

Board of Directors Audio-conference Meeting

15 September 2011



Decision

BOD/2011/09-01 – Strategic Directions of the EFA FTI: The EFA FTI Board of Directors endorses, taking into account the comments made at its conference call on 15 September 2011, the strategic directions and mechanisms described in the document entitled "EFA FTI Strategic Directions and Mechanisms: Bringing it All Together" (BOD/2011/09-DOC 05).

The mechanisms described in BOD/2011/09-DOC 01 to 03, and the actions being taken to pursue them, including the respective roles of the partners, the EFA FTI Secretariat and the partnership as a whole, shall be discussed further at the meeting of the EFA FTI Board of Directors on 9-10 November 2011 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

15 September 2011



EFA FTI Strategic Directions and Mechanisms: Bringing it All Together

1. Introduction

The Education for All Fast Track Initiative (EFA FTI) has developed an ambitious set of strategic directions for the coming three years, focused on increased support for fragile states, improved learning outcomes and girls' education. These strategic directions are situated in the drive for a strong results culture and the EFA FTI's longstanding goal of reducing the number of out-of-school children.

The three strategic directions are closely interlinked and critical to ensuring that more children stay longer in school and receive a better education. This short paper explains the rationale for the three directions, their inter-linkages and how the EFA FTI Secretariat will take them forward in a coherent manner and also how the EFA FTI Partnership can support them. For details on the three strategic directions, and also on how various instruments will work, please see papers BOD/2011/09—DOC 01-04.

The EFA FTI partnership is uniquely placed to provide support and momentum to the strategic directions given its multi-sectoral membership of developing country partners, donors, civil society (including from north and south and the teaching profession), multilateral organizations, the private sector and private foundations, which is unique in the education sector and essential if progress is going to be made. In addition, EFA FTI's convening power around common policy objectives in education development is stronger than ever. By creating coordinated platforms at both global and national levels, the EFA FTI partnership can drive progress towards shared objectives in each of its policy areas, while injecting financial and technical support to allow developing countries to scale-up effective interventions in education. Moreover, the EFA FTI model supports the evolution and growth of the entire education system in developing countries, with adequate attention paid to the strengthening of the relevant institutions in-country.

2. Rationale for the Strategic Directions

The past decade has seen some developing country partners make good progress on access to education. More children are now in school than ever before and the number of children out of school has dropped since 2000 from over 100 million to 67 million. Within EFA FTI developing country partners, the out-of-school numbers have dropped from 27 million to 17 million.

However, this masks some dramatic, enduring problems, including a global crisis in learning: around 200 million children are currently in school but learning very little: the causes are multiple, but as little as 30% of available school time is effectively used in schools in some countries. In addition, although the proportion of girls entering primary school in the past decade has increased, the transition from primary to lower secondary for girls is still much lower than boys (and this is the area where many other health, economic and social developmental benefits occur). And finally, over 40% of the 67 million children currently out of school live in conflict-affected or fragile states. To address these enduring problems, the EFA FTI Partnership has focused strategically on quality learning, girls' education and fragility.

