

The Dakar Framework for Action

Education For All: Meeting our Collective Commitments

**Draft to be finalized and adopted
at the**

**World Education Forum
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The Dakar Framework

Education For All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments

Meeting in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2000, we, the participants of in the World Education Forum, commit ourselves to the achievement of Education for All goals and targets for every citizen and for every society.

The Dakar Framework is a collective commitment to action. National governments have an obligation for ensuring to ensure that Education for All goals and targets are reached and sustained, a responsibility that can be met most effectively through broad-based partnerships within countries, supported by co-operation with regional and international agencies and institutions.

We re-affirm the vision of the World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien 1990) that every child, youth and adult has the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs including the full development of human personality. It is unacceptable in the year 2000 that more than 113 million children¹ have no access to primary education, 880 million adults are still illiterate, gender discrimination continues to permeate education systems and the quality of learning and the acquisition of human values and skills falls far short of the aspirations and needs of individuals and societies. Education as a fundamental human right is a key to sustainable development and peace within and between countries, and thus an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century.

The goal set in Jomtien requires that every individual benefit from a basic education in the best and fullest sense of the term, an education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be. It is an education geared at tapping each person's talents and developing learners' personalities, so that they can improve their lives and transform their societies.

We welcome the importance which the international community has accorded basic education throughout the 1990s, notably at the World Summit for Children (1990), The Conference on Environment and Development (1992), The International Conference on Population and Development (1994), The World Conference on Human Rights (1993), The World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality (1994), The World Summit for Social Development (1995), The Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), The Mid-Term Meeting of the International Consultative Forum on Education for All (1996), The International Conference on Adult Education (1997), and the International Conference on Child Labour (1997).

The EFA 2000 Assessment demonstrates that there has been significant progress in many countries during the 1990s. Yet, vast numbers of children are still excluded from an effective education, and countless millions of young people and adults are denied access to literacy and to the skills and knowledge necessary for gainful employment and effective participation in the societies of the twenty-first century. Achieving Education for All goals can be postponed no longer. The basic learning needs of all can and must be met urgently.

¹ 1998 figure EFA 2000 Assessment

We, hereby, collectively commit ourselves to the attainment of the following goals:

- **Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged of children**
- **Ensuring that all children, with special emphasis on girls – including the poorest, working children and children with special needs - complete a good quality primary education by 2015.**
- **Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.**
- **Providing equitable access to basic and continuing education programmes for adults, and achieving at least a 50 per cent reduction in current gender disparities within a decade.**
- **Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, as a milestone towards achieving gender equality in education programmes, institutions and systems by 2015.**
- **Improving all aspects of the quality of education so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.**

To achieve these goals, we the governments, organisations, agencies, groups and associations represented at the World Education Forum pledge ourselves to:

- **Mobilise strong national and international political commitment for Education For All, including significantly enhanced investment in basic education.**
- **Promote Education For All policies within a sustainable and well-integrated sector framework clearly linked to poverty elimination and development strategies.**
- **Ensure the engagement and participation of civil society in educational development.**
- **Create safe and healthy educational environments conducive to effective learning, including the provision of good quality learning materials that will enable all learners to attain and surpass well-defined levels of achievement.**
- **Enhance the status, morale and professionalism of teachers.**
- **Implement integrated sector strategies for gender equality in education, which recognise the need for changes in attitudes, values and practice.**
- **Develop responsive, participatory and accountable systems of educational governance and management.**
- **Harness new information and communication technologies to help achieve Education for All goals.**
- **Implement education programmes and actions to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic.**
- **Conduct educational programmes in ways that promote mutual understanding and peace and help to prevent intolerance, violence and conflict.**
- **Systematically monitor progress towards Education for All goals at the national, regional and international levels.**

As representatives of the world community, we hereby affirm that no country seriously committed to basic education will be thwarted in the achievement of this goal by lack of resources.

We will strengthen accountable international and regional mechanisms to give clear expression to these commitments and ensure that the Dakar Framework for Action is on the agenda of every international and regional organisation, every national legislature and every local decision-making forum. [Text to be finalised in the World Education Forum]

The EFA 2000 Assessment highlights that the magnitude of the challenge of Education for All is greatest in Sub-Saharan Africa and in South Asia. Accordingly, while no country in need should be denied international assistance, priority should be given to those two regions of the world. Countries in conflict or in the course of reconstruction should also be given special attention in building up their education systems to meet the needs of all learners.

