

Providing Schooling for 72 million Children by 2015

African Ministers Urge Donor Support for Fast Track Initiative



With support from the [Education for All Fast Track Initiative \(EFA FTI\)](#), remarkable strides have been made in school enrollments and gender parity in Africa. At the World Bank-IMF Annual Meetings in Istanbul last month, 14 [African Ministers](#) [acknowledged this success and made a plea for more money for EFA FTI](#) to help poor countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals on education.

The African Ministers told international aid donors, “This global partnership has already achieved impressive results, and with your timely

and generous help, it will achieve even more -- and help millions of new school students to stretch their minds to achieve a better life than their parents”.

Girls benefit the most from FTI financing, comprising of 60% new enrollments in primary school in Africa

Meanwhile, football stars, Queen Rania of Jordan and civil society activists came together on October 6 to launch the [1Goal campaign](#), with the aim of attracting 30 million campaigners across the globe during the World Cup 2010 to join a massive call to get all children into school.

“Illiteracy affects us all. It fuels the mistrust among peoples that, in turn, fuels the extremism that we have felt from Mumbai to Manhattan to the Mediterranean. Illiteracy deepens economic crises that know no borders,” said Bob Prouty, Acting Head of the EFA FTI Secretariat, at an October 4 High-Level Roundtable on EFA FTI in Istanbul.

Since its inception in 2002, FTI has helped 20 million children gain access to primary school in Africa alone—double the enrollment rate in non-FTI countries. Girls comprise 60% of new enrollments in EFA FTI supported countries. 15 out of 38 FTI countries are on track to reach the goal of 95% of all children completing primary school by 2015. Another 11 countries are close behind and should reach this goal soon after 2015.

It is expected that 32 of the 38 FTI countries¹ will reach gender parity by 2015

However, EFA FTI is facing a funding gap of \$1.2 billion through the end of 2010, and several billions more in ensuing years, in order to get 72 million children in school by 2015.

“ We know the importance of primary education – its impact on future employment and income levels, its link with lower maternal and health-related deaths and better nutrition, and its role in reducing the incidence of HIV/AIDS,” said **World Bank Managing Director Graham Wheeler** at the October 4 High-Level Roundtable. “The EFA Fast Track Initiative has been tremendously important, and we must ensure that long-term financing is available to help countries reach the Education MDGs.”

How does FTI work?

EFA FTI pools money from donor countries and harmonizes aid efforts around country-owned national education sector plans. FTI currently supports 38 low income countries, many of whom receive grants through the FTI Catalytic Fund. The Catalytic Fund is a multi-donor trust fund, which is managed by the World Bank on behalf of all the FTI donors, and provides funds to countries that have completed a Poverty Reduction Strategy and whose education sector plans have been endorsed by local donors. Since 2005, FTI's Catalytic Fund has allocated US\$ 1.5 billion for poor countries.

FTI also has another multi-donor funding window –the Education Program Development Fund (EPDF), which provides technical support to help countries with weak capacity prepare a sound education plan.

EFA FTI has been recognized by many as an excellent model in coordinating donor efforts in education -- by avoiding duplication, streamlining funds, and advocating for more funds for education. "In the framework of aid harmonization and effectiveness, I would like to say that FTI is one of the most appropriate instruments for donor coordination, and this has demonstrated good results", according to **James Musoni, Rwandan Minister of Finance**.

More Money for Education

To continue to be an effective instrument in supporting the achievement of the Education MDGs, EFA FTI needs to mobilize more resources and has launched a replenishment campaign.

Bert Koenders, Development Minister for the Netherlands, the top donor so far to EFA FTI, made a special appeal to the G8 countries to commit new financing for the partnership. "We know it [EFA FTI] works," Koenders said, citing better trained teachers, school feeding programs, bringing education to remote communities and getting more girls in school as key results to date.

Increasing funding in this global economic crisis is crucial, "because education will suffer the most as growth slows and budgets are squeezed. And that's a great shame because education is not just a right, but also a remedy: it helps reduce poverty, HIV/AIDS, child labor and various other forms of social and economic injustice," said **Kailash Satyarthi, chair of the Global Campaign for Education**, a global coalition of civil society organizations.

Country examples

ETHIOPIA. Ethiopia is one of the EFA – FTI countries that has made dramatic progress: The ratio of children enrolling in primary school skyrocketed from 48% in 1999 to around 80% in 2006 - 2007. The number of children completing primary school rose from 19% to 46% in the same period. Besides increasing access to schools, the Ethiopian government emphasizes the quality



Ghana. Photo credits: O. Asselin, UNICEF

improvement of education.

Ethiopia's General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP) is a well-established partnership of the local donors with the government and is supported by a US\$ 70 million grant of FTI's Catalytic Fund, US\$ 50 million of the World Bank's IDA and US\$ 100 million of UK, Netherlands, Italy and Finland jointly. Under this program, among others curriculum reform, textbook development and teacher training are financed.

→ Read [A Fast Track to 2015: Educating the world's children for a better future](#)

HAITI. Haiti received a US\$ 22 million grant from EFA FTI's Catalytic Fund in September 2009 that will help as many as 135,000 children to have access to primary education for one more additional year of schooling.

This multi-donor backed plan builds on a World Bank supervised Education For All (EFA) program in Haiti which was approved in April 2007 to sustainably increase access to primary education for poor children aged 6-12 and improve equity, quality and governance of the education sector. By Sept. 2009, 90,000 children were being subsidized in 1,247 non-public schools in 6 departments. School feeding activities had targeted 45,000 children, receiving de-worming, breakfast and hot meals during the school year. The EFA Program is facing a funding gap because of high absorption capacity and a lack of domestic resources to ensure sustainability.



→ Click to hear [Sounds from the Classroom](#)

What's next?

FTI partners will meet next in Rome from November 4-6, 2009 to discuss next steps in the replenishment process and how to mobilize resources to fill the education financing gap in FTI countries.

As Bob Prouty told donors, *"Doing this will take money. Not doing it will take more money. So that makes the choice somewhat easier."*

For more information on EFA FTI results and funding, please see: www.educationfasttrack.org