efficiency of aid, use of pooled support, Sector-Wide approaches and programmatic approaches
- Lower transaction costs with improved alignment and harmonisation of aid
- Support for country-led efforts with greater stakeholder participation

'In the compact, governments will demonstrate their commitment to education through efforts to transform their education systems, in response to which external partners will provide financial and technical support in a transparent, predictable and flexible manner'¹⁹

Further innovations of the FTI model included a commitment to generating a demonstration effect by 'fast-tracking' aid to countries achieving FTI endorsement. There was marked resistance to developing any kind of global fund approach from key stakeholders. This was informed by early experience of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and by developments in the aid effectiveness sphere suggesting that country ownership, alignment and harmonisation were best supported by modalities such as direct budget support and sector programme support, rather than vertical funds. Thus FTI's development evolved an approach whereby assessment, endorsement and resource mobilisation for country plans would all occur at the country level. Subsequently, when it was realised that a number of countries without significant donor presence and financing should still qualify for FTI support, a 'Catalytic Fund' (CF) was created, making short-term external finance available from a pooled fund, based on the idea that such an input would indeed 'catalyse' further in-country donor support.

¹⁸ *A Chance For Every Child: Achieving Education For All by 2015* Bruns, B., Mingait, A., and Rakotomalala, R. World Bank 2003

¹⁹ *Education For Dynamic Economies: Action Plan to Accelerate Progress Towards Education For All*, World Bank, 2002

'Given its transitional role, the CF is expected to remain small relative to support provided by the development partner community as a whole.'²⁰

Two steps forward, one step back? Partial progress of FTI

Since inception, FTI has remained the sole global initiative for education (a remarkable fact in itself, when compared to the 80 or so schemes in the sphere of global health), and has seen some significant achievements. Following a slow start, it has expanded to endorse 37 developing countries, and retained an at times fragile consensus to keep major donors on board, including all G8 nations. There is growing evidence of positive impact on the achievement of universal primary completion. For example, FTI countries in Africa show considerably higher enrolment rates than those outside the initiative (52% as compared to 23%) over the period 2000-2006²¹. The primary completion rate also grew faster in FTI countries²². However, the Preliminary Report of the Mid-Term Evaluation of FTI²³ urges that caution be exercised in attributing these effects solely to FTI, due to the lack of time to discern effect, the purposive nature of country selection for FTI endorsement, and the interaction of FTI with other, pre-existing processes. Nevertheless, early assessments seem to indicate that FTI has had some impact at least in the sub-sector of primary education, its main focus. Individual country experiences also suggest progress has accelerated because of FTI support.

Following abolition of school fees in Kenya in 2003 enrolment surged with over a million more children going to school for the first time. Using grants from the FTI Catalytic Fund, the World Bank's IDA and UK Department for International Development, Kenya successfully established two schemes which gave direct responsibility to primary school committees for decisions, one on textbook purchases and the other for general requirements. Over 18,000 primary schools received per capita grants and established committees in charge of operating bank accounts and making real decisions on the disbursement of these funds. The system is transparent, with committees posting the amounts in the fund and how they have been utilised on the outside wall of the school. Audits have shown that the schemes are functioning with a high level of probity and there is a real sense of grassroots ownership. Indeed, it is reported that due to its success, communities are requesting that similar schemes are established in the health sector.

Guyana is a sparsely populated country that includes secluded Amazon-rainforest areas. For children in these remote areas, going to school poses significant challenges. With support of the Education for All Fast Track Initiative, the government of Guyana is successfully implementing a program to increase the school enrolment of children in the remote regions. The FTI-supported project has several components including the payment of remote areas incentives where teachers are paid a bonus for accepting a hardship post. Furthermore, it finances the establishment of learning resource centres, the free distribution of text books, the construction of teachers' quarters and the provision of a hot-meal school feeding program. As a result, enrolment figures have increased significantly.

Source: FTI website last checked 13.04.09

²⁰ FTI Framework, 2004

²¹ Fact sheet on FTI Progress Report, 2008

²² *Ibid*

²³ Draft Mid-Term Evaluation of the EFA Fast Track Initiative, Preliminary Report. Cambridge Education, Mokoro, Oxford Policy Management. 2009

FTI pioneered a number of important processes that are considered to be best practice examples in the aid effectiveness world. Work to develop tools and approaches such as the Appraisal Guidelines, Indicative Framework and more recently the Strengthening Country-Level Processes work, have helped to earn plaudits for its work in improving country ownership, harmonisation, alignment and mutual accountability²⁴. Education has been fortunate to avoid the fragmentation of effort, distortion of country priorities or 'cannibalisation' of human resources that has prompted criticism on similar efforts in the health sector²⁵. FTI is in large part responsible for this positive experience. These achievements should be learned from, celebrated, and defended.