28 April 2000
Dakar, Senegal

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I INTRODUCTION

The Dakar Framework for Action is a re-affirmation of the vision set out in the *World Declaration on Education for All in Jomtien* a decade ago. It expresses the international community's collective commitment to pursue a broad-based strategy for ensuring that the basic learning needs of every child, young person and adult are met within a generation and sustained thereafter.

The World Education Forum in Dakar has provided the opportunity to assess the achievements, lessons and failures of the past decade. The EFA 2000 Assessment represents an unparalleled effort to take stock of the state of basic education in the world. It has included national assessments in 183 countries of the progress achieved since Jomtien, the problems encountered and recommendations for future action. Synthesis reports summarize the main findings of these assessments by region. In addition, 14 special thematic studies were undertaken, surveys were conducted on the quality of learning achievement in over 30 countries, and a comprehensive collection and synthesis of case studies on the involvement of NGOs in education was prepared.

The Assessment is an unparalleled store of information and analysis. Five regional EFA conferences (Sub-Saharan Africa: Johannesburg; Asia and the Pacific: Bangkok; Arab States and North Africa: Cairo; The Americas: Santo Domingo; Europe and Northern America: Warsaw) and a conference of the nine high-population countries (E9): Recife, have discussed and translated the outcomes of the Assessment into regional frameworks for action, which are an integral part of this document, and underpin the Dakar Framework for Action.

The vision of Jomtien remains pertinent and powerful. It provides a broad and comprehensive view of education and its critical role in empowering individuals and transforming societies. Its key points and principles include universal access to learning; a focus on equity; emphasis on learning outcomes; broadening the means and the scope of basic education; enhancing the environment for learning; and, strengthening partnerships. Tragically, reality falls far short of this vision: millions of people are still denied their right to education and the opportunities it could bring to live safer, healthier, more productive and more fulfilling lives. Such a failure has multiple causes: weak political will, insufficient financial resources and the inefficient use of available ones, inadequate attention to the learning needs of the poor, a lack of attention to the quality of learning and an absence of commitment to overcoming gender disparities. There can be no doubt that the barriers to achieving Education for All are formidable. Yet, they can and must be overcome.

The Assessment shows that progress has been achieved, proving that EFA is a realistic and achievable goal. But it needs to be frankly acknowledged that progress has been uneven and far too slow. At the start of a new millennium²:

² Figures from the EFA 2000 Assessment

- Of the more than 800 million children under six years of age, fewer than a third benefit from any form of early childhood education;
- 113 million children, 60 per cent of whom are girls, have no access to primary schooling;
- At least 880 million adults are illiterate, of whom the majority are women;
- The global adult literacy rate is 85 per cent for men and 74 per cent for women.

These figures represent an affront to human dignity and stand as major barriers to eliminating poverty and attaining sustainable development.

This Framework sets or restates six major EFA goals. It puts forward eleven major strategies informed by the experience of the past decade and the changing global context of the twenty-first century. These include the international development targets for education to which national governments and the international community are already committed.

Starting from early childhood and extending throughout life, the learners of the twenty-first century will require access to high quality educational opportunities that are responsive to their needs, equitable and gender-aware. These opportunities must neither exclude nor discriminate. Since the pace, style, language and circumstances of learning will never be uniform for all, there should be room for diverse formal or less formal approaches, as long as they ensure sound learning. In addition, they must be open, flexible and aimed, in so far as possible, at achieving equivalent quality standards through a variety of means and in a diversity of contexts.

The right to education imposes an obligation upon States to ensure that all citizens have opportunities to meet their basic learning needs. Basic education should be both free and compulsory. The education systems of tomorrow, however diversified they may be, will need to be transparent and accountable in how they are governed, managed and financed. The indispensable role of the State in education must, however, be supplemented and supported by bold and comprehensive educational partnerships at all levels of society. Education for all implies the involvement and commitment of all to education.

II ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

Achievements and Lessons

The EFA 2000 Assessments conducted at national, regional, and global levels show significant progress has been made over the last decade towards the vision reflected in the Jomtien Declaration.

Worldwide primary school enrolments have increased by some 82 million pupils since 1990, with 44 million more girls in school in 1998 than in 1990 – figures which more than any other symbolise the serious efforts of many countries to advance in the face of often severe economic constraints and continued rapid population growth. At the end of the 1990s, developing countries as a whole have achieved net enrolment rates in excess of 80 per cent. Repetition and dropout rates have declined. There has been some improvement, albeit limited, in gender equality in primary enrolment in many regions, with the key exception of Sub-Saharan Africa. Early childhood care and education has expanded modestly, mainly in urban areas. The fact that virtually all countries in the world have ratified The Convention on the Rights of the Child, and thereby accepted an obligation to ensure the right of every child to a basic education beginning at an early age augurs well for the development of learning opportunities at this level. There has been a gradual growth in non-formal education and skills training. While levels of illiteracy remain unacceptably high, a measure of progress has been achieved. The overall adult literacy rate has risen to 85 per cent for men, and is 74 per cent for women. The spread of education has also contributed to a slowing of demographic growth rates, a factor of great importance in the struggle for both education and development.

