

May 14, 2009

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Please send suggestions regarding
this newsletter to:

Abekkers@educationfasttrack.org

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A Note from Linda English, Deputy Head, EFA – FTI Secretariat

Dear partners,

The Partnership Meetings provided two days of focused discussion on the burning issues of improving learning outcomes, the implications of child labor, coping with HIV/AIDS and exchanging experiences on implementing education reforms. Following the meetings of the Steering Committee, Catalytic Fund Committee and EPDF Committee, we have clarified priorities and areas for further action.

At the Secretariat we will be focusing on the replenishment process for the EFA – FTI trust funds. This will, of course, be a major effort requiring the collaboration of all partners. One major ingredient will be to make the case to donors that more resources are needed and that the resources that have already been used are having a positive effect. Working with local education groups at the country level, we will need to get good quality data on donor financing of the education sector and estimates for the next 3 years. Complete information on the country progress in meeting the EFA – FTI indicative framework will help to make the case that progress is occurring. In order to provide good estimates of what the financing needs will be, we will require a solid indication of the financing needs and timeline for those countries intending to request Catalytic Fund and Education Transition Fund support. The Secretariat Focal Points will be getting in touch with each of the local education group lead donors to collect this information.

Finally, we would like to know from you what you like about the newsletter and what we can do to better serve your information needs.

Partnership Meeting in Copenhagen Provided Podium for Debate on EFA – FTI's most pressing challenges

Against the setting of an improvised classroom and grade 3 children of a local school eagerly helping out conference participants, FTI's Partnership Meetings in Copenhagen brought together 140 participants of developing partner countries, donor agencies and civil society. Highlights were the inspirational speeches of Rukmini Banerji of India's Pratham, telling us how Pratham is succeeding in teaching children to read in less than two months, and Mongolia's Minister Otgonbayar Yondon, emphasizing the country's successes in nearing the point of universal primary education. He underlined the difficulties to build on those successes in the current economic climate and a shrinking government budget. Denmark's Minister of Development Cooperation, Ulla Tørnæs, stressed the importance of the principles EFA – FTI partnership in the global aid architecture and announced an extra pledge of US\$ 10 million to FTI's Catalytic Fund.

Background documentation and presentations of the meeting are posted on the EFA – FTI website at www.education-fast-track.org

EFA - FTI Ministerial Breakfast Launched the Replenishment Process of the FTI's main Trust Funds



A high-level meeting of EFA – FTI donors and partner countries was held at the World Bank Spring Meetings on April 25. The participants of the meeting confirmed the goals of the EFA – FTI replenishment process which were already announced during the partnership meeting in Copenhagen. The meeting was hosted by World Bank Managing Director Graeme Wheeler and the Danish Minister for Development Cooperation, Ms. Ulla Tørnæs, currently co-chair of the EFA - FTI. Over 100 people participated in the meeting, including high-level representatives of 18 donor countries, Ministers of Finance of 16 FTI developing partner countries and members of the Global Campaign for Education.

Please visit the EFA – FTI website www.education-fast-track.org for the full transcript of the meeting. For a feature article on the meeting, please visit this World Bank website: <http://go.worldbank.org/E3ND3266K0>

Two New Partner Countries Selected to Serve on the EFA – FTI Board of Directors

Burkina Faso and **Moldova** have been selected as the new partner countries on the Board of Directors following an election process organized by the EFA – FTI Secretariat in April. Their representatives will join the existing members from Guyana and Mozambique (who will serve until December 2009) on the Board in July 2009. The new representatives' tenure will end in June 2011.

We thank all of our partner countries for their commitment to this process. We would also like to thank Minister Ato Fuad Ibrahim Omer, State Minister for Education, Ethiopia and Mr. Charles Yaw Aheto-Tsegah, Director of Planning, Budgeting and Monitoring at the Ministry of Education and Science of Ghana for the contributions they have made through their membership in the FTI Steering Committee since 2007.

We look forward to working together with Burkina Faso and Moldova in the Board to achieve the EFA goals.

For more information, please contact Michelle Mesen of the EFA – FTI Secretariat, email: mmesen@educationfasttrack.org

Election of a Third Civil Society Organization on the EFA – FTI Board of Directors

The selection process for a third civil society organization seat on the EFA – FTI Board of Directors was launched in April and a communication went out to all EFA – FTI NGO partners calling for all interested organizations to submit an application. All expressions of interest and written responses should be sent to this email address: vote@educationfasttrack.org. The deadline for submission is May 15, 2009.

For more information, please contact Aby Toure of the EFA – FTI Secretariat, email: akonate@worldbank.org

Participants of the EFA – FTI Ministerial Breakfast Meeting, April 25, 2009 – World Bank/IMF Spring Meetings, Washington, DC

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Schooling and Child Labor in Three EFA – FTI Countries



Achieving universal primary education is undermined by children's participation in labor markets since schooling and work compete for children's time. Analysis of data from the UNICEF's Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys revealed that between 2000 and 2006 improvement in school attendance and primary school completion rates was associated with a decline in the proportion of child laborers in Niger and Vietnam. In Gambia where child labor remained stable over time, improvement in schooling was accompanied with a 60% reduction in the average number of hours children spent in labor activities.

