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## **Introduction to Thematic Discussions**

## Introduction to the thematic discussion on: Quality of Education and Learning Outcomes

### Introduction

In all regions of the world, there are growing concerns over the quality of education and student learning. The 2013/4 EFA Global Monitoring Report estimates that 250 million primary school-age children are unable to read, write, or do basic mathematics, whether

they have been to school or not<sup>1</sup>. Early learning deficits clearly have lifelong impacts. In the European Union, for example, 73 million adults have only a low level of education<sup>2</sup> while 160 million adults in OECD countries have insufficient reading skills to complete a job application<sup>3</sup>. There is a growing consensus among many governmental, non-governmental and international stakeholders that quality education and learning should be core constructs of the post-2015 education agenda<sup>4</sup>.

### What constitutes good “quality education”?

Despite the growing emphasis on quality issues in education policy, including in the post-2015 education targets, views differ about the nature and determinants of good quality education, as well as the most effective policy levers for enhancing skill acquisition and learning outcomes. What is clear is that context plays a powerful role in influencing the provision of “quality” education<sup>5</sup>.

The World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal, April 2000) identified the key elements of good quality education as: well-nourished and motivated students; well-trained teachers employing active pedagogies to support personalized learning; adequate facilities and instructional materials; clearly defined, effectively taught and accurately assessed curricular knowledge and skills; and a healthy, safe, gender-sensitive learning environment that makes full use of children’s local language skills (Expanded Commentary, 2000: 15-17).

Today, additional elements of quality are being highlighted by many European and North American stakeholders. These include, for example, fostering practices that promote sustainability in local, national and global communities; acquiring skills for competently navigating a technology-intensive world; promoting political and civic engagement, intercultural dialogue and global citizenship; instilling a passion for learning throughout life; and nurturing innovative and creative producers of new knowledge.<sup>6</sup>

### How is quality education to be measured and monitored?

As the issue of quality (in pre-primary, primary, secondary, TVET and tertiary education) is integral to many post-2015 education targets, we must understand how quality education can be measured and monitored. In past decade, monitoring the provision of quality education primarily

<sup>1</sup> UNESCO. 2013/4, EFA Global Monitoring Report. *Teaching and learning: Achieving Quality for All* Paris. 2014

<sup>2</sup> And only 8.9 per cent participate in lifelong learning, source [http://ec.europa.eu/education/ews/rethinking/com669\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/ews/rethinking/com669_en.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> *Youth and skills: Putting education to work*, EFA Global Monitoring Report (2012), 99.

<sup>4</sup> Also see: Benavot, A. 2011. Improving the Provision of Quality Education: Perspectives from Textbook Research. *Journal of International Cooperation in Education*, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 1–16.

<sup>5</sup> UNESCO and UNICEF. 2012. *Asia-Pacific End of decade Note on Education For All*. EFA Goal 6 Quality Education. Bangkok. 2012

<sup>6</sup> Council of Europe (2008) *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue*. Strasbourg [www.coe.int/dialogue](http://www.coe.int/dialogue); The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) *Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development*, adopted in March 2005 in Vilnius, Lithuania, during a High-level Meeting of Environment and Education Ministries; European Commission (2012) *EU High Level Group of Experts on Literacy: Final report*. Brussels, European Commission.

<http://ec.europa.eu/education/literacy/what-eu/high-level-group/documents/literacy-report.pdf>

meant tracking inputs into schools--for example, per pupil educational expenditures, trained teachers, class sizes, instructional time, access to ICT, etc. In recent years, attention has shifted to measuring skill acquisition and learning outcomes in various national, regional, international and/or citizen-led assessments.<sup>7</sup> Such summative assessments of learning can serve as a valid basis for educational accountability.

And yet, despite the growing use of learning assessments, countries express concerns about their potential unintended consequences: basing education reforms on average results in league tables, the search for short-term fixes to perceived learning gaps, the narrowing of the curriculum to what can be measured quantitatively, the marginalization of humanistic and aesthetic subject areas over STEM topics, the growing demand for 'cram' schools and shadow education, the willingness of schools and teachers to "teach to the test." Equating quality education with average learning levels is problematic. Higher achievement in selected content domains may do little to improve the acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills in the broader sense. Equally important is the uneven distribution of learning across regions, households, ethnic or socio-economic groups and, most importantly, in diverse schools and classrooms. Addressing inequalities in quality education requires a deeper understanding on what learners learn from intended curricular contents and teaching practices, in a given learning environment.

There is a pressing need for shared understandings and viable strategies to measure learning in ways that ensure all children and youth, regardless of their circumstances, receive a good quality education<sup>8</sup>. Such understandings can best be cultivated through improved availability of systematic, reliable and updated data and information obtained through formative and/or continuous (classroom-based) assessments and summative assessments.

## **Quality of Education in the context of Europe and North America**

Improving the quality of education is among greatest challenges facing countries in Europe and North America. Learning outcomes are stagnating or decreasing in several countries, reflecting a deep crisis in teaching and learning, which severely affects students from low income households or minority group. As pupil/teacher ratios are low, education policy answers may not need focus on hiring large numbers of additional teachers, but on reorienting their roles in the classroom. Access to quality ECCE services, which is shown to positively impact on later learning, wellbeing and employment prospects, remains a distant for many young children in the region.

## **Guiding questions for the discussion on Quality Education and Learning:**

- What are priority areas for improving the quality of education and learning in European and North American countries? How would this depend on context?
- What are the most important and effective policy levers to ensure that all children and adults learn? Which of these are consistent across countries and which are more sensitive to context?
- How should quality education be measured and monitored? What types or domains of learning should be assessed (and how)? To what extent should transversal skills (e.g., communication, problem solving, teamwork, creativity, critical thinking, learning to live together, respect for cultural diversity); livelihood skills and entrepreneurship, be assessed?