However, there is another, less satisfactory, side to the FTI story. As highlighted above, FTI has not had the expected impact on global aid to basic education. Successive EFA Global Monitoring Reports have remarked on the shortfall in external aid delivery, with the latest GMR remarking that this represents a 'collective failure' on the part of donors to live up to their side of the bargain. This in itself represents a major shortcoming of FTI, which was supposed to provide the major galvanising force towards meeting the Dakar global compact. Moreover, despite progress on the aid effectiveness agenda within FTI, too much aid to education still remains outside programme-based support: almost 50% of aid for education according to the Preliminary Report of the Mid-Term Evaluation of FTI²⁶. This means that countries are not able to allocate funds towards the core running costs of education such as training, hiring and retaining teachers.

Teachers Needed! How global aid to education has failed to tackle the teacher crisis

The UN has clearly shown that 18 million teachers will need to be trained and hired between now and 2015. Lack of external funds has already forced countries to rely on untrained and contract teachers, in some cases (for example, Senegal) reaching 50% of the total teacher workforce. The shortage of professional teachers is recognised by UNESCO and the host government Norway as a 'formidable barrier to furthering progress' requiring 'an unprecedented and urgent effort'. It is therefore obvious that when considering the financing needed to achieve the Education for All goals and MDGs 2 and 3 – the cost of recruiting, training and employing more teachers is fundamental. Teachers are the lifeblood of an education system.

Yet current aid modalities do not assist countries to be able to plan for a managed expansion of the teacher profession. Teacher salaries typically account for 70-90% of education expenditure, which must be fully budgeted for in at least a three-year medium-term expenditure framework. For ODA to be included towards this total, it needs to be both predictable and available to the core running costs of education, typically through either general budget support or sector budget support. These aid modalities allow governments flexibility to spend aid on the mainstream expenditure items in the education budget. However, donors remain reluctant to contribute their aid in this progressive fashion, preferring to support tied aid, projects or technical assistance. This means that the funds are effectively ringfenced and cannot be used to support the core running costs of teachers, with donors doing effectively little or nothing to tackle the teacher crisis.

In many cases donors do not understand or attempt to monitor their contribution to closing the teacher gap. According to the 2009 EFA Global Monitoring Report only 10% of aid to basic education is spent via direct budget support, amounting to just over \$400 million per year. 80% of this could reasonably be assumed to be supporting teacher salaries, meaning that a total of \$320m per year is available, in countries deemed eligible to receive support in this way. A further 34% of aid to basic education is in the form of 'sector programme support' to education ministries- equivalent to \$1.3 billion per annum. There is no data on how much of this is available for recurrent costs/teacher salaries, however, if we assume that 1/3 of it is, this means another amount equivalent to \$440 million per year. Adding these shares together, we come up with a figure of just \$760m a year in support to teacher salaries – around 17% of total aid to basic education. Even if donors were to increase aid to basic

²⁴ See, for example: 'Integrating Global Partnership Programs With Country-Led National Programs: Synthesis Of Findings And Recommendations', OECD-DAC 2006; 'Progress Report on Implementing the Paris Declaration for the Accra High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness', OECD-DAC 2008

²⁵ Eurodad Issues Note: 'The Challenge of Vertical Funds' 2008

²⁶ *Ibid*

education to meet the external financing requirement for primary education alone (\$9 billion per annum) keeping the shares the same, this would mean that around \$1.5 billion would be available to developing countries struggling to increase the teacher workforce – surely far less than what is needed.

This problem is compounded by lack of predictability and short-termism. In most donor countries, aid budgets are appropriated annually, leaving them unable to pledge support formally over the medium term. Aid allocation criteria are sometimes not well defined and vary over time, and donor agencies are increasingly required to demonstrate how past aid has been used before making longer-term commitments for the future. Ironically this more cautious approach ensures an efficiency loss - bilateral aid tends to be granted only on a 1-2 year basis which ensures it cannot be spend on recurrent costs like expanding the teacher workforce, because recipient countries cannot take the risk that insufficient funds might prevent them from financing the recurrent budget in future. Countries' lack of confidence in the predictability of donor support is starkly illustrated by the fact that around half of FTI Catalytic Fund monies are used for the procurement of textbooks, and just 13% is used for teacher salaries. While textbooks are of course a crucial aspect of quality education, these proportions are the reverse of what would be expected to reflect actual priority expenditure.

From GCE Briefing for the EFA High-Level Group, December 2008

The picture is even more disappointing when considering FTI's specific record on providing sufficient financing to endorsed countries. While the overall total financing requirement could be seen as a larger problem of global aid provision, this is squarely and firmly FTI's challenge – and it remains unsolved and growing. Providing country-by-country data on financing gaps has proved to be a major problem for the FTI Secretariat and has severely hampered efforts of advocates in holding donors accountable for making good on the commitment to mobilise in-country resources to enable plans to be fulfilled. However, what is clear is that year-on-year the collective gap for FTI-endorsed plans has grown exponentially.

