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Education for All
A call for UK Action

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR
EDUCATION



shirt shorts dress tall cat tomato apples banana tree orange monkey big Sweater Shoes potato

THIS IS A...
dress
pen
shirt

That is a
pat
flower
chair
trucks

hat
yellow green

I have a
words
shirt
hat
shoe
shoe
shoe

He has a...
She has...
ball
hat
shoe
shoe

what is that?
ruler
pencil
ball
door

Chalkboard with drawings of a cross and a flower.

A world of opportunity

Ten years have passed since the international community adopted both the six Education for All goals and the Millennium Development Goals in 2000. The record since then has been mixed.

While much has been achieved over the past decade, many of the world's poorest countries are not on track to meet the 2015 targets. Failure to reach the most marginalised continues to deny millions of children, young people and adults their right to education.

With some five years to go before both sets of goals fall due we need a renewed effort in support of education if we are to have any chance of creating a more just world.

Education is a development imperative

Education opens doors for individuals and the communities in which they live. It is a foundation for reaching all of the Millennium Development Goals because it is central to giving children, youth and adults the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions and acquire better health, better living standards and safer, more sustainable environments.

Significant achievements

The past decade has witnessed remarkable progress on many fronts. The number of children not in school has been falling, gender gaps are narrowing and more children are completing a basic education.

Some of the world's poorest countries have demonstrated that universal primary schooling and wider education goals set for 2015 are attainable.

But future progress is at risk

However the challenge is to consolidate the gains that have been made to date and accelerate progress in countries that are off track.

Depriving children, young people and adults of opportunities for learning has damaging implications for progress in other areas, including economic growth, poverty reduction, employment creation, health and democracy. If the financial crisis is allowed to create a lost generation in education, this will sound the death knell for the Millennium Development Goals, and it will call into question the future of multilateral cooperation on development.

The UK's role

The UK has played a crucial role in supporting the progress achieved thus far. It has championed the importance of education at the highest level, is a leading donor to education and is publicly committed to improving aid to the sector.

However, there is no room for complacency. UK efforts in 2010 will be crucial to securing a renewed commitment to Education for All from the entire international community.

The focus on education in the lead up to and at the football World Cup in South Africa provides us with a unique opportunity to grow community interest and political support for international efforts to advance educational rights.

Later in the year the Millennium Development Review Summit will provide us with an opportunity to set out what more needs to be done to achieve the education related Millennium Development Goals and to make it clear that greater efforts in support of Education for All will reinforce action in support of development in general.

'Education for All: a call for UK action' sets out what the UK should do to play its part, both alone and in collaboration with other development partners to help secure the right to education for the millions of children, young people and adults around the world who still haven't been given the opportunity to learn.



Key principles

As one of the richest countries in the world playing a powerful role in international affairs, the UK has a particular responsibility to promote justice and equality.

Education is key to this and should therefore be at the heart of the UK's international development efforts.

The UK's approach to helping secure education internationally should be based on the following principles:

Education is a right

Education is a fundamental human right and is also indispensable in realizing other human rights. The State is the primary provider of education, and should be supported in providing good quality education.

We must commit to give everyone the chance to learn and benefit from basic education – not as an accident of circumstance, nor as a privilege, but as a right.

Education must be comprehensive

The six Education for All goals, agreed by the international community in 2000, express a comprehensive view of education which includes early childhood care and development, universal primary education, meeting the life long learning needs of youth and adults, adult literacy, gender equality in education and increasing educational quality.

However the main focus for education since 2000 has been the achievement of universal primary education and gender parity.

Whilst this has seen significant improvements in both of these areas we now need a more comprehensive approach.

No person is too young to start learning or too old to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills and the UK's efforts must reinforce this principle.

Civil society is critical to educational progress

The role of civil society participation in holding governments to account and in contributing to the formulation, implementation and monitoring of educational strategies is vital.

The UK has an important role to play in supporting civil society organisations in advancing quality Education for All.

Education for All must mean all

Despite significant progress, many groups of children remain out of school. Discrimination against girls and women in education still persists: more than 55% of out-of-school children are girls, and two-thirds of adults without access to literacy are women.

Disabled children constitute one third of those out of school, and many others face discrimination because they live on the street or their language is not used in school.

Special efforts are needed to make the education system more inclusive and ensure all children are able to participate - we cannot expect to reach them just by increasing spaces within an unchanged school system.

Keeping our promises

The UK has played an important role in prioritising education including through significant and long term pledges of financial support and the promise of continued policy leadership and international political engagement.

The UK must keep its promises to poor people and poor countries embodied in its international development agreements in general and its financial commitments to education in particular.



More and better aid for education

International aid is a vital part of the Education for All compact.