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<sup>7</sup> See [N. Köseleci Blanchy](https://efareport.wordpress.com/2014/11/19/improving-not-over-hauling-learning-assessments-post-2015), World Education Blog November 2014, <https://efareport.wordpress.com/2014/11/19/improving-not-over-hauling-learning-assessments-post-2015>

<sup>8</sup> See P. Rose, World Education Blog, November 2013 <http://efareport.wordpress.com/2013/11/22/holding-business-to-account-for-learning-outcomes-what-are-the-risks/#more-3976>

**Introduction to the thematic discussion on:  
Skills for life, decent work and entrepreneurship**

## **Introduction**

In Eastern and Western European and North American States, the financial and economic crisis of the late 2000s has led to persistent challenges, such as deepening and widening of social inequalities and vulnerability, in some countries stagnation and even decline in economic growth, and increase in unemployment especially for youth and low-skilled adults. In many countries of the region, these are being accompanied by structural factors such as ageing of the labour force and the increasing postponement of the age of retirement. All these factors put more momentum into an already persistent call on education and training systems to respond effectively to these challenges and ensure an adequate supply of skills, maximising their use and optimising further development of skills in a lifelong learning perspective.

## **Skills for life and decent work and entrepreneurship policy outlook**

Many Eastern and Western European and North American States have developed education and training strategies to address some or all of these issues from their national perspectives; but their success in implementing those strategies varies widely and lifelong learning remains far from being a reality for all across and within countries.

For instance data from OECD countries show that participation in adult education and training varies considerably and that current levels of access to skills for work development opportunities are too low relative to the demands. The issue of insufficient access opportunities is more evident for low skilled workers and Not in Education, Employment or Training persons (NEETs). Moreover, evidence from international surveys such as the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) and the European Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS) demonstrate that people who start off with low levels of skills have difficulties in continuing to learn later in life. The bias towards large firms in providing skills development is also striking (participation in training activities is 50% lower in SMEs than in large firms). In addition, many skills are acquired outside the formal education and training system, through experience or learning in informal settings - increasingly on-line - are often not fully recognised in the workplace or valued by formal education and training systems to help individuals access higher levels of skills. For most countries gender differences in educational choices and low shares of female students in subjects that offer better employment prospects remain an issue. In addition, national and international researches show that the gender gap in wages in the region remains considerable.

Youth unemployment rates are persistently high, job seekers and job-holders are experiencing prolonged periods of insecurity, yet even in countries in recession, unemployment coexists with unfilled vacancies (e.g. there were over 2 million unfilled vacancies in the EU and around 3.5 million jobs unfilled in North America in the second quarter 2013), indicating structural imbalances between skills supply and demand.

## **Priority areas for post-2015 education agenda**

The challenges introduced above, and the development of the post-2015 education agenda itself suggest that education and training policies have to be developed systematically, integrating a range of policy fields. They cannot be thought of independently from other areas of social and economic policy such as economic, labour market policies, regional development, youth, environment or technology and innovation. Working in an integrated manner requires inter-

ministerial coordination, multi-stakeholder representation and mechanisms for partnerships and consultations at national, sectoral and local levels such as Human Resources Development Councils, sectoral skills councils, and local skills councils. These and other mechanisms should therefore be given serious consideration as instruments for steering the skills for work and entrepreneurship strategies.

In the context of the elaboration of the post-2015 agenda, countries now need to step up their efforts to deliver higher quality and relevant skills for work programmes for youth to improve education to work transitions and enhance adult up-skilling and reskilling. This requires developing over-arching lifelong learning policy frameworks, which improve the linkages between 'education and training' and 'employment' and to enhance a dialogue between government and social partners to facilitate the transition of young people from education to work. Reducing the mismatch between qualifications and credentials supplied by education and training systems and the required skills and competencies in the current labour market is particularly important.

Beyond mastering work-specific skills, there is need for information-processing skills and other high-level cognitive and interpersonal skills. Therefore, education systems need to provide learners with those knowledge, skills and competences needed to be creative and innovative, able to adapt to and assimilate change and to continue learning, and navigate a technology-intensive world. Policies for skills development also have to address the consequences of ageing labour forces and rapidly-changing skill needs. Well-designed education systems should be put in place to enable adult workers to keep their skills up-to-date and improve their productivity, and thereby contribute to extended careers of productive employment in a life-long learning perspective.

This further implies, among other things, appropriate mechanisms for identifying and anticipating skills demand, overarching qualifications frameworks prepared with the involvement of social partners, guaranteeing possession of relevant learning-outcomes upon completion, effective career guidance for all based on 'up-to-minute' data about the labour market outcomes, and clear learning pathways allowing people to learn over the course of their working life. The establishment of flexible education systems which facilitate pathways between different education streams and the transition between school and work would be needed. As economies are producing sufficient wage and salaried jobs, skills for entrepreneurship will be also required. Entrepreneurship programmes, business support centres and incubators combined with financing can open the way to the creation of self-employment and employment in particular for start-ups and small and medium enterprises. Interventions to support apprenticeships, and more broadly work-based learning, can also be an effective and appropriate way to develop the skills needed for work and entrepreneurship.

Appropriate and sustainable financing of skills for work programmes is crucial for a successful implementation. Diversifying the sources of funding and effective and efficient institutional financial management are major areas of policy concern in all countries.

The post-2015 education agenda recognizes that key markers of sustainable development are among others, knowledge- and technology-driven growth, a deepening concern for youth employment, social equity and a collective conscience for climate change implications. The discussion during the session will focus on effective policies to address these challenges and to meet the skills for work and entrepreneurship target. The outcome of the session should be 2-3 recommendations for the conference outcome document.

### **Guiding questions for break-out group discussions:**

The questions should be discussed from a regional perspective and with regard to what the specific relevance to and contribution of the region can be in regard to skills for work and entrepreneurship.