These quantitative achievements of course tell nothing of the plight of the millions who are still excluded from education, of the alienated youth or their painful struggle to find a place and retain their values in changing societies. Information is also sparse on the nature and quality of teaching and learning, and of educational outcomes at all levels in education systems.

Experience in the post-Jomtien decade has demonstrated that significant progress can be made towards the goals of education for all where there is a strong political commitment, backed by new partnerships with civil society and more strategic support from funding agencies. Ensuring that girls and boys benefit equally from education requires nothing less than the integration of gender equality concerns into the design and implementation of sector policies and strategies. The importance of gathering and carefully analysing reliable gender-disaggregated data at national and sub-national levels is becoming ever more clear.

Generally, across all regions, where enrolment and participation levels remain low, there is a powerful correlation between poor enrolment, retention and learning outcomes and the incidence of poverty.

The many factors that impinge on the demand for education are now better understood, as are the multiple causes that exclude children, young people and adults from learning opportunities. The range of actions required to increase the participation and retention of girls in school have received widespread attention. Knowledge about the effectiveness of teachers and other educators, the central role of appropriate learning materials, the need for a context-specific mix of “old” and “new” technologies, the importance of local languages for initial

literacy, and the major influence of the community in the life of schools and other education programmes has increased. The value of early childhood care and education in later school success is better understood, and the need for strong linkages between the different sub-sectors of education, between basic education, family health, nutrition, safe water and the natural environment has received greater attention.

Challenges and Opportunities

The tangible but modest gains of the last decade still call for caution. Many countries continue to face the challenge of defining the meaning, purpose and content of basic education in the context of a fast-moving world and of assessing learning outcomes and achievement. Many of the qualitative and informal aspects of education have still not been clearly assessed, and the huge diversity of contexts and growing educational disparities within and between countries make performance and achievements very difficult to measure and compare.

What is clear, is that quality must not suffer as access expands and that improvements in quality should not benefit the economically well-off at the expense of the poor, as has happened, for example in the expansion of early childhood care and education. Many governments and agencies have focused their efforts on the easy to reach and neglected those excluded from a basic education, whether for social, economic or geographic reasons.

The education of girls remains a major challenge: despite the international attention that it has received, 60 per cent of all children without access to primary education are still girls.

South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, where progress has been most difficult to achieve, clearly present a much deeper challenge than world averages imply, and will require particular attention if the goals of Education for All are to be reached in each and every country.

A key challenge is to ensure that the broad vision of Education for All as an inclusive concept is reflected in national government and funding agency policies. Education for All must encompass not just formal school education, but also early childhood education, literacy and life skills programmes. It must take account of the needs of the poor and the most disadvantaged, including working children, remote rural dwellers and nomads, ethnic and linguistic minorities, children and adults affected by conflict and HIV/AIDS, and those with special learning needs. It is encouraging that many governments, funding agencies and civil society organizations are increasingly rallying to this more comprehensive view of education.

Ensuring that EFA is provided with adequate, equitable and sustainable resources is a foremost challenge. Many governments do not give education sufficient priority in their national budgets. Too many do not use education resources effectively and efficiently, and often subsidise better-off groups at the expense of the poor. As a direct consequence, user charges continue to be a major deterrent to poor children, in particular girls, attending school and young people and adults in need of non-formal learning provision. In some countries, passing the cost burden on to poor parents has had a devastating impact on enrolment and retention. Education must neither exclude nor discriminate. Each government has the responsibility to provide free, quality basic education, so that no child will be denied access because of an inability to pay.

Governments need to explore more actively alternative and innovative ways of increasing the resources available to support Education for All and to develop clearly defined strategies for

achieving its goals, for which they take real and sustained ownership. Debt reduction programmes should offer governments an opportunity to give priority to education within overall poverty reduction frameworks.

While the proportion of international assistance allocated to basic education increased in the 1990s, there was an overall decline in total development assistance. The first trend should be supported and the second reversed. There is considerable scope for the international community to demonstrate, in a co-operative and accountable way, that it can be effective in supporting well-defined national sector strategies and in helping to unlock the significant additional resources that many funding agencies profess to be willing to provide.

