

EducationAction



act:ionaid

Issue 21

January 2007

Contents

- 2 Editorial
- 3 Every child out of school is a child labourer
- 6 From rights 'to' education to rights 'in' education
- 7 South Asia Parliamentarians' Forum on Education
- 8 The Global Campaign for education
- 10 The Parktonian Recommendations
- 13 African Education Ministers launch Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015)
- 14 Uprooting the challenges of girls' education in Northern Nigeria
- 15 Participatory curriculum design – from Guatemala
- 17 Education rights: An Activist's Guide to a Human Rights-Based Approach to Education
- 19 Funding change: sustaining civil society advocacy in education
- 22 How the rights-based approach to macroeconomics can increase spending on education
- 24 Signs of change: will the 'Abuja Commitment' bring the IMF to the table?
- 25 Summary Report from Cairo: Fast Track Initiative partnership meeting and EFA High Level Group meeting
- 26 From schooling access to learning outcomes: an unfinished agenda and an unfinished evaluation
- 30 Rewriting the future: Education for children in conflict-affected countries
- 33 The Elated Schools campaign in Sri Lanka
- 35 Disaster risk reduction through schools in Malawi
- 37 More than words: Comparing policy and practice in Tanzania and Vietnam
- 40 Reflect update
- 41 ESOL resource materials
- 42 Deadly Inertia
- 44 Girl Power: the impact of girls' education on HIV and sexual behaviour
- 45 Violence against girls in schools: Developing a Model Policy in Southern Africa
- 48 Remembering... Katarina Tomasevski

Further information on all projects available from Balaraba at ActionAid Nigeria.

If you have any comments on this edition or any articles for inclusion in a future edition please contact one of the *Education Action* editorial team:

Balaraba balaraba.aliyu@actionaid.org
David david.archer@actionaid.org
Victorine victorine.djitrinou@actionaid.org
Akanksha akanksha.marphatia@actionaid.org
Emma emma.pearce@actionaid.org
Egi egigayehu.summers@actionaid.org

ActionAid is a UK registered charity no. 274467

Produced by S37 Design
Photographs not credited © ActionAid

Cover photograph – Gideon Mendel / Corbis / ActionAid

Editorial

2007 will be a crucial year for education activists. A mid-term review of progress towards achievement of the Education For All goals is underway and even before that has reported, it is clear that urgent new action is needed. This edition of *Education Action* addresses a range of the key challenges that lie ahead and offers some new directions.

One of the most enduring challenges for the education sector is **financing**. New openings appeared in 2006 with the engagement of African finance ministers and pledges of large scale aid (see page 24). But is this enough? The Global EFA architecture, as epitomised by the High Level Group and Fast Track Initiative (see page 25) have not seized on this new momentum as effectively as they could. A major donor conference in Brussels in April 2007 offers some renewed hope of a breakthrough but without addressing macro-economic constraints and the policies of the IMF (see page 22), new aid may not translate into more teachers. Unfortunately, despite promising a comprehensive review of its role in primary education, the **World Bank** has shied away from confronting the big issues (see article page 26).

It is clear that civil society organisations need to maintain the pressure on governments and donors if progress is to be made on EFA. The Global Campaign for Education's **Global Action Week** is one remarkable means to do so, mobilising over five million people (see page 8). We need to work with parliamentarians (see page 7) and deepen partnerships between NGOs and **teacher unions** (see page 10) as well as working with bodies like the **African Union** (page 13). We also need to work on a **rights-based approach** to education at local, district, national and international levels, linking work across these levels in a coherent framework (see page 17). Finding sustainable ways to fund such work will be crucial to the future and Kathryn Tomlinson (page 19) outlines the innovative ideas that have emerged from a 16 country **Commonwealth Education Fund** research project on this question.

Articles in this edition capture a range of practical experiences that can help to make breakthroughs in achieving EFA. For example, in **India**, activists have put child labour at the centre of mobilisation on education (see page 3). In Northern **Nigeria** (page 14) girls' education is the

focus of action whilst a recent workshop in **Zimbabwe** has developed an exciting Model Policy (page 45) to address a relatively under-regarded obstacle to girls' progress – the violence that they experience in school and on the way to school. Recognising that most countries face a multi-lingual and inter-cultural reality like **Guatemala** (page 15) is essential if the curriculum is to be made relevant. Sometimes this involves challenging entrenched interests, as faced in **Pakistan** where the history curriculum is being re-conceived (page 6).