1. What policies and strategies should be developed to enlarge the skill sets of youth and how to ensure that skills are relevant to demand? What mechanisms exist for assessing and anticipating skills demand?
2. What life-long learning policy frameworks and flexible education systems should be established to facilitate pathways between different education streams and the transition between school and work and to enhance adult up-skilling and reskilling? What are the most appropriate funding mechanisms?
3. Beyond work-related skills, what transferable skills are required for life and work, which policy measures and innovative schemes are showing potential in helping address skills gaps? How could transferable skills be measured?

## **Introduction to the thematic discussion on:**

### **Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education**

## **Why Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship Education?**

In a globalized world with unresolved social, economic and environmental challenges, there is an increasing awareness of the importance of ensuring that the content of education is relevant and matters to learners. In our current time, learners are

expecting education to be a holistic experience that is formative, enabling and empowering.

In this context, strengthening the ways in which education contributes to the fulfilment of human rights, peace, responsible citizenship, gender equality, sustainable development, health, respect for cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue has been proposed as part of the post-2015 education agenda. The knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required by citizens to take informed decisions, in all facets of their lives, and assume active roles both locally and globally to face and resolve global challenges can be acquired through global citizenship education (GCED) and education for sustainable development (ESD).

GCED and ESD aim at empowering learners of all ages to contribute to sustainable development and to take responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society for present and future generations. GCED and ESD ultimately help learners become proactive contributors to a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world.

Both emphasise the interconnections between the local and the global levels and promote skills such as critical thinking, understanding complex systems, imagining future scenarios, and making decisions in a participatory, fair and collaborative way.

There is a strong mandate for action for ESD and GCED: The UN Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative promotes global citizenship as one of its priorities, and the World Conference on ESD recently launched the Global Action Programme on ESD.

## **From words to action: how to implement ESD and GCED?**

Implementing ESD and GCED require changes in policy and practice. Considering that ESD and GCED are transformative, integrating them in the formal education system is not enough. GCED and ESD are about action and therefore also about living what you learn. This implies going beyond the formal system and mobilizing non-formal education and educational stakeholders. Learning should furthermore begin as early as childhood and continue throughout life.

GCED and ESD also particularly require effective cooperation and action-oriented partnerships beyond the education sector, with other sectors that are crucial for sustainable development and global citizenship such as the media, the social and business sectors. Actions at the local level that engage multiple sectors are able to translate universal principles such as human rights into meaningful transformations.

Finally, ESD and GCED both also depend on the active and authentic engagement of young people who are driving change and reinventing modes of social engagement via the internet.

As the post-2015 agenda is universal and concerns all countries, GCED and ESD address issues that are relevant to all countries, regardless of their economies and stage of development. In this regard, GCED and ESD have a clear relevance for the European and North American States that are experiencing a growing call from their citizens for a relevant education that can support the transition to sustainable lifestyles in the region.

## **Guiding questions for break-out group discussions:**

The questions should be discussed from a regional perspective and with regard to what the specific relevance to and contribution of the region can be in regard to ESD and GCED.

1. How to make education (formal, non-formal and informal) truly transformative for learners and society? How can transformative education be practiced? What are the requirements – and barriers – at the level of policy and practice?
2. How can learners live what they learn throughout life – and at all ages – inside and outside the formal learning environment? What are the implications for education as we know it?
3. How can we reach out beyond the education sector for the implementation of GCED and ESD, including to groups like media and youth?



## Introduction to the thematic discussion on: Indicators and Benchmarks for the Post-2015 Agenda

### Introduction

The UN processes to define the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including education, continues to consult stakeholders at national, regional and international levels. Goals and targets have been articulated and are being debated, and attention has also

turned towards indicators which can best monitor progress towards these goals.

### Considering an architecture for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals

The UN Secretary General's synthesis report and the report of the SDSN on post-2015 indicators, sets out four levels of SDG monitoring:

- **Global:** with no more than 120 indicators for the entire framework, thus requiring an extremely limited number of indicators for each goal;
- **Thematic:** the indicators proposed by the education community for more comprehensive tracking of education at the national, regional and global levels, not all of which are currently available at the global level or internationally comparable;
- **Regional:** indicators agreed upon by groups of countries to track progress towards regionally-relevant targets; and
- **National:** indicators generated and tracked by individual countries, which may not be comparable at either the regional or global level.

The global indicators would serve as the primary foundation to tracking progress of all countries towards education goals on an internationally comparable basis although in the short term, they may need to be supplemented by related indicators in the broader set. The thematic set includes a larger number of indicators to provide greater alignment with the proposed targets, some of which will require further development and decision-making on the extent to which globally-comparable data are attainable or desirable. The small set of global indicators should be reflected at thematic, regional and national levels.

### Criteria for choosing indicators for global tracking

Indicators for global tracking should ideally meet a range of standards that ensure technical strength, feasibility, cross-national comparability and availability of data over time. Four key criteria include:

- **Relevance:** While it is difficult for indicators alone to fully capture the vision behind the proposed targets, indicators should ideally reflect the most critical policy themes. Across all of the proposed targets, emphasis has been placed on measuring learning with equity.
- **Alignment:** The construct to be measured must be valid and reliable relative to the targets, such that the indicator has the same meaning and significance in all settings, ideally measured by a similar question or item. Measuring constructs that vary across settings pose challenges for global tracking. It may be possible to measure some elements globally, while others may be best measured at the national or regional level, with flexibility to adapt constructs to local contexts.

- **Global comparability:** Global tracking is most effective when the data are collected on a regular basis (though not necessarily annually) and all or nearly all countries routinely collect the data in a similar manner. It must be feasible and cost-effective to collect data over time. It may be more feasible for countries to invest in indicators which require quality observations as part of a local monitoring system, rather than including quality observations as part of a global tracking system.
- **Communicability:** The indicators selected must be easily understood and lend themselves to the construction of a clear narrative regarding progress towards the goals and targets. The indicator framework for education should facilitate clear and transparent reporting and effective communication about the objectives and achievements of each stage of implementation.