One-sided Global Compact

As can be seen from the table below, low-income countries have done admirably well in raising domestic funds – over 80% of the money for these plans will come from domestic resources. In some instances, notably Rwanda, Ghana and Madagascar, the donors too have stepped up the pace – this must be applauded.

But tragically some of those facing the biggest challenges have remained stranded, having raised the hopes of their populations in vain. They have taken bold steps to open the doors of learning to all, including such measures as the abolition of user fees and active pursuit of policies aiming to redress the gender balance. In light of the financing shortfalls, the message their experience sends is: your efforts may not be rewarded.

Could do better – Mali's experience of aid to education

Mali is one of five Francophone African countries that have around a million children out of school. It needs to recruit around 40,000 teachers between now and 2015 to meet increased demand and replace teachers leaving the profession. Currently there is just one teacher to every 53 primary school pupils, and one to every 70 children of primary school age.

There have been efforts to increase teacher numbers but lack of resources means that these have to a large extent been at the expense of quality. More than four out of ten teachers have not even completed junior secondary schools, and nearly six in ten have no teaching qualifications. In community schools, where salaries are much lower than in public schools, the statistics are even more stark: nearly six in every ten teachers have not completed junior secondary school, and as many as nine in ten have no teaching qualifications. The government's response has been to implement a programme called SARPE (Stratégie Alternative de Recrutment de Personnel d'Enseignement, SARPE) which trains teachers in just 90 days, putting them into the classroom in half that time.

"What is clear is that there is a terrible lack of teachers... SARPE is producing what is possible, not what is needed. You cannot train a teacher in 45 days with a magic wand. These poor teachers, who can't really teach, are stood in front of a class of 80 to 100 pupils and told to get going with no materials"

Kady Baby, Forum of African Women Educationalists coalition/coalition EPT

Yet, despite these evident pressing needs, Mali is struggling to secure aid to improve and expand its education system. Mali's plan for the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) was endorsed in September 2007. For 2008 and 2009, \$8.7 million was committed from the FTI Catalytic Fund – nowhere near enough to fill the education financing gap (approx \$40 million in 2008) as this initiative is intended to do – a terrible indictment of how donors have failed to keep the Dakar promise that 'no country committed to EFA shall suffer through lack of resources.'

Fifteen donors provide aid for education in Mali, but the vast majority comes from just two donors. Canada and the Netherlands together provided 76% of all education aid and 95% of the aid for basic education in 2006. Other donors need to do more to fill the gap.

Donors also fall short on committing their aid to government priorities and programmes, through sector budget support, and budget support to allow the government the funds it needs to invest in recurrent costs like teachers' salaries. Only 13% of education aid in 2006 was delivered via sector budget support (SBS), and Mali also receives very little general budget support. In 2006, only six of its 20 donors gave any general budget support. In total in 2006, Mali received \$140 million of aid as general budget support in 2006, just one-sixth of all its aid.

Moreover General Budget Support to Mali has been highly unpredictable over the last five years and looks set to continue to vary immensely year on year. There is a need for donors to not only improve the disbursement of their aid, but to provide more budget support over a long term basis in a predictable manner. Until the financing gaps are filled, on a basis that allows Mali to hire teachers, it is clear that the education system will be hobbled by serious problems, with devastating effects for a generation of learners.

Summarised from Delivering Education Aid in Mali (2008), Oxfam Research Report. Oxford 2008

Estimated financing needs for FTI countries

Countries	US\$ millions			
	2006	2007	2008	
Albania	Primary program cost	162.8	173.2	178.5
	Financing gap	14	12.9	11.9
Burkina Faso	Primary program cost	92	92	92
	Financing gap	19.8	19.8	19.8
Cambodia	Primary program cost	343.1	330.1	338.2
	Financing gap	146.5	123.3	141.5
Cameroon	Primary program cost		239.9	261.3
	Financing gap		0	0
Djibouti	Primary program cost	32.6	34	35.3
	Financing gap	0	0	6
Ethiopia	Primary program cost	395.8	395.8	395.8
	Financing gap	163.6	163.6	163.6
Gambia, The	Primary program cost	15.2	15.2	15.2
	Financing gap	0	5.3	5.3
Ghana	Primary program cost	195.4	195.4	195.4
	Financing gap	3.2	0	3.2
Guinea	Primary program cost	144.5	144.5	144.5
	Financing gap	25.8	25.8	25.8
Guyana	Primary program cost	78.2	78.2	78.2
	Financing gap	0	4	4
Honduras	Primary program cost	375	375	375
	Financing gap	0	0	0
Kenya	Primary program cost	1,318.70	1,410.00	1,418.90
	Financing gap	37.0	96.1	133.1
Kyrgyz Rep.	Primary program cost		167.3	186.3
	Financing gap		0	0
Lesotho	Primary program cost	89.1	90.4	92.9
	Financing gap	0	0	6.9
Madagascar	Primary program cost	166.9	137.5	195.5
	Financing gap	48.3	10	84.3
Mali	Primary program cost	115.3	150.3	160.9
	Financing gap	0	7.2	16.5
Mauritania	Primary program cost	31.4	31.4	31.4
	Catalytic fund	0	0	0
	Financing gap	6.2	6.2	6.2
Moldova	Primary program cost	38.6	40.6	42.2
	Financing gap			4.4
Mongolia	Primary program cost	113.5	128.7	134.1
	Financing gap	25.2	9.2	12.5
Mozambique	Primary program cost	210	210	210
	Financing gap	96.9	96.9	96.9
Nicaragua	Primary program cost	122.5	126.3	135.0
	Financing gap	7	7	14.6
Niger	Primary program cost	126.9	155.8	172.6
	Financing gap	7.7	49.6	79.5
Rwanda	Primary program cost		164	182
	Financing gap		0	27
Senegal	Primary program cost		197.1	206.9
	Financing gap	26	25	28
Timor-Leste	Primary program cost	23.7	21.8	20.8
	Financing gap	0	1.5	8.2
Tajikistan	Primary program cost	120.3	143	153
	Financing gap	0	16.7	34.3
Vietnam	Primary program cost	660	660	660
	Financing gap	13	13	13
Yemen	Primary program cost	449	464	480
	Financing gap	73	62	83