One of the education challenges which is rarely adequately addressed is **HIV/AIDS**. Most countries have policies on paper but little happening in practice (see **Deadly Inertia** page 42). Yet, education can save lives and this is particularly true for girls as 74% of young people with HIV/AIDS in Africa are women. A review of the latest research on this shows that **Girl's Education = Girl Power** (page 44).

It is clear that some of the biggest challenges lie in **conflict-affected** countries and this concern frames the new campaign by **Save the Children Fund** (page 30). The role of education in responding to **disasters** needs to be addressed (see the experiences of **Sri Lanka** on page 33) as does the role of education in preventing disasters (see article on **Malawi** on page 35).

The expansive **Education For All** agenda has all too often been reduced to a focus on primary schooling. In this context, the **International Benchmarks on Adult Literacy**, produced last year, offer an important step forward in re-asserting the case for effective investment in adults. The practical application of these benchmarks in **Vietnam** and **Tanzania** is examined by **Jude Fransman** (page 37). And of course this edition also brings news of new ways in which the **Reflect** approach is being adapted, in **Bangladesh** (to address disability) and in the **UK** (to work with refugees and asylum seekers).

This edition of *Education Action* is dedicated to **Katarina Tomasevski** (see page 48) who was an inspiration to all of us. As the first ever United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Katarina did more than anyone to advance education rights globally. We are committed to continuing the struggle and with the **Global Action Week** of the Global campaign for Education focused on education rights in 2007. We hope that this will be the year of a major breakthrough!

Abbreviations:

CEF – Commonwealth Education Fund
DFID – UK Department for International Development
EFA – Education for All
FTI – Fast Track Initiative
GATS – General Agreement on Trade in Services

GCE – Global Campaign for Education
IMF – International Monetary Fund
MDGs – Millennium Development Goals
NGO – non-government organisation
SMC – school management committee
UPE – universal primary education
WTO – World Trade Organisation

Every child out of school is a child labourer: The work of the MV Foundation

Based on an interview by David Archer with R. Venkat Reddy, Coordinator of MVF

Venkat Reddy has a remarkable story to tell. Just 16 years ago the MV Foundation (MVF) started work by freeing 16 children from bonded labour in the Ranga Reddy District of Andhra Pradesh in India. Now they have consolidated their learning into an approach that has an impact across the State and far beyond. Key to their success has been the non-negotiable set of principles upon which they build their work (see box). At the heart of these is the idea that any child not in school is a child labourer. They have had remarkable success in mobilising rural youth around these principles, with the central goal of eliminating all child labour by getting all children into school.

Ranga Reddy District is one of few places in rural India where one can see the same number of children in Grade 5 as in Grade 1. MVF has succeeded in shifting deep-rooted social norms. Previously, child labour was a normal part of life in the district, seen as inevitable by poor parents, tolerated by communities and implicitly endorsed by the government. Now, it is socially unacceptable for any child to be doing anything during school hours except learning.

Youth mobilisation

The origins of MVF lie in challenging bonded labour in 1991. Despite powerful legislation to prevent bonded labour, MVF found that there were many bonded labourers in Ranga Reddy District and that 40 per cent of them were children. There were government schemes to help adults freed from bonded labour but no equivalent for children. Once 'freed' the children risked being bound once again. MVF linked up with local youth clubs and encouraged the youth to help by running a residential camp. These camps would protect the children and prepare them for going to school. The youth, many of whom were the first generation in their own families to have gone to school, were strongly motivated to act against child labour.

The next step was to mobilise the youth to conduct household surveys across a range of villages asking whether children were in school (if so what grade) or not (if not, what are they doing). Of the 10,000 children identified, only 4,000 were in school. Shocked by this, the

The non-negotiables

- *All children must attend full time formal day schools (not night schools or non-formal education centres).*
- *Any child out of school is a child labourer (whether waged, non-waged, in factory, fields or home).*
- *All work/labour is hazardous: it harms the overall growth and development of the child.*
- *There must be a total abolition of child labour (any law regulating child work is unacceptable).*
- *Any justification perpetuating the existence of child labour must be condemned (e.g. arguments about the 'harsh reality' of poverty, the necessity of children's earnings, poor quality of teachers or schools – these are all anti-children).*



Tom Pleasnik / ActionAid

young people analysing the results took a pivotal decision: the 6,000 other children surveyed should be regarded as child labourers (whether they were bonded labourers, daily-wage labourers or working in their own homes). They noted that in every village surveyed there was a school and agreed that the central

challenge had to be to make that school work effectively and include all children. Local campaigns were run to condemn all forms of child labour and mobilise all children. Young children in the 5-8 age range were encouraged to enrol immediately. Older children were invited to 'bridge camps' where local youth would help them to get ready to go to school the following year, building their confidence and embedding their sense of education as their right.