## Measurement challenges

The post-2015 global education agenda requires the international community to address new issues and measurement challenges in two critical ways: 1) measurement of learning outcomes; and 2) improved measurement of equity in education. In both cases the challenges are to be addressed through a universal agenda with indicators that are relevant to all countries. Table 1 proposes global monitoring indicators guided and motivated by these basic principles of learning outcomes and equity.

To track learning and equity using methods that are relevant to all countries, it will be necessary to build measures of learning that encompass the various skills and competencies across a wider range of contexts and to measure equity in ways that can facilitate global tracking, while accurately capturing the unique characteristics of equity in different contexts.

- The growing evidence on the importance of **early childhood** development has produced a number of research-based measures but no field-tested consensus on an indicator that can be collected in a cost-effective way and compared across different countries.
- The agenda highlights the need to measure **learning** outcomes at different ages or grades. Despite growing participation in national and cross-national learning assessments, learning outcomes are not yet tracked over time and across countries in a systematic way. Efforts are underway to develop an approach to equate and link key national definitions of key learning outcomes in order to compare assessment results.
- The proposed indicator framework prioritises the measurement of **literacy** and **numeracy** by level of proficiency, which marks an important improvement to current measures. However, it will be critical to build on lessons learned from recent efforts to assess these skills in order to promote cost-effective approaches that can be used by countries with very limited resources.
- The core of the new agenda is attention to **equity**. This calls for a clear shift in the use of surveys and population censuses – whether of households or schools, children or adults – and efforts to extend the background information available through administrative sources.
- In the area of education for **global citizenship** and **sustainable development**, the current proposal is provisional. The international community needs to discuss the essential behaviours and the type of education that lead to desired outcomes. The very process of reaching a consensus and using the findings to influence the design of education systems

to better serve these objectives will be in itself a ground-breaking result of implementing the post-2015 agenda.

**Guiding questions for break-out group discussions:**

1. What are the most critical education targets for your country/region?
2. What measurement challenges will you face in monitoring these targets?
3. Which indicators would you use to monitor the targets?

**Table 1. Proposal for global/thematic indicator framework**

Target	Concept	No.	Indicator	Equity	Sex	Location	Wealth	Available	Coverage	Comments
<b>Targets 4.1-4.7</b>										
4.1	Readiness	1.	Early Childhood Development Index	Yes	X	X	X	Yes	c30	This indicator is currently available (through MICS) but more work is needed over the next 3-5 years to examine other alternatives, reach consensus and develop set of questions for use across surveys.
		2.	Percentage of children under 5 years experiencing responsive, stimulating parenting in safe environments	Yes	X	X	X	Yes	c30	This indicator is currently available (through MICS) but more work is needed over the next 3-5 years to examine other alternatives, reach consensus and develop set of questions for use across surveys.
	Participation	3.	Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary school entry age)	Yes	X	X	X	Yes	c60	Necessary to harmonize this indicator across surveys in two areas: (i) age group of reference (e.g. MICS asks question about 3-4 year olds) (ii) description of programmes (e.g. many surveys may not capture the concept of organised learning but only the concept of pre-primary education).
		4.	Gross pre-primary enrolment ratio	Yes	X			Yes	c165	
	Provision	5.	Countries with 1 year free and compulsory pre-primary education	No				Yes	All	
4.2	Learning	6.	Percentage of children who achieve minimum proficiency standards in reading/mathematics at end of: (i) grade 2 (ii) primary (iii) lower secondary	Yes	X	X	X		3-5 years	The indicator requires the development of a global metric for each subject as a reference point to which different assessments (national, regional or international) can be anchored.
		7.	Percentage of countries that organize a nationally representative learning assessment at the end of primary / lower secondary school that produces a publicly available report of results	No					1-3 years	Standards will need to be developed.
	Completion	8.	Gross intake ratio to the last grade (primary, lower secondary)	Yes	X			Yes	c150	
		9.	Attainment rate (primary, lower secondary, upper secondary)	Yes	X	X	X	Yes	c100	This indicator is currently available but work is required to finalise a common methodology and increase the number of surveys available to calculate it.
	Participation	10.	Out of school rate (primary, lower secondary)	Yes	X			Yes	c160	
		11.	Percentage of children over age (primary, lower secondary)	Yes	X	X	X	Yes	c100	This indicator is currently available but some work required to finalise a common methodology on age adjustment and increase the number of surveys available to calculate it.
	Provision	12.	Countries with nine years of free and compulsory basic education	No				Yes	All	