New ways of working that are emerging within the wider development context also represent opportunities for achieving Education for All goals. Greater co-operation between national and international agencies at the country level, through structures and mechanisms such as Comprehensive Development Frameworks, Poverty Reduction Strategy Plans and UN Development Assistance Frameworks, offer the potential for resource-related partnerships for basic education.

These benefits are more likely to result in genuinely participatory development where there is a stronger and more vocal recognition of education as a fundamental human right and where representative democracy has taken root. The growing importance of participatory poverty assessments and household surveys also highlights a positive trend in the development of education programmes and systems which are genuinely responsive to well-defined needs and priorities.

While inadequate institutional capacity and weak political processes still prevent many governments from responding to the priorities of their citizens, the spread of democratic principles around the world, the growing contribution of civil society to democratic processes, the fight against corruption, the process of decentralization that is ongoing in many countries, all have the potential to contribute greatly to building a solid foundation for the achievement of effective, equitable and sustainable education for all.

Globalisation is both a challenge and an opportunity. It is generating new wealth and resulting in the greater interconnectedness and interdependence of economies and societies. Driven by the revolution in information technology and the increased mobility of capital, it is bringing people together in ways that have the potential to help reduce poverty and inequality throughout the world. Yet, globalisation carries with it the danger of creating a market place in knowledge that excludes the poor and the disadvantaged. Globalisation is neither inherently good nor bad - it is a reality which must be shaped and managed so as to ensure equity and sustainability. There is a real opportunity to harness the new information technologies for basic education. Achieving this will require creative partnerships between technology leaders and financiers, governments, educators and learners. A strong collective commitment must be made to ensure that the world's poor benefit from globalisation as education has a crucial role to play in bringing its advantages to bear on the lives of everyone.

The threat posed by HIV/AIDS to the achievement of EFA goals and to development more broadly, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, presents an enormous challenge. The terrifying impact of HIV/AIDS on educational demand, supply and quality requires explicit and immediate attention in national policy-making and planning. Programmes to control and reduce

the spread of the virus must make maximum use of education's potential to get across messages on prevention and to change attitudes and behaviours. .

The significant growth of tensions, conflict and war, both within and between nations and peoples, is a cause of great concern. Education has a key role to play in preventing conflict in the future, and building lasting peace and stability.

III GOALS

“Basic learning needs...comprise essential learning tools...and...content required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning.” (World Declaration on Education For All).

Despite the broad vision of the means and ends of education set forth in Jomtien, the assessment shows that the main focus during the past decade has been on formal education with insufficient attention paid to non-formal modes of learning or the acquisition of life skills. The six goals presented in this framework are oriented towards ensuring lifelong learning for all. From education in early childhood to literacy and skill training in adulthood, men, women and children have both the right and the need to acquire new knowledge and skills that can help them adapt their lives to ever changing environments, and have an influence upon them.

The goals and strategies set forth below aspire to establish the groundwork of a Framework for Action that will enable all individuals to fulfil their right to learn and their duty to contribute to the development of their society. They are global in nature, drawn from the goals and targets proposed by regional EFA conferences and the international development targets to which countries are already committed. Individual countries, through a process of consultation among all stakeholders in education, with the assistance of the wider international community, and the support of EFA follow-up mechanisms, should set their own intermediate and final goals, targets, and timelines, within existing or new national education plans. The findings of national EFA assessments should inform the process of planning and goal setting. Monitoring systems at national, regional, and international level are essential in guiding reforms and determining progress.

1 Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged of children.

All young children must be nurtured in safe and caring environments that allow them to become healthy, alert, secure, and able to learn. The last decade has provided more evidence that good quality early childhood care and education, both in families and in more structured programmes, has a positive impact on the survival, growth, development, and learning potential of children. Such programmes should be comprehensive, focusing on all of the child's needs and encompassing health, nutrition, hygiene, and cognitive and psycho-social development. Partnerships between governments, NGOs, communities, and families can help ensure the provision of good care and education for children, especially for those most disadvantaged, through activities centered on the child, focused on the family, based within the community, and supported by national, multi-sectoral policies and adequate resources.

Ministries of education and other ministries have an important responsibility in building partnerships. They can mobilize political support and promote flexible, adaptable programmes for young children that are appropriate to their age and not mere downward extensions of formal school systems. The education of parents and other caretakers in better childcare,

building on traditional practices, and the systematic use of early childhood indicators are important elements in achieving this goal.

2 Ensuring that all children, with special emphasis on girls – including the poorest, working children and children with special needs - have access to and complete a primary education of good quality by 2015.