MVF built up training programmes to help the local youth run bridge camps and support village schools. Before long they had a strong cadre of committed youth activists who were able to train others. The non-negotiables were a powerful uniting identity, deeply internalised by everyone. From these core principles, local activists could determine innovative solutions to new challenges that they faced – without seeking approval from outside. This enabled a horizontal spread of the movement.

The work of MVF has of course evolved dramatically over the years,

but the core threads remain clear: galvanising youth into an activist role to eliminate child labour by getting all children into school. The youth have reached out to sympathetic teachers, community leaders and government officials to extend their work, forming Child Rights Protection Committees. Activist teachers involved in the work have formed a Teachers' Forum, BKVV, which now has 2,500 teachers involved and has linked MVF's work to the teacher unions. These teachers have popularised the idea that 'teachers are responsible for out-of-school children too'. They have worked with parents to create new 'contracts' where in return for 'retention guarantees' from parents (promising to keep their children in school), teachers issue 'learning guarantees' (promising that children will achieve basic learning objectives). This is indicative of the impact that MVF's work has had on schools themselves. Once all children are in school and are staying there, the pressure for the school to improve is great. Parents no longer have the option of pulling children out of the local school if it is failing, so they are compelled to engage actively to make the school work.

One dramatic example of the power of the non-negotiables came when MVF confronted the government of Andhra Pradesh around its support for non-formal education night schools. The government claimed it was running 25,000 such schools. MVF called for them to be closed down on the grounds that they were complicit in child labour – designed to enable working children to access school at night. This was highly controversial – an NGO campaigning to *close down* government provision! Surely this was madness! The campaign led the government to re-assess its provision. They found in fact only 17,000 centres were operational and they agreed eventually to close all of these and to get the night-school teachers to link to the village school, bringing all the night-school children into the day school. Remarkably, this worked.



Tom Pretask / ActionAid

One dramatic example of the power of the non-negotiables came when MVF confronted the government of Andhra Pradesh around its support for non-formal education night schools. The government claimed it was running 25,000 such schools. MVF called for them to be closed down on the grounds that they were complicit in child labour – designed to enable working children to access school at night. This was highly controversial – an NGO campaigning to close down government provision! Surely this was madness!

The political clarity that comes from the strong principled foundations of MVF can be seen again and again. Shanta Sinha, Director of MVF, recently campaigned against the International Labour Organisation's new convention on hazardous child labour. Some people were perplexed. Others saw this as overly dogmatic. But the principle is clear. As soon as you talk about hazardous child labour you are implicitly suggesting that non-hazardous is not as bad – that somehow it is more tolerable. This sends out the wrong message altogether and fudges the issue.

The classic argument used against complete abolition of child labour is that poor parents depend on the income for survival. MVF have shattered this myth. They have shown that even the poorest families can adjust to sending all children to school. They have also shown that one of the obvious but unexpected side effects has been to increase the pay of adults working as day labourers or in low-paid employment. Once child labour is removed there is more demand for adult labour. Child labourers used to be paid less than adults – so the presence of children in the workforce directly undermined employment opportunities and pay for adults. This only works of course on a collective level – getting

all children at once out of the workforce and back to school – and hence the mobilisation approach of MVF is essential.