4.3	Participation	13.	Tertiary gross enrolment ratio	Yes X	Yes c145	
		14.	Participation rate in technical-vocational programmes (15-24 year olds)	Yes X	3-5 years	Currently data is available on technical-vocational enrolment in upper secondary education. Considerable work required to extend the age reference and capture all possible programmes.
		15.	Participation rate in formal and non-formal education and training (25-64 year olds)	Yes X X X	Yes c30	Currently data is only available on adult education in EU countries. Considerable work required to develop set of questions to be applied in labour force surveys globally.
4.4	Skills	16.	Percentage of youth / adults proficient in numeracy skills	Yes X X X	3-5 years	While some middle income (STEP) and high income (PIAAC) countries have assessed adult numeracy skills, a cost-effective tool is needed in other surveys for general use.
		17.	Percentage of youth / adults who are computer and information literate	Yes X X X	Yes c20	Only one survey (ICILS) attempts to measure such skills. Major efforts required to develop a global data collection.
4.5	Equity cross-targets	...	We recommend the <u>parity index</u> (female/male, rural/ urban, bottom/top wealth quintile] for all indicators on this list that can be disaggregated			Alternative ideas instead of the parity index may be: (i) odds ratio (ii) concentration index (iii) least advantaged group.
	Policy	18.	Percentage of total education expenditure borne by households	No	Yes c35	Currently data is only available for more developed countries. Considerable work needed to develop national education accounts in less developed ones.
		19.	Percentage of countries which have an explicit formula-based policy reallocating education resources to disadvantaged populations	No	3-5 years	A reporting process is required for countries to describe their policies and a methodology will need to be developed to assess these policies.
		20.	Percentage of students in primary education where their mother tongue is the language of instruction	Yes X X X	3-5 years	Major efforts will be required to develop a global measurement tool.
		21.	Percentage of total aid to education allocated to low income countries	No	Yes All	
4.6	Skills	22.	Percentage of youth / adults proficient in literacy skills	Yes X X X	3-5 years	While a number of middle income (STEP) and high income (PIAAC) countries have assessed literacy skills of adults, a cost-effective tool is needed to be inserted in other surveys for use across countries.
		23.	Youth / adult literacy rate	Yes X	Yes All	
	Provision	24.	Participation rate in literacy programmes (% illiterate 25-64 year olds)	Yes X X X	3-5 years	Currently data is only available on adult education in EU countries. Tools should be developed in conjunction to indicator 16.
4.7	Knowledge	25.	Percentage of 15-year old students showing proficiency in knowledge of environmental science and geoscience.	Yes X X X	Yes c57	Only one survey (PISA 2006) attempts to measure such knowledge. Major efforts will be required to develop a global measurement tool.

	Attitudes	26.	Percentage of 13-year old students endorsing values and attitudes promoting equality, trust and participation in governance	Yes X X X	Yes c38	Only one survey (ICCS 2009) attempts to measure such attitudes. Major efforts will be required to develop a global measurement tool.
	Participation	27.	Percentage of teaching hours dedicated to education for sustainable development / global citizenship education	No	3-5 years	Preparatory work is required to develop a consensus on what elements of curricula across countries correspond to these concepts.
<b>Means of implementation 4.a-4.c</b>						
4.a	Resources	28.	Average size of single grade classes in primary schools	Yes X	Yes c26	Considerable work is required to extend the coverage of current data collections.
		29.	Percentage of schools with (i) electricity (ii) drinking water (iii) sanitation	Yes X	Yes c41	Considerable work required to extend the coverage of current data collections.
	Environment	30.	Percentage of students experiencing bullying	Yes X X X	Yes c73	
4.b	Number	31.	Volume of ODA flows for scholarships by sector of study, type of study and by beneficiary country	No	Yes All	Considerable work is required to develop a measure that assesses the number of scholarships / beneficiaries.
4.c	Qualified	32.	Percentage of teachers qualified according to national standards (by level)	No	1-3 years	Following preparatory work, countries will begin reporting on this indicator for the first time from the academic year 2014 onwards.
	Trained	33.	Percentage of teachers trained according to national standards (by level)	No	3-5 years	Major efforts will be required to agree on common standards.
	Motivated	34.	Average teacher salary relative to other professionals	No	3-5 years	Major efforts will be required to develop a methodology based on labour force data.
	Supported	35.	Percentage of teachers receiving in-service training	No	3-5 years	Major efforts will be required to develop a tool that assesses the incidence, duration and content of training.

**Introduction to the thematic discussion on: Implications of the future education agenda from an aid perspective and innovative financing**

## Introduction

Even though domestic spending remains the most important source of financing for education, aid plays a vital contributing role, particularly for the poorest countries furthest from achieving EFA. In those cases where countries have made faster progress towards goals, the role of external financing has been instrumental. Moreover, aid from the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) member

countries has been the main source of external finance, with private sector and non-DAC donor contributions remaining a very small part of the financing picture for education.

Despite the important role that DAC donors have played in promoting EFA, their failure to meet the commitment they made at Dakar in 2000 that no country will be prevented from achieving education for all by a lack of resources is an important contributing factor to the goals not being met. As a result of this failure, the poorest countries continue to face major shortfalls in resources needed to achieve Education for All, with an estimated financing gap for basic education of US\$26 billion annually, once domestic spending and current aid levels are taken into account (UNESCO, 2013)<sup>9</sup>.

In order to inform discussions on the role of aid in supporting a post-2015 development and education framework, the first section of this paper analyses trends in aid to education, identifying both the amount that donors are spending as well as whether these resources are being allocated effectively.<sup>10</sup> It draws largely on the Education for All Global Monitoring Reports, which each year include analysis on financing in the context of achieving education goals.

### **Aid flows have increased since 2000, but with a reversal in trends from 2010**

Since 2000, there has been an overall positive trend in aid to education, mirroring improvements in aid levels overall. However, there are signs of stagnation or even decline even though a large financing gap remains. Aid disbursements by DAC donors to the education sector more than doubled from US\$6.7 billion in 2002 to US\$14.4 billion in 2010, but declined by 7% between 2010 and 2011 to US\$13.4 billion (UNESCO, 2013). The share of education has been around 13% of sector-allocable aid over the past decade, but because some donors are de-prioritising education within their aid budgets, education's share of total aid is at risk of falling (UNESCO, 2012)<sup>11</sup>. The reduction in aid to education between 2010 and 2011 of 7% was considerably more than the 3% reduction in total aid over the period. In order to assess the contribution that financing makes to achieving EFA, it is important to assess flows by the level of education to which aid is directed and the type of recipients (by income group and region).