The economic crisis and mounting pressure on government budgets threaten not only to slow progress in education, but also to reverse the hard-won gains of the past decade. Countering that threat requires not just increasing aid but also improving its effectiveness.

Clear spending commitments and efficient disbursement

International support for education depends on the size of the global aid envelope so we are delighted with the cross party commitment to meeting the international aid target of 0.7% of national income by 2013.

Within the UK's overall aid budget it is therefore essential that we continue to set and meet specific education related spending commitments.

In 2006 the UK promised to spend £8.5 billion on education over 10 years from that date, half of which it consequently promised would be spent in sub-Saharan Africa.

Since then the Global Campaign for Education has set out the need for DFID to massively increase its disbursements in order to meet this commitment.

Despite constructive dialogue we remain concerned that disbursements are not matching the UK's promised level of financial support.

The UK should therefore commit to:

- A ten-year education sector spending plan which details the expected level of educational investments, by country, between 2010 and 2020.
- Annual assessments of the spending plan led by Parliament's International Development Committee.

Improved predictability and stability

Without predictable and timely aid, recipient governments have trouble making and delivering their plans so we must ensure far greater stability in future aid flows to education.

The UK should therefore commit to:

- Continue to use budget support as the main modality for aid delivery.

More support for the countries that need it most

Whilst DFID's policy is to focus aid on low-income countries, including large population countries and fragile states at risk of not achieving the Millennium Development Goals, over 50% of the UK's education aid is going to countries that have already achieved UPE or have a high chance of doing so.

The UK should therefore:

- Set out its commitments to low income countries and those furthest from achieving universal primary education.
- Work with other donors to do more to ensure that those countries, especially the group of francophone African countries where DFID is not making direct investments, are able to achieve universal primary education.

International political leadership

More and better aid from the UK will not on its own be enough. Meeting the EFA goals requires additional and more effective funding by a wider range of donors.

The public support for education associated with 1GOAL poses a significant opportunity to generate the political will necessary to develop a new global compact in support of education.

The UK should therefore:

- Support a pledging and planning conference on the eve of the World Cup in South Africa to mobilise the additional financing and other commitments required to fulfil the Dakar commitment.



A global financing initiative that can deliver Education for All

The world needs an effective global funding mechanism to provide crucial resources for building education systems.

When the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) was launched in 2002, it was widely seen as a catalyst for accelerated progress towards Education for All (EFA). However it has thus far failed to deliver on that promise.

The recent evaluation of the FTI highlighted the need for a major reform related to the governance, accountability, scale, reach and flexibility of the FTI if we are to have any hope of achieving the EFA goal.

The UK should therefore commit to pursuing the reform of the FTI, including:

- Creating a fully autonomous multilateral partnership, formally and legally independent of all other institutions including the World Bank, UN agencies, and bilateral actors;

- Improved accountability systems that can track the disbursements of donors, including assessing whether that are contributing their fair share and monitoring the performance of developing countries on an ongoing basis.

- Enhancing the initiative's scale of ambition, ensuring that it has the authority to mobilise resources on the basis of the global resource gap estimate; can reach larger and federal countries and fragile states; and can engage with international financial institutions around macro-economic policy.

- Ensuring democratic governance structures, both globally and at country level, that build on best practice in similar initiatives and that guarantee participation for civil society representatives and other stakeholders,

- Increase its flexibility in order to reach the millions of children in conflict-affected or fragile states. A redesigned initiative should feature a more flexible endorsement process, with support tailored to country circumstances and conditioned on progress.

- Expanding the scope of the initiative to include the full Education For All agenda with the capacity to address early childhood care and education and adult literacy in particular.



Improve educational quality, equity and inclusion

Improving the quality of education and tackling the exclusion of the 72 million children who remain out of school is an urgent priority.

Despite increases in school enrolment and a decline in the share of girls missing out on an education, 72 million children of primary school age remain out of school. Many more drop out, attend infrequently, or achieve little within the classroom. Promoting quality and tackling exclusion is an urgent priority and is central to ensuring education plays its role in poverty reduction.

Quality

Quality plays a central role in getting and keeping children in school. A quality education is participatory, transformative, inclusive, flexible, equitable, child-centred and accessible. UK support for education must focus not just on increasing enrolment but on securing a better quality of education for those children already in school.

Equity and inclusion

Failure to place inclusive education at the centre of the Education for All agenda is impeding progress. Much more must be done to extend opportunities to hard-to-reach groups.

Marginalisation in education reflects wider patterns of social disadvantage and discrimination, as well as bad policies and practices. Inequalities relating to gender, disability, language and ethnicity, place of residence, child labour, poverty and other issues leave many children either unable to access any education or marginalised within the school process.

The UK should therefore:

- Place the principle of inclusion at the heart of all its education work, ensuring UK aid promotes equitable education systems that respond to diversity and improve quality.
- Encourage and support effective consideration of equity, inclusion and quality within national education sector plans.
- Support development of research and data to assess and monitor quality and exclusion.