Some challenges

Inevitably there are some areas of tension and contention around MVF's work. One key concern relates to the use of residential bridge camps to help prepare former child labourers to go to school. In part this builds on a particular tradition in rural areas of Andhra Pradesh for hostel-based solutions. It is seen by some as essential for breaking the culture of dependency on child labour. But any institution like a hostel runs the risk of being a place where children's rights are abused rather than respected. There is also concern about separating children from their own families and from their cultural identity. Clearly *culture* cannot be accepted as an excuse for child labour, but eliminating child labour should not depend on separating children from their parents. Venkat recognises the risks: *'Residential camps are a temporary solution to help break norms. In the long term there should be no need for hostels.'* He adds: *'when children were working there was a greater distance between children and parents. It is when they become students or are in the process of becoming students, parents begin to discover the parent in them and children too become children.'*

A second area of contention concerns the role of teachers. The bridge camps involve stimulating and creative activities, building the confidence of children and their preparedness for learning. Sometimes they go beyond this and start teaching reading and writing. This may seem unproblematic but there are serious political implications. In recent years, the government of Andhra Pradesh has employed 50,000 para teachers on a third of the salary of professional teachers. These para teachers are not trained and are seen by many as a cheap labour solution, which will embed low quality education, especially in rural schools. MVF risks being seen as endorsing this by

its own practice of using local youth activists as para teachers. Venkat is clear: *'The camps are a mobilisation activity NOT an education activity. These are non-students working with non-teachers in a supportive environment. The real teaching happens in schools. We say very clearly that the formal school is absolutely vital. Perhaps in the context of the spread of para-teachers we need to define a new non-negotiable: that formal schools require trained, professional teachers.'*

'The camps are a mobilisation activity NOT an education activity. These are non-students working with non-teachers in a supportive environment. The real teaching happens in schools. We say very clearly that the formal school is absolutely vital. Perhaps in the context of the spread of para-teachers we need to define a new non-negotiable: that formal schools require trained, professional teachers.'



Karen Robinson / Panos Pictures / ActionAid

Conclusion

There is huge potential for the MVF approach to be used outside Andhra Pradesh. ActionAid is already drawing on MVF to support work in Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. I believe the influence should extend beyond India to other countries in Asia and even to Africa and Latin America. The simplicity of the non-negotiables and the political clarity that they provide is wonderful. These, matched with the approach to youth mobilisation, can be used in almost any context.

Some people have criticised the non-negotiables of MVF – seeing them as overly dogmatic. Personally I think we need more non-negotiables! The essential role of trained, professional teachers should be embedded as a non-negotiable. There is also much potential to link this grassroots work to campaigning for the abolition of fees and the call for free education. Unless all costs that exclude children from school are removed there may be difficulties in following this path in some contexts. So, making education free at the point of use should also be a non-negotiable. Then we have the potential to build a truly powerful campaign.

One last reflection concerns the role of MVF as an NGO. Venkat argues that NGOs should be seen as temporary facilitators. Our role is not a permanent one – and we should be serious in working towards our own dissolution. Our role is to bring out the voices of children, parents and teachers – to provide space for them and not to occupy it ourselves. *'If we can shift social norms and enable parents, young people and children to organise for themselves, then we leave something enduring. If we make the teacher unions really work and ensure they take strategic action, then we can really leverage change. NGOs are transitory and should always work to strengthen existing structures.'*

For more information contact Venkat Reddy: venkatmvf@yahoo.com / mvfindia@mvfindia.com or David Archer: david.archer@actionaid.org

From rights 'to' education to rights 'in' education – a People's history



Chris Steel-Perkins / Magnum / ActionAid

The production and distribution of knowledge in Pakistan is deeply interwoven with the politics of power. Education systems in Pakistan have been used to promote the dominant ideologies of particular ruling classes and their governments. Curricula and textbooks have been changed to reflect nationalism. Fundamentalism in the form of hardline madrassas (Islamic schools) has made inroads into the mainstream education systems. Since 1962, history has not been taught as an independent subject at schools in Pakistan. Instead, social studies was introduced, containing fragmented history along with geography and civic studies. The little historical material that Pakistani textbooks contain usually fails to inspire any interest and understanding among students. Much of this history serves the interests of the ruling elite and glorifies militarization, warriors and monarchs, ignoring the contribution of the common people, workers and peasants in the development and progress of the country.

There is therefore a great need for alternative history books for children, providing basic information on the history of mankind. In 2005, ActionAid initiated plans for a set of parallel history books presenting a peoples' perspective: the stories of ordinary men and women, workers, farmers and artisans, and how they have contributed to and created history.

A core pillar of ActionAid's education work is 'rights in education' – advocacy for an education system that respects children's rights and provides education that is relevant, empowering and of good quality. While we continue to lobby to secure access to school for excluded children, we do not see this as the end point. For ActionAid Pakistan it is only the start. We need to ensure that schools are places where all rights are respected and reinforced and the education imparted is empowering and liberating, celebrates cultural diversity and is free from indoctrination. Schools should be places where children's minds are opened and not closed, where prejudices and discrimination are challenged and where democratic principles are practiced as well as preached.