*Aid disbursements by education level:* Over the last decade aid disbursements to basic education<sup>12</sup> have comprised around 43% of total aid to education. Aid to the sub-sector doubled from around

<sup>9</sup> UNESCO (2013) Schooling for millions of children jeopardized by reductions in aid. Education for All Global Monitoring Report Policy Paper 9. Paris: UNESCO

<sup>10</sup> The information included in the paper is provided by the OECD Creditor Reporting System which can be found at <https://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/idsonline>

<sup>11</sup> UNESCO (2012) Youth and Skills: Putting Education to Work - 2012 Education for All Global Monitoring Report. Paris: UNESCO

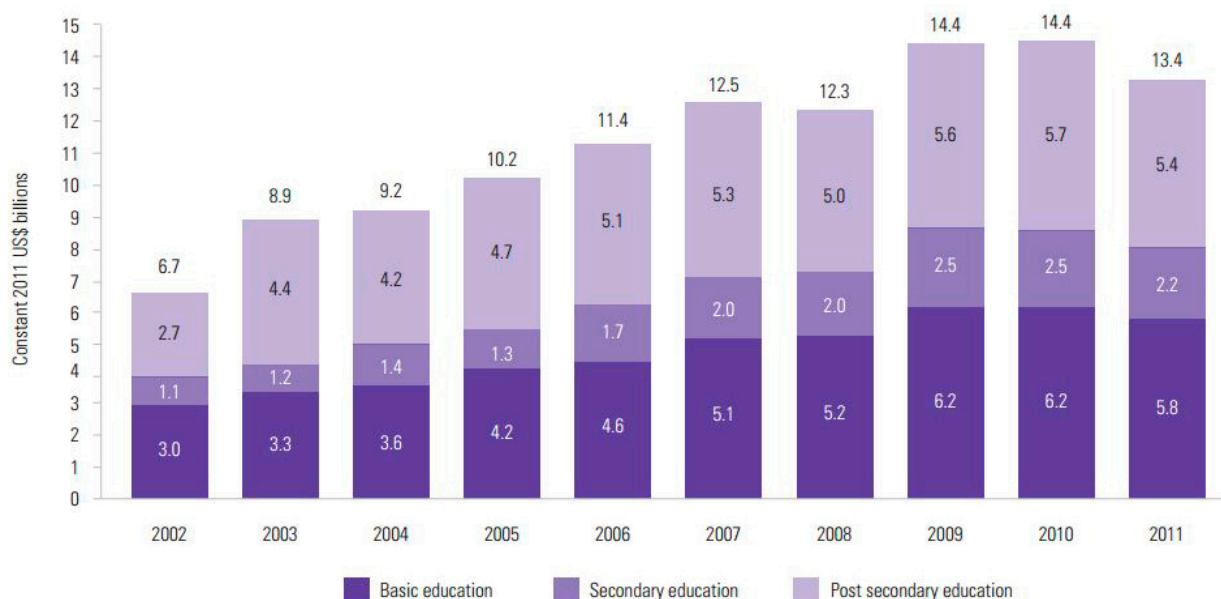
<sup>12</sup> In the OECD-DAC classification, 'basic education' covers pre-primary education, primary education and basic life skills for youth and adults. Almost all aid to 'basic education' (92%) is directed to primary education.

US\$2.8 billion in 2002 to US\$6.2 billion in 2010 (Figure 1). However, aid to basic education fell between 2010 and 2011 by 6% to 5.8 billion, the first time there has been a reduction since aid disbursement data were first published in 2002 (Brookings Institution and UNESCO, 2013)<sup>13</sup>. This decline is occurring at a time when there are still 57 million children of primary school age out of school, with the numbers stagnating in recent years.

Despite concerns that the MDG focus on primary education could be at the cost of higher levels, aid disbursements to secondary education doubled over the decade from US\$1.1 billion in 2002 to US\$2.2 billion in 2011, although this sub-sector also witnessed a decline between 2010 and 2011.

Aid to post-secondary education, which has similarly doubled over the decade, is on par with aid levels to basic education. While aid to higher education can in some circumstances play an important role in supporting capacity development, it unfortunately rarely reaches developing countries. Around three-quarters of aid for tertiary students is spent on the costs of them studying in the donor country, via scholarships and student imputed costs. This spending, which is equivalent to around one-quarter of total direct aid to education, is excluded from OECD-DAC's definition of 'real', or country programmable, aid (UNESCO, 2012).