Since boys and girls often do different jobs, the relation between child labor and education can vary according to gender. For example, in urban areas in Gambia where boys and girls equally benefited from improvement in schooling, child labor remained stable at about 12% among boys while increasing among girls from 10% to 21%. The data also revealed that urban and rural areas differ in terms of how changes in schooling and child labor are related.

These results confirm that eliminating child labor among the poor require significant efforts to improve schooling for the poor.

The full paper will be soon available on our website on the thematic page under *vulnerable children*.

For more information please contact Mamadou Thiam of the EFA – FTI Secretariat, email: mthiam2@educationfasttrack.org

Quality in Catalytic Fund Operations is Central to EFA – FTI

In recent years, most partner countries applied for Catalytic Fund (CF) grants. Appraising such applications requires a range of expertise - from public finances to policy making - and can be time consuming. Last December, the Catalytic Fund Committee (CFC) decided to address this problem.

The EFA – FTI Secretariat was asked to organize External Quality Reviews (EQR) for all 2009 CF requests. EQRs are no additional tasks for countries nor do they add approval layers. They are meant to facilitate CFC decisions. A pilot EQR was undertaken for Rwanda in March, 2009. EQR panelists developed an executive memorandum that assesses and summarizes the internal consistency of CF requests. Criteria that are reviewed in the EQR are: (i) fit between needs and demands, (ii) rationale for CF resources (rather than more bilateral funds), (iii) robustness of funding gap equation, (iv) contribution of CF grant to aid effectiveness, and (v) soundness of connection between CF request with education sector plan.

At the end of 2009, the CFC plans to revisit the value added of EQRs to decide whether to continue the policy. There is full recognition that EQRs are not quality enhancers, as they are placed downstream of CF application processes. Local Education Groups, together with World Bank teams, continue to hold the mandate for quality assurance of CF requests.

For more information about the set-up of External Quality Reviews, please contact Ms. Alcyone Vasconcelos of the EFA – FTI Secretariat, email: avasconcelos@educationfasttrack.org

UNICEF Maps the Out-of-School Children of Sierra Leone

"I am the eldest of three sons in my family. My parents are blind; I was going to school...but I stopped in class 6. Even though my mother was blind, she was determined that I go to school. Whatever she had, she used to pay my school charges, uniform and other materials. Raising the money was difficult through begging alone and my mother could not pay the fees... I stopped attending because I could not pay."

This statement was given by a 17 year old boy when interviewed for the study "**The Out-of-School Children in Sierra Leone**". The study was commissioned by UNICEF on behalf of the local Education Development Partners in order to assist the Government of Sierra Leone to identify primary aged out-of-school children. Despite progress, total net enrolment rates in primary school remain at 70 percent and according to UNICEF about 300,000 children are out of school in Sierra Leone.

The study shows that the main reasons why children are not in school are poverty and the need to work, the death of a parent(s), geographic location, gender, religion and family situation, exploitation and marginalization, and involvement into work. The study provides extensive recommendations on how to practically address the needs of out-of-school children. Although the numbers and the living conditions of out-of-school children in Sierra Leone are not well documented, they are highly visible wherever one may go.

The full study is available on the EFA – FTI country website on Sierra Leone at www.education-fast-track.org.

EFA – FTI News from Around the World

New EFA – FTI Success Stories Brochure "Sounds from the Classroom" Launched in Copenhagen

A new publication from the EFA – FTI was launched on April 20 in Copenhagen, entitled "Sounds from the Classroom" which features success stories from five EFA – FTI countries (Ghana, Guyana, Madagascar, Mongolia and Yemen). It focuses on how basic education programs supported by the EFA – FTI partnership have impacted the lives of children, parents and communities positively. The brochure and a video slide show can be downloaded on the EFA – FTI website at www.education-fast-track.org

Moldova: Roma Children, Between Freedom in the Street and Kindergarten

Ion (2.5 years old) and Daniel (6 years old), two Roma children in the poor neighborhood of Nisporeni town are living with their grandparents as their parents left for Moscow in search for employment. Their father was sentenced for a crime in Moscow and is serving his punishment in a prison. The mother is working illegally to take care of her children working various occasional jobs: in construction, housekeeping, and other areas. But recently, the Ministry of Education and Youth with the support of the EFA – FTI Catalytic Fund rehabilitated few kindergartens in the neighborhood allowing Ion and Daniel to attend school with no school fees and a free meal. Please read the complete story at the home page of the EFA – FTI website at www.education-fast-track.org

Upcoming events

May 15 – 25, 2009: 4th EFA – FTI Capacity Development Workshop, Dakar, Senegal

June 1 – 3, 2009: UN meeting at the Highest Level on the World Financial Crisis and its Impact on Development, New York, USA

June 15 – 17, 2009: Teachers and HIV/AIDS: Reviewing achievements, identifying challenges - Meeting of UNAIDS/ Inter-Agency Task Team on Education in Limerick, Ireland

June 15 – 19, 2009: 17th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (17 CCEM) - Stakeholders' Forum, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

June 23 – 24, 2009: Financing Adult Education for Development, Bonn, Germany, organized by the International Council of Adult Education (ICAE)