All children must have the opportunity to fulfil their right to quality education in schools or alternative programmes at whatever level of education is considered “basic”. While there is international agreement on the 2015 target date for achieving Universal Primary Education in all countries, more is required. Commitment and political will from all levels of government is required to carry appropriate strategies and actions forward. For the millions of children living in poverty, it also requires an unequivocal commitment that education be free of all costs and that everything possible be done to reduce or eliminate indirect costs, such as for school materials, uniforms and lunches. No family and no child should be denied the opportunity to complete a good quality primary education because they cannot pay for it.

While commitment to attaining universal *enrolment* is essential, improving and sustaining the quality of basic education is equally important in ensuring effective learning outcomes. In order to attract and retain children from marginalized and excluded groups, education systems need to be able to respond flexibly - providing relevant content in an accessible and appealing format. The EFA Assessment suggests the wide range of ways in which schools can respond to the needs of their pupils: offering affirmative action programmes for girls that seek to remove the obstacles to their enrolment, bilingual education for minority children, adapting flexible hours and calendars and, more generally, actively seeking out children who are not enrolled and assisting them to enter and succeed in school.

3 Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.

All young people must be given the opportunity to gain the knowledge and develop the values, attitudes and basic technical, vocational and entrepreneurial skills which will enable them to develop their capacities to work, to participate fully in their society, to take control of their own lives, and to continue learning. At the dawn of a new Millennium, young people face risks and challenges of a magnitude that could not have been foreseen at Jomtien: exploitative labour or the lack of employment, conflict and violence, drug abuse, and HIV/AIDS. Youth, especially adolescent girls, are increasingly unable to continue in school or to find useful employment after their basic education is finished.

Young people who have been forced to drop out of school, or who have completed school without the literacy, numeracy, and life skills they need, must have a range of options for continuing their learning. Such opportunities should be both meaningful and relevant to their environment and needs, offering them a second chance to learn and helping them become active agents in shaping their future. Equally, all young people should have the opportunity to develop useful work-related skills. Because this age group is particularly at risk of HIV/AIDS, programmes must be made available which provide all with the information, skills, and

services they need to protect themselves from HIV infection and to deal with the dramatic impacts of this pandemic upon their families and communities.

4 Providing equitable access to literacy and continuing education programmes for adults, and achieving at least a 50 per cent reduction in current gender disparities within a decade.

All adults require a basic education, beginning with literacy, which allows them to function within, and to transform, the world in which they live. There are still some 880 million people who cannot read or write in the world; two-thirds are women. The fragile levels of literacy acquired by many neo-literates compound the problem. Yet, the education of adults remains isolated from the mainstream, being often at the periphery of national education systems and budgets.

Adult education must be integrated into the mainstream of national education. The vital role literacy plays in lifelong learning and the development of individuals, communities, and societies must be more widely recognized, especially in regard to its health, economic, and social benefits. Learning opportunities for continuing education must be greatly expanded and diversified. Closer linkages among formal, non-formal, and informal approaches to learning must be fostered to respond to the diverse needs and circumstances of adults. Efforts across sectors at national and community levels to create and sustain environments conducive to literacy and continuous learning are required.

Sufficient resources, well-targeted literacy efforts, and the innovative use of technologies to enrich quality are essential in promoting these activities. The scaling up of practical, participatory learning methodologies developed by non-government organizations, which link literacy with empowerment and local development, is especially important. The future success of any adult education efforts in the next decade will require a substantial reduction in existing disparities between male-female and urban-rural literacy rates.

5 Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, as a milestone towards achieving gender equality in education programmes, institutions and systems by 2015

Gender-based discrimination remains one of the most intractable constraints to Education for All. Without overcoming this obstacle, EFA cannot be achieved. Research has concluded that one of the most important determinants of development is the education of girls and women. International agreement has already been reached to achieve gender equity in primary and secondary education by 2005. Unfortunately, only limited progress has been made in the last decade on increasing girls' participation and successful completion of basic education.

Gender considerations must be mainstreamed throughout the education system, supported by adequate resources and strong political commitment. Despite a modest increase in the number of special efforts focused on girls' education, there is evidence of growth in gender disparities in several countries. Merely ensuring access to education for girls is not enough; unsafe school environments and biases in teacher behaviour and training, teaching and learning processes, curricula and textbooks, often lead to lower completion and achievement rates for girls.

Changes in attitudes, values and behaviour are required. Comprehensive efforts need to be made at all levels and in all areas to eliminate gender discrimination and to promote mutual respect between girls and boys, women and men.