**Figure 1: Total aid disbursements to education, 2002 to 2011**



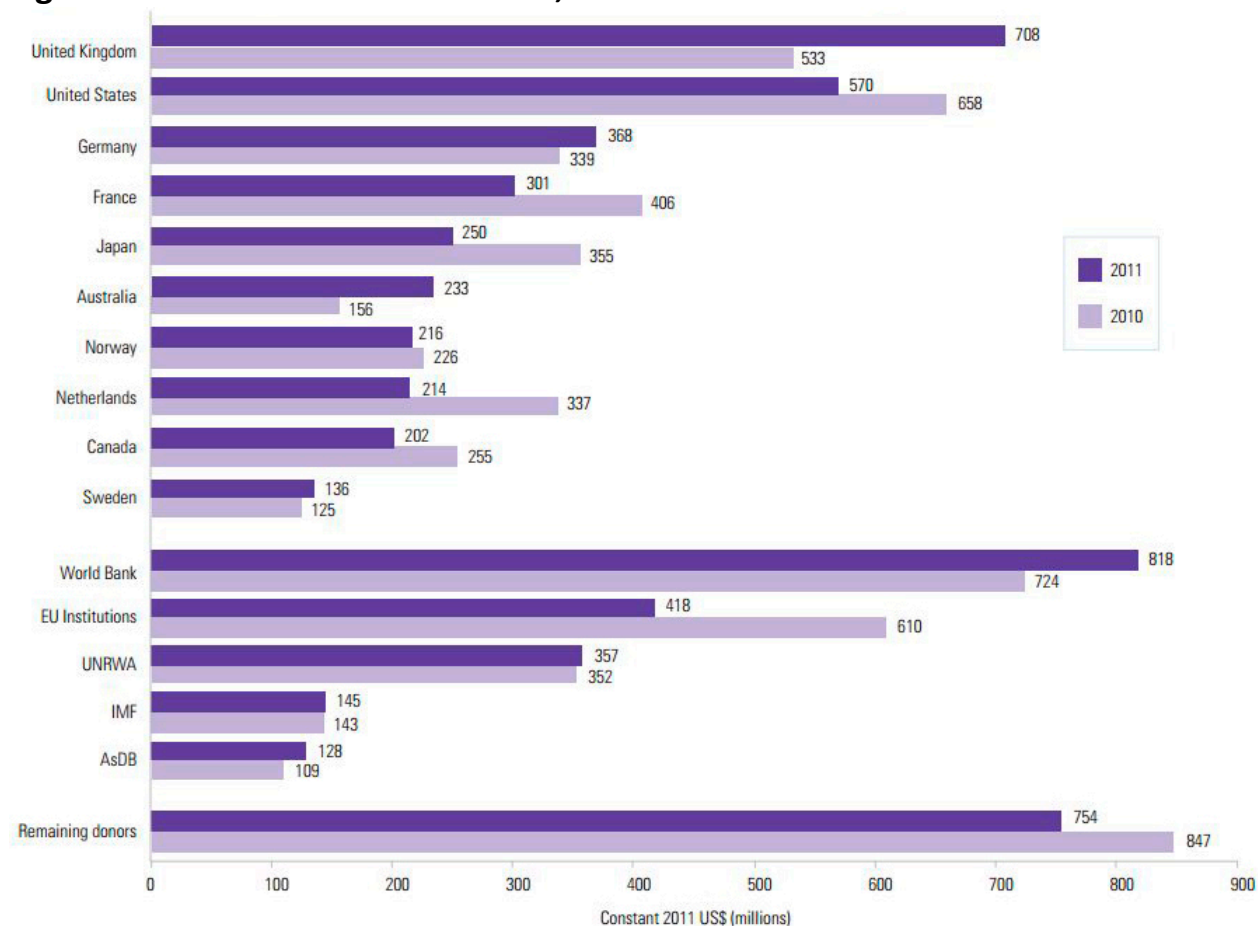
Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report team analysis based on OECD Creditor Reporting System (2013).

The top five bilateral donors to basic education are the United Kingdom, the United States, Germany, France and Japan (Figure 2). Reflecting the general trend, three of these (United States, France and Japan) reduced their aid to basic education between 2010 and 2011.

13 Brookings Institution and UNESCO (2013) Financing for Global Education: Opportunities for Multilateral Action. A report prepared for the UN Special Envoy for Global Education for the High-level Roundtable on Learning for All: Coordinating the Financing and Delivery of Education. Washington, DC / Paris: Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution / Education for All Global Monitoring Report.



**Figure 2: Donors to basic education, 2010-2011**



Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report team analysis based on OECD Creditor Reporting System (2013).

## Financing the post-2015 education agenda

The implementation of the new education agenda will require adequate and effective financing, tapping into a wide variety of sources: domestic government, international aid, public-private partnerships and innovative financing. It will also require a fairer share of the distribution of education spending within countries, with a lower share spent by households and a higher share spent by governments and donors to equalize financial flows to benefit the disadvantaged. This will also necessitate prioritizing existing and future government and donor resource commitments.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, it is essential that attention is paid to providing adequate funding to all education targets. To hold governments and donors accountable, specific commitments on financing with clear targets need to be made.

Domestic resources are the most important source for funding education and this should remain so.<sup>15</sup> Education is a public good and public financing has an especially important role to play to ensure equity in education. Catalyzing and increasing domestic financing will be key for implementing the new education agenda.<sup>16</sup> Widening the tax base as well as increasing the share of the national budget allocated to education would considerably increase funding for the

<sup>14</sup> Education for All is affordable - by 2015 and beyond, EFA global Monitoring Report (Policy Paper #6.), UNESCO (2013).

<sup>15</sup> Trends in aid to education: Lessons for post-2015, EFA global Monitoring Report (Policy Paper #11.), UNESCO (2013).

<sup>16</sup> See Kenneth King, Development Assistance for Education Post-2015, UNESCO (2013); Rose and Steer, Financing for global education: opportunities for multilateral action. EFA Global Monitoring Report and Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution. (2013)

sector.<sup>17</sup> Education needs to be at the core of national sustainable development financing strategies and this most certainly implies that the majority of governments will need to invest a far higher share of their gross national product on education. In low and middle income countries, which currently spend a little under 5% of GNP on education, there will still be a considerable financing gap for achieving the post-2015 targets even if they raise their spending to 6% of GNP. The Muscat Agreement proposes that countries invest 4-6 per cent of GDP and/or 15-20 per cent of public expenditure in education.

As a result, aid will continue to play a vital role, most notably for countries most in need. Aid from the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) member countries remains the main source of external finance.<sup>18</sup> It has been estimated that even with ambitious assumptions on economic growth and public expenditure in low and lower middle income countries, there will be an important annual gap<sup>19</sup> to achieve universal pre-primary, primary and lower secondary completion of good quality by 2030. This means that the aid to education effort would need to scale up and yet there is a trend of declining aid since 2010,<sup>20</sup> while the current outlook from OECD-DAC suggests that aid will stagnate at similar levels until 2017. The education sector has received a lower share of total aid in 2000s compared to the 1990s as well as to other social sectors.

To reverse the situation, not only will the share of education in aid budgets need to increase. Aid to education will also need to be better targeted to countries furthest from the targets than is currently the case. This is particularly relevant for countries in conflict. Education is the sector receiving the smallest proportion of requests for humanitarian aid, and just 26% of the amounts requested are actually covered.<sup>21</sup>

While it is inevitable that only higher levels of external financing will help achieve the targets, we should build on the lessons we have learned and the institutions we have created. The Global Partnership for Education is a key partner for countries in financing the post-2015 education agenda and will play a catalytic role on domestic and external finance. It is only partnerships that can build political will and enhance result delivery.