• Support national and multilateral efforts to:

- Ensure sufficient numbers of trained and motivated teachers;
- Provide appropriate, accessible and safe learning environments;
- Develop and implement relevant, flexible, non-discriminatory curricula;
- Ensure the provision and distribution of resources and learning materials for teachers and pupils, including in accessible formats
- Promote parental and community engagement in educational governance;
- Promote and support family learning;
- Support mother tongue teaching, especially in the early years.

Photo: Babul Miah from Bangladesh has been blind since birth. He could only dream of attending his local school until a local organisation taught the school and his family, that Babul could attend school alongside his sighted peers.

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International economic policy reform that supports Education for All

Without reform, efforts to both increase resources and expenditure on education will be constrained by macroeconomic policies.

Though progress has been made in making fiscal and monetary policies more flexible, research shows the International Monetary Fund (IMF) continues to define the macroeconomic framework rather than national social and equity goals. Alternative policies which balance the need for economic growth and recognise investment in education is required to maintain economic stability need to be pursued.

The UK should therefore:

- Ensure closer coordination between DFID and HMT on policy advice to the UK seat on the IMF Executive Board. The UK representative should demand that the IMF commits to sustaining long term flexibility in macro-economic targets that it has publicised as part of its response to the financial crisis.

The return to tight fiscal targets in the coming years would have a devastating impact on education spending. As the IMF challenges donors to provide more predictable aid, it needs to allow more predictable fiscal space.

- Support research that tracks the macro-economic targets fixed by the IMF as loan conditions - to ensure that they are living up to their rhetoric on increasing flexibility.

- Ensure that macro-economic policies facilitate rather than obstruct the achievement of all EFA goals in all countries where DFID works by supporting greater policy dialogue at national and international levels.

The UK should also develop DFID country staff and government capacity on developing alternative policies which support increased investment in education and at the same time, maintain macroeconomic stability.

- Encourage dialogue between the FTI (or any renamed future Global Initiative on EFA) and Ministries of Finance, World Bank representatives and IMF missions around macro-economic policies that will actively support greater investment in basic education, recognising this as a sound medium and long term investment that yields significant returns as well as finding new ways to accurately factor in these returns within Medium Term Expenditure Frameworks.



Closing the global literacy gap

Literacy has never been more necessary for development; it is key to communication and learning of all kinds and a fundamental condition of access to today's knowledge societies.

With socio-economic disparities increasing and global crises over food, water and energy, literacy is a survival tool in a fiercely competitive world. Literacy leads to empowerment, and the right to education includes the right to literacy.

Literacy is also central to Education for All (EFA). Literacy lies at the heart of learning for small children, those at school, out-of-school youth, and adults. From this perspective, literacy is an essential component of all aspects of learning.

However literacy is the most neglected of the EFA goals with almost 760 million adults, two thirds of whom are women, lacking literacy skills.

If we are to reverse the neglect of adult literacy there is an urgent need for renewed momentum, with fresh and innovative ideas and a clearly articulated vision in which the UK must play its part.

The UK should therefore commit to:

- Develop a strategy which identifies how it will help improve adult literacy through it's multilateral and bilateral funding, technical assistance, policy dialogue and political leadership.
- Encourage developing countries governments to dedicate at least 3% of their national education sector budgets to adult literacy programming.

- Ensuring that adult literacy is included in the reform and renewal of education related global financing initiatives.
- Appointing a Special Ambassador for adult literacy who can lead UK efforts to generate the international political will necessary to advance adult literacy.
- Host a high level meeting on adult literacy to develop and agree a five year action plan to put progress in improving literacy globally, back on track.

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) is an international coalition of non-government, development and children's rights organisations and education unions. In the UK the Campaign undertakes a range of activities designed to increase community awareness of the state of education internationally and generate the political will necessary to ensure the UK plays an active and effective part in efforts to secure education for all. For more information about the campaign in the UK visit www.sendmyfriend.org

The Campaign's UK members are:

ActionAid UK	National Association of Schoolmasters
Africa Educational Trust	Union of Women Teachers
Association of Teachers and Lecturers	National Union of Teachers
Book Aid International	Oxfam GB
Christian Aid	Plan UK
Children in Crisis	Read International
Comic Relief	Results UK
Consortium for Street Children	Save the Children
Deafchild Worldwide	Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association
Education Action International	Sightsavers
Educational Institute of Scotland	Toybox
First Read	Ulster Teachers Union
Handicap International	UNESCO UK
Leonard Cheshire	Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)
Link Community Development	World Vision

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATION

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All figures contained in this document have been taken from 'Reaching the marginalised: the 2010 Education for All Global Monitoring Report' published by UNESCO.