There is therefore a great need for alternative history books for children, providing basic information on the history of mankind. In 2005, ActionAid initiated plans for a set of parallel history books presenting a peoples' perspective: the stories of ordinary men and women, workers, farmers and artisans, and how they have contributed to and created history.

Designed for different levels of readers, these books attempt to make history an interesting subject. The aim of the books is to create a sense of belonging, helping people to locate their identities in the historical perspective, reclaiming history as the heritage of ordinary people. ActionAid identified the renowned historian Dr. Mubarik Ali to write the books in three stages: History of Civilizations, South Asian History and Culture, and European History. In 2006, three volumes on the History of Civilizations were completed, aimed at school children under twelve. Each volume contains 70-80 pages with sketches and illustrations. The books were tested

by teachers and students before going to press.

The books were launched in four cities: Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi and Hyderabad. The book launches were well attended and covered extensively both in print and electronic media. They also received a good response from education experts and academics as well as NGOs, donors, schools and colleges (both public and private). The books were distributed free of cost to areas where ActionAid is working as well as to schools run by our partners. Books were also sold in bookshops and directly to schools and universities. A flyer containing information about the books was distributed to different education institutions and NGOs. The books were introduced to the Minister of Education, who promised to acquire them for the libraries of all the schools run by the Federal Education Directorate. At his recommendation, we also met with the Federal Coordinator of the Ministry of Education Curriculum Wing and Reform, who undertook to write letters to 300 government schools introducing the books. The project is now geared for Stage Two, which will focus on the history and culture of South Asia and will cater to teenage and above readers.

For more information please contact
Aqsa Khan:
aqsa.khan@actionaid.org

Parliamentarians from Bangladesh, Pakistan and India set up the South Asia Parliamentarians' Forum on Education

by Tanvir (Bangladesh), Shahjahan Baloch (Pakistan) and Niraj Seth (India)

On World Literacy Day 2006, 17 parliamentarians from Bangladesh, Pakistan and India resolved to work together on the issue of education at the South Asia regional level, setting up the South Asia Parliamentarians Forum on Education (SAPFE). The meeting was facilitated by the Commonwealth Education Fund and by the India National Coalition on Education. More than 100 activists, academics, teachers' unions, civil society organizations, representatives of networks and school students also participated in the discussions. A highlight of the meeting was a press conference organized by children from a cross-section of society from India. They put forward a number of well-researched questions to the parliamentarians.

Common concerns

Despite many differences, the three countries face similar problems in education:

- Education is not fully recognised as a right in any of these countries. In Pakistan, the Compulsory Education Act was introduced in 1995 but has not yet been implemented. In India the relevant legislation is yet to be enacted to guarantee it as a fundamental right. In Bangladesh, education is not yet recognised as a fundamental right.
- The infrastructure of government schools is poor, especially in rural areas.
- Resource allocation for government schools is very poor.
- Inequality between schools is increasing.
- Little attention has been paid to teaching as a profession and this has impacted negatively on the quality of education in schools.
- Early childhood education is not given due importance.
- Education is not sufficiently prioritised in national budgets.
- Pressures from international financial institutions have a negative impact on education.

In addition to highlighting concerns, civil society organizations presented a number of recent initiatives to the group. These largely focused on work to build public opinion and make people aware of their right to good quality education. Existing instruments are being used to increase accountability in the systems governing state schools. The

possibilities for learning from each other and working together are immense. This is only the beginning.

What can civil society do?

1. Provide inputs to the political parties when they are forming their manifestos. Once the elections are over, the parties should be committed to implementing their party manifestos.
2. Send relevant literature to the parliamentarians regularly to help them carry out debates in the parliament.
3. Undertake budget analysis and send reports to parliamentarians so that they may ask suitable questions.
4. Civil society should equip itself to engage effectively with parliamentarians by understanding parliamentary procedures. They should be ready with facts and figures to support their demands.

What can parliamentarians do?

1. Go to schools whenever they visit their respective constituencies.
2. Motivate parents to send their children to schools.
3. Provide effective links between civil society and legislators
4. Make Standing Committees on Education more effective.
5. Work towards an increase in allocations to the education budget.

A number of recent initiatives... focused on work to build public opinion and make people aware of their right to good quality education.