As the EFA movement enters its second decade, it is becoming increasingly clear that achieving EFA is, in essence, a gender issue. Not only are girls a majority among out-of-school children and youth, and women a sizeable majority of illiterate adults, the education of girls and women has a proven and powerful trans-generational effect. If the world community wishes to bring the Educational for All movement to a successful and early conclusion, there is no better strategy than working to overcome gender biases at all levels and investing decisively in the education of women and girls.

6 Improving all aspects of the quality of education so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills

Quality is at the heart of education, and what takes place in classrooms and other learning environments is fundamentally important to the future well being of children, young people and adults. Experience over the last decade has shown that enhancing educational quality must accompany efforts to expand school enrolment, if children are to be attracted to school, stay there, and achieve meaningful learning outcomes.

It is alarming that recent assessments of learning achievement in some countries have shown that a sizeable percentage of children is acquiring a fraction of the knowledge and skills they are expected to master. Over the last decade, expanding enrolment has often taken precedence over learning outcomes, and scarce resources have frequently been used for expanding systems at the expense of quality improvement in areas such as teacher training and materials development. What pupils are meant to learn has often not been clearly defined, well taught, or accurately assessed.

Governments, their education authorities and national EFA partners must continue to work together to ensure basic education of quality for all, regardless of gender, wealth, urban/rural location, language or ethnic origin. Successful education programmes require: (1) healthy and motivated students; (2) well-trained teachers and active learning techniques; (3) a relevant curriculum that can be taught and learned in a familiar language; adequate facilities and learning materials; (4) an environment that not only encourages learning but is welcoming, gender-sensitive, healthy, and safe; and (5) a clear definition and accurate assessment of learning achievement. EFA partners must also promote dynamic partnerships between school and community, not only in providing education but also in improving its quality.

IV STRATEGIES

By its very scale and nature, the challenge of achieving Education for All calls for strategic planning, policies, and prioritization at national, regional, and international levels. Achieving the goals outlined above will require sustained commitment, greater political will, and more resources from all EFA partners, at all levels of society and in all sectors of government for education to find its place at the heart of development. Building on the lessons of the last decade, the following eleven critical strategies are required.

1. Mobilize strong national and international political commitment for Education For All, including significantly enhanced investment in basic education

The Jomtien Framework for Action stated that *progress in meeting the basic learning needs of all will depend ultimately on the actions taken within individual countries*. This means first that governments must make firm political commitments and allocate sufficient resources to basic education – an absolutely necessary first step to meeting the state’s obligation to ensure basic education for all of its citizens. In many countries this will require increasing the share of national income allocated to education and, within that, to basic education, balanced by reduced allocations to lower priority sectors. Resources have to be used with much greater efficiency, and governments should set goals for more equitable spending across education systems. Achieving education for all will also require the more creative and sustained mobilization of resources from other parts of society, including different levels of government, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations.

Even with improved mobilization and allocation of domestic resources, and enhanced efficiency in their use, meeting the key education goals will likely require additional funding from international development agencies. Funding agencies should allocate a larger share of their resources than in the past to support for primary and other forms of basic education. The regions where the challenges are greatest, which include much of Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, and countries emerging from conflict deserve particular attention.

Lack of resources should not stand in the way of any government seriously committed to basic education within a sustainable development framework. Funding agencies are willing to allocate significant resources towards education for all. The key to unlocking these resources is evidence of, or potential for, sustained political commitment; clear and binding mechanisms for ongoing consultation with civil society organisations in developing, implementing, and monitoring EFA plans; and a well-defined, consultative processes for sector planning and management.

This commitment requires that funding agencies collaborate closely to provide flexible development assistance within the framework of sector-wide reforms, and support sector priorities within sound and coherent government-owned poverty reduction programmes. Proceeds from debt relief should benefit priority sectors including education, managed within an overall budgetary and poverty reduction framework.

Funding agencies will need to make longer-term and more predictable commitments, to be more accountable and transparent. They must provide timely and accurate information on their disbursements and ensure that there is regular reporting at regional and international levels.

2. Promote Education For All policies within a sustainable and well-integrated sector framework clearly linked to poverty elimination and development strategies

Education, starting with the care and education of young children and continuing through lifelong learning, is central to individual empowerment, the elimination of poverty at household and community level, and broader social and economic development. At the same time, the reduction of poverty facilitates progress toward basic education goals. There are evident synergies between strategies for promoting education and those for reducing poverty that must be exploited both in programme planning and implementation.