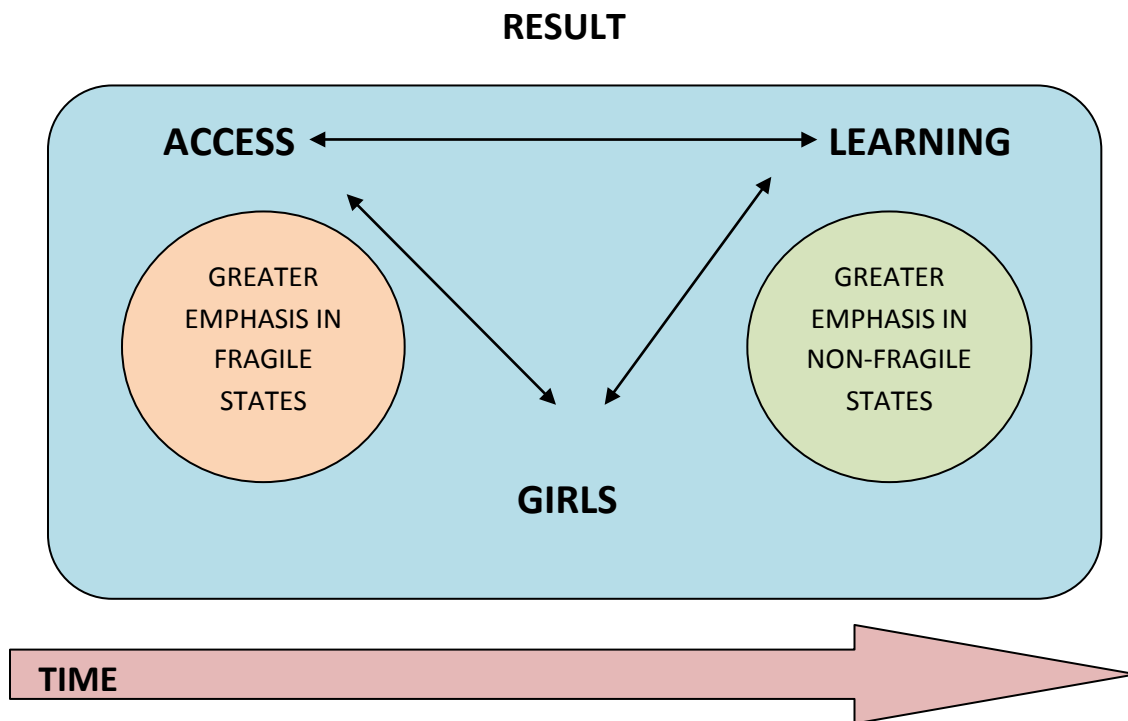
In order to ensure that these priorities are being met, the EFA FTI Partnership has shifted from an input-oriented to a results-oriented approach. A Results Framework has been developed that integrates the objectives of the three strategic directions. The EFA FTI Secretariat and the partners will promote the development of results-focused approach within the education sector in developing countries that will ensure a greater focus on the outcomes in learning, not just monitoring inputs such as teacher training or provision of text books.

3. Linkages between the Strategic Directions

The three agendas relating to quality learning, girls' education, and fragile states are clearly inter-linked as EFA FTI strives to achieve the ultimate goal of seeing all children in school and learning equitably. In the context of conflict-affected and fragile states, the first priority is to ensure that more children have greater access to school, especially girls who tend to be the most marginalized in these contexts. That said, merely improving access doesn't mean that children are learning and a special focus is then required on the quality of education and increasing the numbers of girls staying in school.

The following diagram attempts to highlight some of the inter-linkages between the EFA FTI priorities. The representation is illustrative and simplistic, but nonetheless, there is an important reality here. On a time continuum, improving access has historically tended to be the first fundamental issue to be addressed, more recently with a specific focus on girls. Then aspects of quality require increased attention as the education systems begin to develop. For EFA FTI developing country partners, this is all situated in a context of a robust education plan and a results framework focused on outcomes. Conflict affected and fragile states tend to be situated more to the left of the continuum, while other EFA FTI developing country partners more to the middle and right. Part of the EFA FTI Partnership’s challenge is to ensure quality receives equal attention to access right from the very start.

INTER-RELATIONSHIPS OF EFA-FTI STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



4. EFA FTI Mechanisms and Strategic Directions

In order for EFA FTI to deliver on its strategic directions, it is necessary to ensure that the various mechanisms available to the EFA FTI are suitably aligned with each other and the strategic directions. EFA FTI is well placed to do this since it has much in its ‘toolkit’, from technical support to the

development of sound education plans, financing of implementation and the power of the knowledge and experience across the partnership.

The five main EFA FTI mechanisms are outlined below. Annex 1 explains how the EFA FTI will address each of the three strategic directions.

- a. ***Education Plan Development, Assessment and Endorsement.*** This is the core of the EFA FTI model and partnership, ensuring strong country ownership and on-site policy dialogue, where this dialogue and the accompanying planning, done in the context of funding, may be more important than the funding itself. The EFA FTI Secretariat is currently developing an improved version of the appraisal process and ensuring an explicit link to core indicators in the new Results Framework. Education plan development (be it full education sector plans or interim plans in conflict-affected and fragile states) is also linked to all of the other EFA FTI mechanisms.
- b. ***Resource Allocation and Transfers.*** This mechanism helps achieve the strategic directions in two ways. First, the initial country-based financial allocations are determined by the Needs and Performance Framework (NPF) that explicitly takes account of the strategic directions. The NPF recognizes important needs to be addressed (such as a country having a high gender disparity in primary access) and also recognizes good performance/progress (such as a country receiving a higher score under the NPF if it is making good progress in primary completion). Second, it is proposed to use financial top-ups (or other performance-based financial transfers executed through any of the partners) to countries based on strong performance against pre-agreed indicators reflective of any of the three policy priorities. In addition, the policy discussion process is meant to leverage in-country own-source funding.
- c. ***In-country Mechanisms and Experiences.*** Key to the success of the EFA FTI and its policy priorities is the successful implementation of national education plans and the results they deliver. There are a number of ways in which the EFA FTI will increase its support of developing country partners in order to deliver better results, including the following:
 - i. Enhanced technical support to developing country partners to identify what works and encourage scale-up of ideas that work;