In a joint declaration the Parliamentarians agreed to form the South Asia Parliamentarians Forum for Education. They will focus on the following:

- Making education a priority in governance.
- Increasing national budget allocations for education.
- Improving opportunities for gender equality, and the rights of minorities and disadvantaged communities.
- Promoting a common school system.
- Prioritizing quality education as a pre-condition for eradicating poverty.
- Establishing co-operation between parliamentarians and civil society.
- Ensuring transparency and accountability in the education sector.
- Aiming to have a regional policy on education.

Declarations were issued on the following:

- Making education a justiciable fundamental right in South Asia.
- Achieving the Education for All goals.
- Ensuring a minimum of six per cent GDP allocation for education and making sure it is used efficiently.
- Ending child labour and trafficking.
- Making EFA a core agenda in all political party manifestoes.
- Commitment to holding a larger meeting of South Asian MPs and civil society organizations in 2007.

For South Asia, which has the largest number of illiterate people in the world, this is a welcome step.

The Global Campaign for Education

In April 2006, children, teachers, teachers' union leaders, NGOs, parents, Ministers and Heads of State and the media once again took part in the now celebrated Global Action Week (GAW) campaigns. This amazing feat of bringing together national and international civil society organisations around the world to remind world leaders of the commitment to the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All goals has gone from strength to strength thanks to the amazing dedication and organisation of education coalitions around the world. With a now confirmed 5.6 million participants taking action and with over 15 countries still to report, 2006 saw more campaigners take to the streets than ever before.



Recognising the importance of teachers in improving access and quality in education, the Global Campaign for Education made 'Every Child Needs a Teacher' its Global Action Week campaign theme for 2006. The aim was to confront politicians and leaders with the reality that over 100 million children and 860 million illiterate adults still miss out on an education – in large part due to a lack of quality teachers.

Every child needs a teacher

There were three global stages to the Every Child Needs a Teacher action. The first stage involved compiling dossiers of information from students, teachers and parents about the daily situations faced by teachers across the world. The second stage was to encourage officials and people of influence to go back to school to experience the reality of the situation. Finally 'Big Hearing' events were organised which gave students, parents, teachers and other members of civil society the opportunity to present their dossiers and arguments to leaders and decision-makers in the field of education.

In the months and weeks leading up to GAW, GCE campaigners busily prepared national dossiers on the issues surrounding teachers in their particular countries. In some cases this was formal academic research that acted as supporting evidence for the case they then put to governments.



The dossiers also included:

- Surveys and questionnaires with profiles of teachers in particular schools;
- Essays or statements by teachers and learners explaining why teachers are crucial to the achievement of quality education for all;
- Descriptions and interviews by children saying what their ideal teacher would be like;
- Mapping exercises to show where there are not enough teachers in the towns and villages;
- Desk-based research bringing together official statistics, facts and figures to unveil the global reality of the teacher shortage and the reasons for it.

Each national coalition gave their own campaign a unique flavour, from massive grassroots mobilisation to local songs, plays, art exhibitions, street festivals and children's competitions around the week's themes.

At the 'Big Hearings', Presidents, Ministers of Education, local politicians and officials were presented with the 'dossiers' that had been conscientiously put together by GCE networks, highlighting and providing evidence of the often serious problems facing teachers and students in their countries.

The following demands were made:

Rich countries should:

- Increase aid and cancel debt to allow countries to expand education systems;
- Support countries' long-term education plans including teacher salaries;
- End harmful donor conditions that prevent countries employing sufficient numbers of professional teachers.

Poor countries should:

- Increase public spending on education;
- Ensure quality in teaching by training teachers to a professional standard;
- Pay teachers a living wage and give them a say in education policy-making;
- Reduce class sizes and improve classroom conditions.

For everyone involved it was an incredible opportunity to increase the pressure on leaders to keep pledges to ensure that every child is not only able to go to school, but is also taught by a well-qualified teacher in a class no bigger than 40 pupils. There was much positive feedback about plans to continue advocacy work on the need for quality teachers, using the pledges and reports that came out of Global Action Week for sustained advocacy work throughout the year. Because of the nature of the campaign and focused work by coalitions and the secretariat, teachers' unions were more actively involved than in previous Action Weeks.

With reports still to come in, the following are estimated to have participated in GAW 2006:

- 5,648,366 people participated in activities worldwide;
- 6,339 officials went 'Back To School';
- 1,106 MPs and Education/Finance Ministers took part.