A multi-sectoral approach to poverty elimination requires that education strategies complement those of the productive sectors as well as of health, social welfare, labour, the environment, and finance – and be closely linked with civil society. Specific actions in this regard include: (1) integrating basic education strategies into broader national and international poverty alleviation measures such as UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), Comprehensive Development Frameworks, and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers; and (2) developing “inclusive” education systems which explicitly identify, target, and respond flexibly to the needs and circumstances of the poorest and most marginalized.

3. Ensure the engagement and participation of civil society in educational development

Learners, parents, communities, non-governmental organizations, and other bodies representing civil society, must be granted new and expanded political and social space, at all levels of society, in order to engage governments in dialogue, decision-making, and innovation around the goals for basic education. Civil society has much experience and a crucial role to play in identifying barriers to EFA goals and developing policies and strategies to remove them.

Such participation, especially at the local level through partnerships between schools and communities, must not only occur to endorse decisions or finance State-designed education. Rather, at all levels of decision-making, governments must put in place regular mechanisms for dialogue enabling citizens and civil society organizations to contribute to the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of basic education. This is essential in order to foster the development of accountable, comprehensive and flexible educational management frameworks. In order to facilitate this process, building capacity in these organizations is often necessary.

4. Create safe and healthy educational environments conducive to effective learning, including the provision of good quality learning materials that will enable all learners to attain and surpass well-defined levels of achievement

The quality of education is and must be at the heart of EFA concerns. In many countries, the expansion of enrolments that is critical to achieving EFA goals has been accompanied by a decline in educational quality. Many reasons can be cited, including overstretched resources and children from poorer homes starting out in school on an unequal footing, but this outcome is neither necessary nor acceptable. EFA aims to meet the basic learning needs of all, which requires not only increasing enrolments, but also improving the quality of education. High quality educational materials have a decisive influence on learning. The concept of “equity in quality” has emerged as a key concern of the EFA movement. EFA is not achieved by squeezing all children into inadequate schools and providing them with the ritual of an education. Jomtien was clear on this: EFA means providing all individuals with an education of sufficient quality to meet their basic learning needs. There is a strong consensus on the need to provide quality education and to define and measure learning outcomes, including literacy, numeracy and mastery of life skills.

5. Enhance the status, morale and professionalism of teachers

Teachers at all levels of the education system should be adequately trained, respected, remunerated, and able to participate in decisions affecting their professional lives and teaching environments.

The EFA conferences in both Jomtien and Amman recognized the pre-eminent role of teachers in providing quality basic education – whether in schools or in more flexible community-based programmes for young people and adults. They stressed the importance of improving teachers’ working conditions and status, especially in regard to recruitment, initial and in-service training, remuneration, and career development opportunities.

Evidence suggests that strategies to identify, attract and retain the best young talent as primary school teachers are not yet in place in most countries. With a few exceptions, teacher qualifications have not improved significantly over the last decade and, in some cases, the number of untrained teachers is growing. The proportion of female teachers, an important factor in increasing the enrolment of girls, is, very gradually, increasing in most countries.

6. Implement integrated sector strategies for gender equality in education, which recognize the need for changes in attitudes, values and practice.

Achieving EFA demands high-level commitment to gender equality. Throughout the education system, awareness must be fostered on the need to develop new attitudes and behaviours. The education sector must be supported by a gender framework, which builds upon the lessons of experience. Comprehensive gender analysis and commitment to gender equality will be essential for all levels of government.

In the learning environment, the content, processes, and context of education must be free of gender bias and encourage and support equality and respect. This includes teachers' attitudes, curriculum and textbooks, activities and student interactions. Efforts must be made to ensure personal security: girls are often especially vulnerable to abuse, harassment, and even rape on the journey to and from school and at school. Teaching and supervisory bodies must be fair and transparent, and rules and regulations, including promotion and disciplinary action, must have equal impact on girls and boys, women and men. Attention must be given to boys' needs in cases where they are outnumbered by girls.

Schools and other learning environments and, more broadly speaking, education systems usually mirror the larger society. Efforts in support of gender equality must include specific actions to address social attitudes and practices, including those related to economic status and culture.

7. Develop responsive, participatory, and accountable systems of educational governance and management

The experience of the last decade has underscored the need for better governance of education systems in terms of efficiency, accountability, transparency, and flexibility so that they can respond more effectively to the diverse and continuously changing needs of learners. Reform of educational management is urgently needed – to move from highly centralized, standardized, and command-driven forms of management to more decentralized and participatory decision-making, implementation, and monitoring at lower levels of accountability. These processes must be buttressed by a management information system which benefits from both new technologies and community participation to produce timely, relevant, and accurate information.