Source: FTI Secretariat 2007. Updated figures for 2008 and estimate for 2009 not yet available

This should serve as an indictment of donor behaviour, and clearly illustrates their failure to live up to the Dakar compact and to FTI as its implementation initiative. But it also a wake-up call to all those with a stake in the global financing architecture for basic education. It poses serious questions as to whether the much-vaunted country-led resource mobilisation model developed through FTI is actually delivering.

It seems clear, then, that the accountability arrangements for in-country resource mobilisation through FTI have not supported the proper fulfilment of its mandate. There are few formal opportunities for donors to be called to account for their actions at country level, and there is a paucity of timely and adequate information about the financing gaps, aid commitments and donor intentions. This fundamental shortfall in external financing has led some to question whether the model of FTI galvanising in-country donor support is truly viable. As the Preliminary Report of the Mid-Term Evaluation of FTI²⁷ puts it:

'...the formulation is seriously implausible in expecting a local education donor group to be able to broker a meaningful collective funding commitment that no individual agency takes direct responsibility for.'

Mind the gap: the Catalytic Fund response

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given this apparent flaw in FTI's model, over time the Catalytic Fund of FTI has assumed greater importance, as pressure mounted for FTI to ensure that endorsed plans received adequate financing to be feasibly implemented. From 2006, the Catalytic Fund became available to all low-income countries with endorsed plans (rather than just donor orphans)²⁸. Demand on the Fund grew exponentially, and in the course of a short period (May 2007 to September 2008) the CF Committee allocated some \$627 million to 12 countries.

But unhappily, this growth coincided with increasing concern on the part of the World Bank, acting as trustee of the CF, about responsible oversight of monies on behalf of global funds. In late 2007 the World Bank Executive Board decided that all trust funds should be subject to the same safeguards and financial management procedures as IDA operations. Subsequently, all FTI Trust Funds were taken into full management control of the World Bank, meaning that full financial management and safeguards assessments applied to their operation. The result was a devastating delay to CF disbursement, meaning that between May 2007 and September 2008, only \$3.2 million out of the allocations made were disbursed.

Education Ministers were left high and dry, having made political commitments on the basis that funds were imminent. Several expressed concerns. Donors, too, were displeased and embarrassed by the situation. The Dutch development minister was forced to explain to Parliament that, as a result of slow FTI uptake, the Ministry would miss an official aid target mandated in legislation. Although considerable effort has been made by both donors and World Bank officials to improve the situation since September 2008, overall Catalytic Fund disbursement rates remain disappointingly low, at 34% of total funds committed to country plans²⁹. This has led to concern by campaigners and some policy-makers that the Catalytic Fund is an unsuitable destination for a rapid and substantial increase in funds at this time.