Moreover, there is a need to increasingly involve emerging donors such as the BRICS in the funding of education. The establishment of new banks in support of South-South cooperation such as the BRICS Development Bank may present new sources of funding for education.<sup>22</sup>

The private sector has emerged as a potential contributor to education development objectives but its resources need to increase and be better targeted at countries most in need and use existing channels of development assistance to maximize synergies.<sup>23</sup> Beyond financing, the private sector can catalyze innovation and advance policy reform.<sup>24</sup> Effective public-private partnerships require effective coordination and regulatory mechanisms ensuring a common vision for inclusive, equitable quality education and accountability.<sup>25</sup> Engaging the private sector calls for making the most of innovative financing approaches to help raise additional funds. Such approaches can also raise political and public awareness of education, promote innovation and improve outcomes.<sup>26</sup>

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17 Trends in aid to education: Lessons for post-2015, EFA global Monitoring Report (Policy Paper #11.), UNESCO (2013).

18 Trends in aid to education: Lessons for post-2015, EFA global Monitoring Report (Policy Paper #11.), UNESCO (2013).

19 To be completed with the latest figures from the forthcoming GMR policy Paper (March 2015).

20 Trends in aid to education: Lessons for post-2015, EFA global Monitoring Report (Policy Paper #11.), UNESCO (2013).

21 The EFA Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO (2013/14).

22 Synthesis Report of the UN Secretary-General on the Post-2015 Agenda (2014).

23 Education for All is affordable - by 2015 and beyond, EFA global Monitoring Report (Policy Paper #6.), UNESCO (2013).

24 The Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO (2012).

25 See also: Making Education a Priority in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, UNESCO and UNICEF (2013).

26 Kenneth King, Development Assistance for Education Post-2015, UNESCO (2013).

## **Guiding questions for break-out group discussions:**

1. Given the increased need for financing for the post-2015 education agenda, can DAC countries commit to the international target of providing 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) as official development assistance (ODA) as called for by the UN SG and increase the contribution to education? What is the status of discussion within DAC countries on the subject?
2. How to ensure better targeting of aid and aid effectiveness?
3. Should international financing mechanisms and GPE support the implementation of all targets of the post-2015 education agenda according to the needs and priorities of the respective countries?

**Introduction to the thematic discussion on: Governance, coordination and partnerships - Regional mechanisms and strategies and the global education agenda**

**Key priority areas of the Council of Europe's action in Education**

Quality is a key concern in the policy debate about education at all levels in Europe and is therefore central to the programme of the Education Sector of the Council of Europe. On the basis of the Committee of Ministers' Recommendation (2012)13 on "Ensuring quality education" and the conclusions of the 24<sup>th</sup> session of the Standing

Conference of Ministers of Education on "Governance and Quality Education", the Council of Europe is developing policy and practice to further quality education, with a particular emphasis on policies to favour social inclusion.

The overall aim of the Education Programme is to strengthen democratic culture among new generations in member states as a prerequisite for sustainable democracy. The programme provides national authorities with policy orientations, relevant tools and needs-based support for their work.

In 2016-2017, a new framework on competences for democratic culture and intercultural dialogue will include tools to help member states assess the effectiveness of their curricula and training programmes with regard to citizenship, as well as to set learning objectives and monitor students' progress. Specific successful actions will be identified through the launching in 2016 of the Second Cycle Review of the implementation by member states of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (CM/Rec (2010)8).

Policies to further quality in history and language education will also be developed to enable member states to enhance their know-how in building inclusive and cohesive societies through education while valuing diversity and peacefully resolving conflicts. The programme will also contribute to further reflection and identification of good practice regarding the roles and responsibilities of public authorities for quality education. It will establish and develop a pan-European platform to further ethics, transparency and integrity in education that will cater for all actors.

The programme is implemented by the Steering Committee for Education Policy and Practice (CDPPE), which comprises official representatives of Ministries of Education of the 50 States party to the European Cultural Convention as well as observers from civil society, international partner organisations and non-European states (Canada, Japan, Mexico, United States of America and Israel).

**Education in the EU development agenda**

The commitment to education is reflected in a number of EU development policies including the 2013 Communication "Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: An agenda for change" which states that the EU should improve its support for quality education to give young people the knowledge and skills to be active members of an evolving society. A commitment has also been made to improve collaboration between humanitarian and development programs in education.

In the “Agenda for Change”, the EU made a commitment to allocate at least 20 % of EU aid to supporting social inclusion and human development. Education programming shows promising results in this context. For the new financial framework 2014-2020, the overall EU budget allocated to support education and training in developing countries stands at an estimated €4,6 billion, higher than in the previous programming period. The total includes:

- about €2,55 billion for 40 countries where education and/or vocational training is a sector of concentration; around half of these countries are fragile or conflict affected;
- EUR 265 million under the Global Public Goods and Challenges (GPGC) program destined primarily at supporting global education initiatives and education in situations of fragility;
- EUR 1 680 million to Erasmus+ directed to increasing higher education cooperation with the developing world (managed by DG Education and Culture).

The main recipient of funds for education from the Global Public Goods and Challenges program is the Global Partnership for Education. The European Union hosted the second Replenishment Pledging Conference of the Global Partnership for Education on June 26, 2014, where the Commission pledged EUR 375 million for the period 2014-2020 (€175 million from the GPGC programme and €200 million from the 11th EDF intra-ACP funds).

Education remains high up in the EU's priorities for the post-2015 agenda with a main focus ensuring access to and completion of quality education to all boys and girls and in this respect welcomes the inclusion in the proposal of the UN Open Working Group for the post 2015 agenda of a specific goal on “Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. To achieve this goal it is important to strengthen synergies and linkages with other sectors.

### **Guiding questions for break-out group discussions:**

1. What could be the roles of the European Commission and of the Council of Europe in linking the implementation of the post-2015 education agenda to education strategies of the region, including regional coordination and monitoring?