- ii. Close monitoring of education plan implementation to track progress on policy priorities and the plan more broadly, and identify measures to improve results;
 - iii. Support for more effective monitoring of progress at a country level with a focus on strengthening Joint Sector Review processes; and
 - iv. Support to Local Education Groups to strengthen coordination of activities and financing in the education sector.
- d. **Results Framework.** The EFA FTI Secretariat has developed a Results Framework specifically to reflect the importance of the three strategic directions with core indicators of achievement in quality learning and girls' education. Indicators for these areas are being incorporated centrally in the new EFA FTI results Framework. Mutual accountability around results will help ensure delivery along all the key indicators of the results framework.
- e. **The Global and Regional Activities (GRA)** program will be used by partners to support education plan implementation by offering knowledge development and dissemination on how to achieve the goals laid out in the three strategic directions and how to measure achievement of goals in these strategic areas in the Results Framework. The GRA is fundamentally supportive of education plan development and implementation of those plans. It will also be used to support mutual commitment and accountability around the goals embodied in the Results Framework, so that the goals acquire more meaning.

In addition, and of critical importance and potential power, the broader EFA FTI Partnership affords the opportunity to drive the policy goals. All of the EFA FTI partners can and should define ways in which their own policies, financing and political commitment can support the priorities. EFA FTI is developing a Mutual Accountability Matrix that seeks to establish these commitments and responsibilities. Moreover, the EFA FTI pledging conference in Copenhagen in November 2011 will seek not simply financial pledges to the Education for All Fund, but also policy pledges and other bilateral, domestic and multilateral funding commitments aligned with the EFA FTI processes and policy goals.

Annex 1. Illustration of fit between EFA FTI Mechanisms and New Strategic Directions

Available Mechanisms	Strategic Directions		
	Girls' Education	Quality	Fragile States
ESP preparation, assessment, endorsement	Appraisal guidelines will ensure that issues pertaining to girls' access to school and learning are given due consideration.	Appraisal guidelines will help ensure that issues pertaining to learning outcomes, particularly initial literacy and mathematics, are well considered.	Appraisal guidelines will make special allowances for fragile states such as a focus on specific topics or encouraging consideration of interim education plans. They will specify the elements to be considered for helping countries transition from 'interim' to 'full' education plans.
Resource allocation and transfers	Needs and performance funding framework already includes incentives to improvements in gender parity in primary school completion. Special funding top-ups based on specific performance or policy targets can also be considered.	Needs and performance funding framework already includes incentives to progress on primary school completion. Special funding top-ups based on specific performance or policy targets, for instance related to learner assessment or use of quality assurance systems are proposed.	Needs and performance funding framework already contains an allowance for fragility. Note that funding cannot be used to induce results that reduce fragility itself, as overall reduction in fragility is beyond the medium-term reach of the education sector.
In-country mechanisms and experiences	EFA FTI partners will engage in discussions with developing country partner governments around girls' education results as identified by the education plans and joint sector reviews, and will use the Results Framework, as appropriate, as a source of indicators, targets, and knowledge of "what works" for girls' access and learning outcomes.	EFA FTI partners will engage in discussions with developing country partner governments around learning outcomes as identified by the education plans and joint sector reviews, and will use the Results Framework, as appropriate, as a source of indicators, targets, and knowledge of what works for learning outcomes in initial literacy.	The EFA FTI Secretariat will propose joint sector review processes that are sensitive to the operational realities of working in fragile states, including engagement of the Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies. The Country Support Team will include greater expertise on fragile states issues.
Results Framework	Will specify the results countries could aim for, and that the Partnership will be assessed with respect to girls' access and learning results.	Will specify results countries could aim for, and that the Partnership will be assessed with respect to initial literacy (and later numeracy) learning outcomes.	Targets in Results Framework will be set country by country so as to take into account issues specific to fragile states.
Global and Regional Activities program	Will provide funding for partners to use in feeding knowledge into education plans, in-country instruments and experiences. Will generate agreements and mutual accountability on results needed with specific reference to girls' access and learning outcomes.	Will provide funding for partners to use in feeding knowledge into education plans, in-country instruments and experiences. Will generate agreements and mutual accountability on results needed on learning outcomes.	Will provide funding for partners to use in feeding knowledge into education plans, in-country instruments and experiences with specific reference to improving access, learning outcomes, and girls' performance in fragile states.