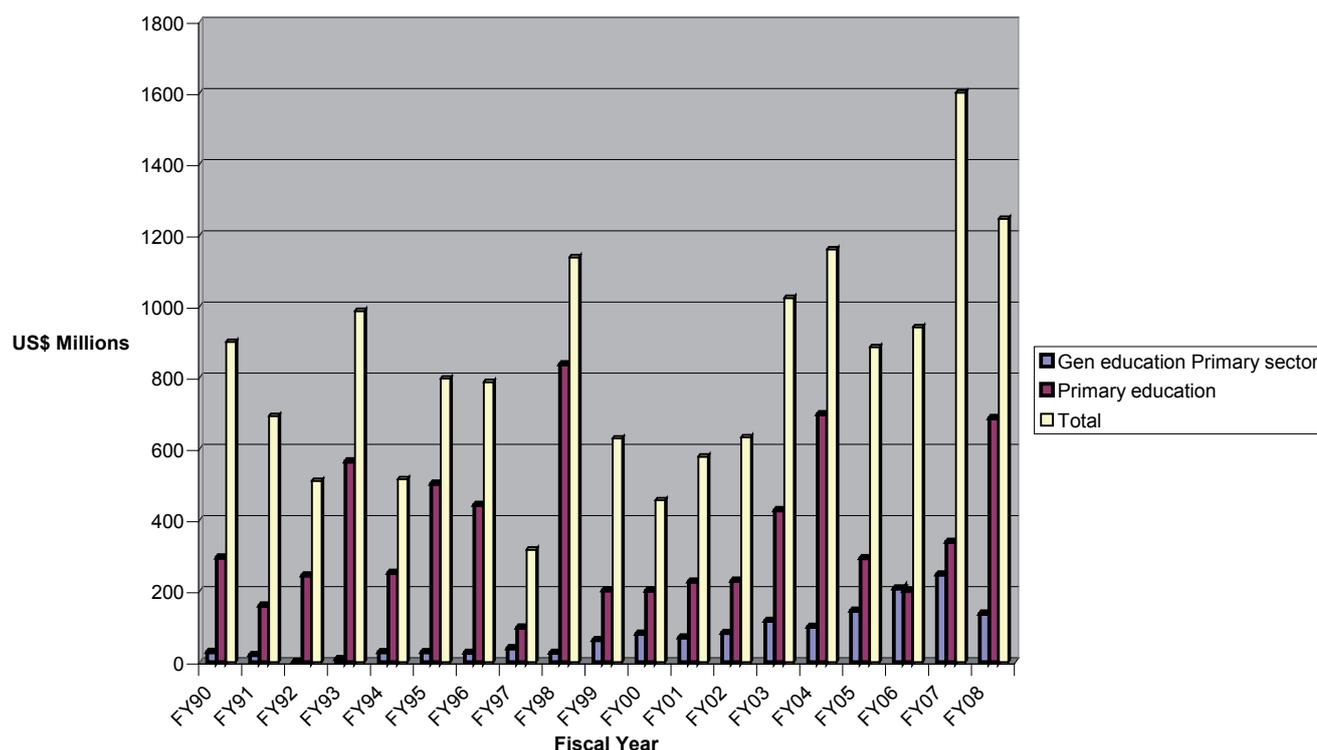
At the same time, the World Bank, historically a major financier of basic education and mandated to expand this role under FTI, has appeared to pull back direct investing in primary education. A 2008 report from RESULTS Education Fund showed that assistance for primary education from IDA has in fact decreased since 2002 – a 13% decline in nominal terms over three-year averages 2002-2004 and 2005-7.

²⁷ *Ibid*

²⁸ *FTI Partnership Meeting Minutes, Cairo, 2006*

²⁹ *Fti Catalytic Fund Annual Status Report Oslo, Norway, December 13, 2008*

New World Bank IDA Commitments to Education



The findings are clear:

- 1) Overall education investments at all levels, peaked in 2007 at around \$1.6 billion.
- 2) General education (education projects implemented through other sectors) as a share of total education lending has also increased – 50% of the General Education sub-sector is typically said to go towards primary. The overall trend is therefore an increase in primary education projects being implemented through other sectors.
- 3) Primary education projects (through the education sector, or Human Development Network) have decreased as a proportion of total education investments since 2004, with the exception of Fiscal Year 2008.

In 2008, the Bank did invest \$686 million directly in primary education—however \$600 million went to just one country, India, for its Elementary Education Project, while according to the Bank, only \$44 million was invested in all of sub-Saharan Africa directly in primary education.

And by excluding last year's unprecedented investment in India's primary education and focusing in on the last decade, a worrying picture emerges about the World Bank's role financing basic education. Since 2004, investments in primary education have not only decreased in real terms but they have also decreased as a percentage of all education investments. The World Bank Education Sector Strategy Update from 2006 supports the view of FTI's Catalytic Fund grants as a substitute for World Bank primary education investments, by stating that the Bank's revised strategy includes new elements such as "greater reliance on the Fast Track Initiative to channel donor assistance for primary education... in low-income countries. If this trend is to continue, without adequate financing from the world's largest external financier of basic education, the recent gains in school enrollment, not to speak of the quality of education, may see a reversal³⁰.

³⁰ RESULTS World Bank Education Overview 2008

A narrow vision?

Campaigners also remain concerned about other key aspects of the current approach to funding global education through FTI. The first and most important is the limited scope of the initiative, targeting as it does just the Millennium Development Goals rather than the full EFA agenda (ironically, despite its name!). The Dakar Framework for Action endorsed six goals in recognition of the indivisible links between different levels of formal education, and between literacy and learning in the general population and schooling. It is increasingly clear that early childhood care and education is a vital element in ensuring equity of access and learning for all children, especially the poorest. By the age of six, a child's educational fate is largely determined. Provision of learning opportunities and, crucially, adequate nutrition, during children's early years can make the vital difference to their chances³¹.