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATION

Country-by-country activities

In the USA, congressional-style hearings were organised in a number of schools, with a 'Big Hearing' event organised on Capitol Hill on 25 April. This brought together a number of high-level US politicians, as well as children from around the US and from Peru and India. The children also visited the World Bank, UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and UNICEF offices.

'Education is a human right and a foundation for a better life. The 2006 Global Action Week will help convince the world's leaders to give every child the chance to go to school.'
Angelina Jolie, Namibia, 2006

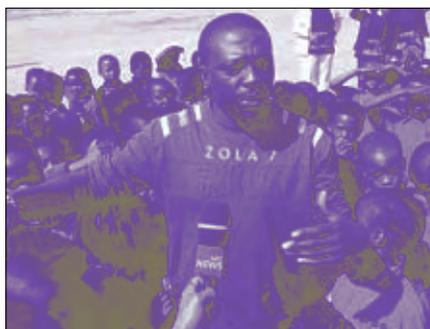


Many countries conducted good quality research on teacher issues. (India, Bangladesh, Tanzania, Zambia, Romania, Malawi, Benin, Chile, Pakistan, Niger). Research was backed up by students' and teachers' testimonies, with essays, poems, and pictures of their favourite or ideal teacher. In the Philippines, Haiti and Madagascar essay writing competitions were organised with the best essays being published and presented at 'Big Hearing' events.

Media coverage of events was widespread; in Senegal, a live debate took place on EFA, Radio Kitara in Uganda broadcast discussions around the themes highlighted in GAW, whilst in Suriname, a 30-minute documentary was made and broadcast on national TV.

'Back to School' events happened worldwide, with politicians and high-level officials returning to schools to see the situation on the ground. Worldwide, 6,339 officials returned to school. In South Africa local celebrities and journalists joined in; local musician, Zola, the Takalani Sesame Muppets, and Mondli Makhanya, editor of the *Sunday Times*, visited schools.

Traditional dances, poetry



South Africa: ZOLA goes back to school to vote for teachers on Freedom Day

recitals, sketches and plays were used to illustrate issues surrounding teachers at 'Big Hearing' events. In Rwanda, four main events were held around the country supported by FAWE (Forum for African Women Educationalists), SNEP (Syndicat National de l'Education Physique) and VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas), with around 6,000 people participating. In Pakistan, GAW was celebrated nationwide, in a total of 55 districts in all four provinces.

National and international outcomes

Global Action Week is crucial for pressurising national governments in both rich and poor countries to make changes that will make a real difference. Throughout GAW, coalitions were successful in getting a number of high-ranking politicians and education officials to make public promises to resolve all issues that were highlighted in the dossiers as part of their continued support to the Education For All goals ensuring that promises made in 2000 with the aim of getting every child into school and receiving a quality education will not be forgotten:

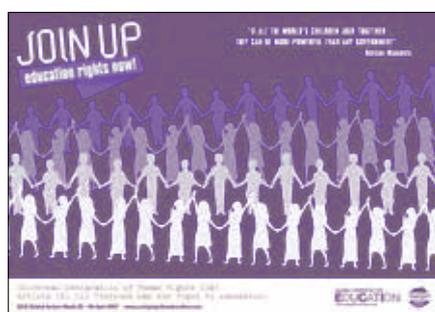
- In **Benin**, President Yayi Boni stated '*...action will be taken by the authorities to increase numbers of teachers in the system. It is the dream that all the children of the country grow up to be good men and women through education.*' Whilst the Minister for Primary and Secondary Education said, '*Education and training constitute the essential conditions of success of my vision.*'
- In **Brazil**, President Lula made public commitments towards ensuring EFA.
- At the 'Big Hearing' in **Cameroon**, all visiting dignitaries committed themselves to a statement promising that they would do all in their power to ensure that every child has a teacher by 2015.
- **Egypt's** Minister of Education, Dr Yousry El Gamal, promised his unconditional support to attain EFA by 2015.
- **Gambia's** Secretary of State for Education, Belinda Bidwell, and the Speaker of the National Assembly promised to lobby for increased education budgets to improve conditions for teachers and for student learning.
- Lydia Osei Dep, the Director General of **Ghana's** Education Service, pledged government support to the GAW in order to improve teacher situations in Ghana.
- In **Malawi**, Kate Kainja Kauluma, Minister of Education, pledged to address all of the registered concerns and said she would work through the Teaching Service Commission and stakeholders to review salaries and conditions in order to improve working conditions.
- **Mali's** Minister for Education promised to honour existing plans to ensure that Malian schools have sufficient teachers.
- President Alan Garcia, **Peru's** newly elected president, promised a 0.25 per cent rise in the education budget during his election campaign, which would mean an additional \$1.364m.
- In **Romania**, the President pledged to give answers to and solve the problems posed by participants in GAW and to design and implement the required legislative provisions that address critical issues like violence in schools, creating proper facilities and learning conditions in all schools.
- **Sudan** saw its President promise to increase GDP allocation to education that was previously less than one per cent, and issue a decree to establish a National