Country EFA reports and regional action frameworks stemming from the EFA 2000 Assessment recommend the following: (1) establish better regulatory frameworks and administrative mechanisms for managing not only formal and non-formal primary education, but also early childhood, youth, and adult education programmes; (2) more sharply delineate responsibilities among different levels of government; (3) ensure that decentralization does not lead to inequitable distribution of resources; (4) make more efficient use of existing human and financial resources; (5) improve capacities for managing diversity, disparity, and change; (6) integrate programmes within education and strengthen their convergence with those of other sectors, especially health, labour, and social welfare; and (7) provide training for school leaders and other education personnel.

8. Harness new information and communication technologies to help achieve Education For All goals

The role of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the knowledge economy and in education will continue to expand and develop. The potential of these technologies must be harnessed to support EFA goals at affordable cost. While they often tend to separate the haves from the have-nots, weaken social bonds, increase disparities, and threaten cultural cohesion, ICTs can also help expand the reach and enhance the quality of education for all learners. They should complement more traditional technologies such as books and radio.

The swiftness of ICT developments, their increasing spread and availability, the nature of their content, and their declining prices are having major implications for learning. Governments will need to establish clearer policies in regard to science and technology and undertake critical assessments of ICT experiences and options, including their resource implications, in relation to the provision of basic education, emphasizing choices which bridge the “digital divide”, increase access and quality and reduce inequity.

EFA partners also need to tap the potential of ICT to enhance data collection and analysis and to strengthen management systems, from central ministries through sub-national levels to the school; improve access to education by remote and disadvantaged communities; support initial and continuing professional development of teachers; and provide opportunities to communicate across classrooms and cultures.

9. Implement education programmes and actions to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is undermining progress towards Education for All in many parts of the world by seriously affecting educational demand, supply, and quality. This situation requires the urgent attention of governments, civil society, and the international community.

The decade has shown that the HIV/AIDS pandemic has had, and will continue to have, a devastating effect on education systems, teachers, and learners, with a particular impact on girls. Ongoing monitoring of the epidemic's impact on education and specific programmes targeted at mitigating it (e.g., laws ensuring the right of AIDS-affected people to education, actions targeting AIDS orphans) are essential.

10. Conduct educational programmes in ways that promote mutual understanding and peace and help to prevent intolerance, violence and conflict

Civil conflict and violence as well as natural disasters take their toll on education. All EFA partners must build the capacity of governments and civil society to rapidly assess educational needs in contexts of crisis, re-establish a normal life for children and adults through learning provision in secure and friendly learning environments, and re-construct destroyed or damaged education systems.

In designing educational programmes, due attention should be given to both the right to education and to the development of the human personality, as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 26. In this respect, education must be sensitive to cultural identity and linguistic diversity. Life skills in the learning society should include not only broad interdisciplinary knowledge and new skills, such as the peaceful resolution of interpersonal and social conflicts, but ethical values as well.

11 Systematically monitor progress towards Education for All at the national, regional, and international levels

Achieving all the EFA targets, including UPE by 2015, requires setting priorities, establishing intermediate targets, determining policies, allocating resources, monitoring performance, and assessing impact against equity and learning outcomes. Robust and reliable education data, based on accurate census data and disaggregated and analysed by gender, is essential if progress is to be accurately measured, experience shared, and lessons learned. Information on the success of particular strategies, on national and international budget allocations for basic education and on civil society participation in EFA must also be sought. These are all key elements in measuring government accountability.

In order to minimise the burden on scarce human and other resources within ministries of education, it will be necessary to concentrate on a limited, agreed range of key indicators, building upon those used in the EFA 2000 Assessment and focused around education-specific International Development Targets. Qualitative data on progress toward the goals will also be needed. Opportunities to enhance the capacity to produce accurate and timely data, to undertake analysis, and to feed back lessons to policy-making should be sought. Support should also be provided on a selective basis to develop statistical research and analytical capacities at national level. Attention to collecting disaggregated data at lower levels of the system, both to identify areas of greatest inequity and to provide data for local-level planning, management, and evaluation, is essential.

Progress towards meeting the targets needs to be captured systematically to allow for meaningful comparative analyses. The availability of better data at national and international levels will allow governments, civil society, and other agencies to gain a clearer perspective on progress toward the goals, to identify regions, countries, and sub-national levels where there is particular success or difficulty, and then to take appropriate action.

[In order to realize the six goals presented in this Framework for Action, clear strategies for providing support through follow-up mechanisms at international, regional and national levels will be developed and presented in Dakar for endorsement by the World Education Forum. A 12th strategy item will then be added to this framework which will spell out in detail the future mandate and functioning of what may replace the EFA Forum and its governing and executive bodies.]