Ensuring that all adults can read and write is a hallmark of a civilised society, and contributes strongly to the achievement of universal learning for children: literate mothers are more than twice as likely to send their children to school³². Yet, as GCE's 2008 School Report and numerous EFA mid-term reports show, these elements have been largely neglected in the drive to achieve the MDGs, jeopardising the whole vision of Education For All.

Moreover, as progress on universal primary education has moved forward, increasing concern has arisen about quality of education and rising demand for secondary education. It will be a hollow failure indeed if the sum of all efforts is to create an education compact that achieves universal enrolment but leaves millions unable to read and write, and with no hope whatsoever of continuing their education. While the FTI's Catalytic Fund has funded non-primary education activities when they contribute to the goal of universal primary education, this evolution of the policy has yet to be formalized or announced officially to partner countries developing education sector plans.

This is not, clearly, the sole responsibility of FTI, which was explicitly set up to deal with MDGs 2 and 3, but at this pivotal moment it is now time to expand the role of a global architecture for education. As the deadline to 2015 approaches, the time is right to renew the true vision for Education For All and ensure that global financing structures are ready and able to respond to it.

Almost 40% of out-of-school children live in fragile states. These children deserve the right to education just as much as others, and education can be a force for peace-building and reconciliation, yet a disproportionately small share of education aid goes to these neediest countries.³³ However, progress made in enrolling children in more robust contexts has left behind large swathes of the school-age population unlucky enough to be born in troubled nations. FTI was conceived as an initiative to incentivise and reward good performance, and by this mandate was unlikely to target fragile and post-conflict states. Work through the FTI Fragile States Task Team and the establishment in 2007/8 of the Education Transition Fund (ETF) for fragile states by the Netherlands and UNICEF has sought to address this imbalance. In the next phase of the global education compact, further and deeper efforts will be needed to continue and expand this good work, and ensure that children of conflict are no longer left waiting at the school gates.

Another key challenge going forward is to achieve greater equity of provision both in terms of access and quality of education. The latest Education For All Global Monitoring Report lays out a bold agenda for change in terms of ensuring that education governance must be improved to tackle persistent inequalities of income, gender, location, ethnicity, language

³¹ *Strong foundations, EFA Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO, Paris 2007*

³² *Literacy for Life, EFA Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO, Paris 2005*

³³ See: *How to Unlock Financing For Fragile States Gene Sperling, CUE Briefing, 2007; Last in Line, Last in School series Save the Children, Last in Line, Last in School series*

and other factors of disadvantage. It is clear that specific efforts will be needed to encourage demand and improve provision of education for the hardest-to-reach children if the Dakar promise of Education For All is truly to mean for all.

Finally, the EFA compact envisioned a greater and stronger role for civil society in dialogue with governments and donors to ensure ambitious, innovative and equitable provision of education. In principle, FTI has responded to this mandate, with a number of key framework documents specifying a clear role for civil society as partners and advocates³⁴ in the process of developing plans and monitoring provision. At the global level the experience has been mainly good, with the FTI Steering Committee expanding in 2006 to include three civil society representatives (and four developing country representatives), although funding committees have never included civil society as full participants and have occasionally rejected requests even for observer status. However, in partner countries the experience has often not lived up to the principles set out in print. GCE Spain's research in Honduras and Mozambique found that civil society was frequently excluded from government planning and remained marginal in FTI processes. The Preliminary Report of the Mid-Term Evaluation³⁵ of FTI bears this out:

'Civil society has played an increasingly visible advocacy role since Dakar, but opportunities to seriously engage with government in setting national education agendas remain limited.'

This is a pivotal moment for the global architecture for education. FTI has shown that progress is possible, but appears increasingly hampered by donor neglect of their financing responsibilities, and a number of institutional challenges. This is the time to correct course, and move forward with boldness towards 2015. The new interest of the United States administration could provide new impetus and momentum. But the US and all donors must deliver on their commitments and be able to do so through a global architecture fit for purpose. We can do more, do it better and do it faster so that the next generation can be the first to have full access to complete and good quality education at all levels and for all people.

More, better, faster. Principles for a new Global Fund for Education For All, growing out of FTI

The Education for All-Fast Track Initiative (FTI) provides a very strong foundation for a new initiative such as a Global Fund for Education For All. Building on the strengths of this best-yet model for coordination among donors, national government and civil society on education sector plans and financing, a Global Fund for Education For All must retain the most effective aspects of the FTI partnership, while simultaneously strengthening those areas that have been identified as challenges for the FTI. It should not establish a competitor fund or structure but should evolve from the reforms already plans for FTI taking them further and with more ambition. Accordingly, a Global Fund for Education For All should maintain the FTI's current approach toward:

- **Nationally-Owned Education Sector Plans:** FTI has actively encouraged the development of robust, costed national plans linked to the Poverty Education Strategy Papers and Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks. This has undoubtedly contributed to the success in increasing enrolment and completion seen in FTI-endorsed countries.
- **Country-Level Coordination of Donors:** By bringing donors together at the country level, FTI has also increased coordination among outside donors and implementers who ultimately want the biggest bang for the buck.

³⁴ See, for example, *FTI Framework 2004*, *FTI Governance Proposal 2009*

³⁵ *Ibid*

- **Quality Education Plans:** Utilizing a system for assessing the quality of education plans, the FTI has worked to ensure that individual countries have developed comprehensive and reasonable budgets and have established measurable targets for improvement.

In transforming the FTI into a stronger Global Fund for Education For All, a new global initiative must adhere to the following core principles:

- **Participatory Governance:** At both the individual country and global levels, the GFE should maintain a tripartite balance between national government, donor, and civil society representation.
- **Independent Global Secretariat:** As the management structure of the Global Fund for Education For All, the Secretariat must remain independent from any individual member organization to ensure effective management and accountability.
- **Multilateral, Multi-donor, Multi-partner and Multi-instrument:** A strong and inclusive Global Fund for Education For All must provide a framework for increased and improved aid mobilized through a variety of modalities. In recognition that donors have varying preferences and priorities for the delivery of aid, an inclusive Global Fund for Education For All would 'count in' bilateral contributions that support developing country plans, especially through sector programme support and direct budget support as well provide an expanded pooled fund that will similarly align behind nationally-owned education sector plans.
- **Adhering to Global Principles for Aid Effectiveness:** Responding to the Accra Agenda for Action on Aid Effectiveness, the GFE will coordinate all aid – delivered through diverse channels and focus on ensuring adherence to the broadly-accepted principles of aid effectiveness: strengthening country ownership; building effective and inclusive partnerships; and delivering and accounting for development results.
- **Fast-Response Mechanism:** Particularly in the case of post-conflict and fragile states, rebuilding and/or strengthening the education system can have significant impact on the road to recovery. As *the* global process for education, the GFE must ensure strategic and innovative ways to deliver financing more rapidly and effectively to achieve better results quicker. Employing lessons learned from the education sector, as well as from health, debt relief, and poverty-reduction, can enhance the impact of the Global Fund for Education For All.
- **Strong Value-Added:** A Global Fund for Education For All would improve upon what already exists to make the investment in a new system more than worth the effort to establish and maintain it. In particular, a re-invigorated international and multilateral focus on education for all will:
 - Increase attention on the hardest-to-reach and most vulnerable children, including those living in conflict-affected and otherwise fragile states;
 - Enhance civil society participation in country-level and global decision making processes;
 - Deliver aid that is predictable and available to spend on recurrent costs such as teacher training and employment;
 - Ensure coordinated and speedy aid flows unencumbered by unnecessary conditions;
 - Emphasize quality in education and contribute to plans and strategies for improving learning achievement as well as access to schooling; and
 - Ensure that aid is available for all the Education For All goals.

Recommendations for the establishment of a Global Fund for Education For All

The Global Fund for Education For All needs to be a truly global partnership, inclusive of all stakeholders and focused on ensuring that millions of children in the poorest countries of the world have access to a quality education. The GFE's core objectives should be to mobilize the funds needed to accomplish the full Education for All agenda – from early learning to adult literacy – and to deliver those funds in the most effective way possible to achieve the best results in the classroom. To really achieve education for all, the GFE must explicitly address the education of the hardest-to-reach and most vulnerable children living in conflict-affected and otherwise fragile states and emphasize quality in education for improved learning outcomes. The GFE must be an independent entity governed jointly by donors, developing country governments, and civil society at both the global and individual country level. It should build on existing coordination mechanisms such as the Education for All-Fast Track Initiative (FTI) and work closely with the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF and bilateral donors to leverage the comparative advantages of all. In this sense a Global Fund for Education For All could be a Fund of Funds – an umbrella mechanism to monitor all existing bilateral and multilateral education aid and its impact on progress towards the EFA goals – in essence building on FTI's experience to continue the work of promoting a results-based model for education aid built on mutual accountability.

Doing more:

- At one of the major international events of 2009, donors should mandate the establishment of a high-level Transition Working Group to develop substantive and specific proposals for a new international architecture building on the strengths of FTI. This should include participation from implementing/recipient countries, and civil society groups.
- A Global Fund for Education For All should state its ambition to work with governments to ensure delivery of the full Education For All agenda in all low-income countries, including fragile states, by 2015.
- To adequately plan for the full achievement of the Education for All agenda, we must have a comprehensive cost estimate of the financing need within each country and globally. While a number of different organizations have undertaken parts of this task, an appropriate entity (such as the EFA Global Monitoring Report) should be scaled-up and tasked with calculating the total cost of achieving education for all. It is likely that this new estimate – with the inclusion of more comprehensive early learning and adult literacy programs as well as an increased focus on reaching the most marginal and ensuring the quality of learning – will be substantially higher than the current estimate. Pending this, the total of \$16 billion³⁶ should be used.
- At a major international conference in 2010, donors should make ex-ante commitments towards that total for at least 5 years via bilateral, multilateral or pooled fund modalities, in line with their 'fair share' of the financing gap.
- A Global Fund for Education For All should have a larger global pooled funding 'pot' which developing countries can access for timely, appropriate and ambitious financing of national education plans. The Education Transition Fund (ETF) should continue as a separate funding stream for countries in fragile situations but ongoing resource mobilisation for it should be included within the framework of the Global Fund for Education For All.

³⁶ *Ibid*

Doing better and faster

- A review of FTI-developed frameworks and benchmarks should be undertaken during 2009, to ensure that by mid 2010 they are fit for purpose of incentivising governments to plan and budget for the full EFA agenda including teacher salaries.
- Within the framework of a Global Fund for Education For All, development *and* approval of robust EFA plans and financing requirements should be jointly undertaken by a broad-based Local Education Group, incorporating balanced representation from government, donors and civil society including, where appropriate, representatives from the private sector. The Country Coordinating Mechanisms of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria could be used as a model for more inclusive participation in plan development.
- UNESCO and the EFA Global Monitoring Report team should provide an independent review of financing estimates for plans on request by the Local Education Group, using a transparent costing methodology.
- A Global Fund for Education For All should be mandated to monitor and co-ordinate all on-plan aid for Education For All, including bilateral aid.
- A Global Fund for Education For All should have an independent Secretariat and Chair, based outside of any partner agency to ensure high political profile and freedom of action.
- A Global Fund for Education For All Secretariat should include increased capacity to support countries to develop plans and assist with establishment of Local Education Groups.
- A Board of Directors should be the highest authority within a Global Fund for Education For All. If separate committees manage pooled funds under its aegis, these should be sub-committees of the whole and should represent all constituencies, including partner countries and civil society. Similar arrangements should be mandated for the ETF.
- The World Bank should remain as trustee of pooled funds for a Global Fund for Education For All, but funds should not automatically be subject to World Bank fiduciary requirements. The Trustee would solely act as a bank and be responsible for managing the money and disbursing it as directed by the GFE Board. However, Funds may be disbursed through a range of agencies without compromising principles of responsible financial management and viable alternatives should be explored.
- Lessons should be learned from positive and negative experiences of the Global Fund on AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in the following areas:
 - Use of Technical Review Panels (TRP) – expert panel to review plans
 - Use of Local Funding Agents to track the flow of grant money in country and report back to the Secretariat
 - Clarity about provision of technical assistance for plan development at the earliest stage
 - Performance-based financing

Conclusion: Education For All on the brink

GCE has consistently advocated a working global initiative in education since before the Dakar World Conference on Education. The clock is ticking: the reality is that Education For All will not be achieved without a massive increase in overseas development assistance. This must be delivered within two years, to enable countries to plan for the enrolment of all children by the end of 2010, and begin planning for expansion of other EFA provision immediately. While this will entail missing even the minimal target of universal primary completion by 2015, it may still serve as a useful milestone target to getting back on track with EFA.

Yet we must be aware that universal primary education is only part of the picture. Although the record on supporting enrolment of all girls and boys is patchy, some progress has been made. The international aid agenda has too long neglected the other EFA goals – without which UPE, and other development targets, cannot be achieved. The ‘two steps forward – one step back’ approach currently favoured by donors must turn into a sustained and speedy march to the finishing line. Only one country, the Netherlands, is currently giving its fair share of the total needed to realise the original – and still the best – vision of an integrated approach to EFA that leaves no-one, adult, child or infant, behind.

While FTI has achieved much, its limitations are also clear. We can and must build on its successes and redress its shortcomings to build a re-invigorated and rebranded global initiative fit for purpose of delivering the dream of a global compact. It is time to seize the initiative and break from received wisdoms towards a more ambitious and more functional global architecture for education. A Global Fund for Education For All can be the next generation of FTI.

All stakeholders must work together faster and stronger to achieve EFA. The establishment of a Global Fund for Education For All offers a unique opportunity to do something for education that has never been done before, and fulfil a global commitment to ensure that everyone can acquire an education. While significant progress toward Education For All will undoubtedly produce tangible results in the short term with an increasing number of children enrolling in, attending, and completing their basic education with essential skills, its impact on the global economy and society will have long-lasting effects that will be experienced in increasing returns over the next several generations. Leadership on global education now could establish a legacy that stretches far beyond our current generation. Times are hard, and temptation will be strong to renege on previous commitments. Yet there has never been a better time to argue for investment in education to deliver stronger, more equitable growth and development for the future. The dawning of the 21st Century saw the dawning of hope for the world’s children and illiterate adults. Let’s make this the year that turns hope into reality.

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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 fulfill their promises to provide at a free, public basic education for everyone.