Fund for EFA that will be chaired by the Vice President.

- Education Minister, Namirembe Bitamazire, disclosed that the Ugandan government has made available Sh30 billion and will recruit 2,000 teachers for the Universal Secondary Education programme.
- In the USA, senators, and congressmen and women made a number of pledges to try to ensure an increase in US funding towards EFA.

Global Action Week 2007

The theme for Global Action Week 2007, which will take place from 23-29 April 2007, is 'Education as a Human Right'.



A basic education is a right inherent to being human, each child's birthright and thus constitutes an end in itself. However, education is also a means to an end: it is required to ensure that all people can live in a dignified manner and participate effectively in society. Promises need to be kept now if all children are to be in school by 2015 (2007 being the mid-point for the EFA goals). The activities for the 2007 GAW will be around the idea of 'chains' – either cut out chains or human chains, 'joining hands for education' both within and across borders. Watch this space!



For more information on how you can participate in the Join up – education rights now! Global Action Week campaign, please contact Lucy Tweedie actionweek@campaignforeducation.org

The Parktonian Recommendations Education International (EI) and ActionAid

Forty senior Education International (the international federation of teachers' unions) and ActionAid representatives from across India, Nepal, Nigeria, Malawi, Tanzania, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Senegal and Brazil met in the Parktonian Hotel, Johannesburg, South Africa over three days in April 2006. A background paper, *Building a Strategic Partnership on the Need for Quality Teachers to Achieve EFA*, served to frame discussions on a range of key issues. There was a clear convergence of political understanding that served to build strong relationships of trust between the teachers' unions and ActionAid delegates. Recommendations emerged around seven key areas. The positions agreed by both organizations have since been taken to the wider decision-making bodies in EI and ActionAid and a final position document has been developed and circulated.

EI and ActionAid share a deep passion for securing quality basic education for all. Both organisations see education as a fundamental right and as a defining responsibility of governments. We see the commitments in the Dakar Framework of Action on Education for All (and the education MDGs drawn from that) as key reference points, to which all governments should be held accountable.

1. On macro-economics and the IMF

Achieving quality education for all will require massive new investment in the coming years – new teachers, new classrooms and new textbooks. Whilst predictable international aid may (and should) help, increasing investments from domestic budgets is crucial. Unfortunately national education budgets are being unnecessarily constrained by macro-economic positions imposed by the International Monetary Fund. The IMF ideology controls the discourse and thinking in Ministries of Finance even where no direct conditions are imposed. Whilst maintaining sound public finances is important, national governments need to be able to decide for themselves the trade-offs between investing in education for long-term growth and unnecessarily tight fiscal and monetary policies that constrain investments. Education should be at the top of domestic political agendas. We recommend that:

- ActionAid and EI affiliates should work together on

national-level studies to better understand how IMF policies constrain budgets and contradict the achievement of education goals.

- EI and ActionAid should link up with wider education coalitions nationally, regionally and internationally (with the Global Campaign for Education) on this work.
- Efforts should be made to build links with parliamentarians (working with existing committees or creating new ones) and to raise public awareness through links to national media.
- Connections should be made with work that is demystifying and tracking education budgets.
- Joint advocacy and campaigning should be developed to place this issue at the centre of national and international attention.

2. On non-professional teachers

The spread of non-professional teachers is happening at an alarming rate, promoted by the World Bank and backed up by distorted research. Employing non-professionals is being seen as a low cost and permanent solution – yet this is having a devastating impact on quality and equity in education. EI and ActionAid recommend that:

- There should be no more recruitment of non-professional teachers. It is a violation of children's right to quality education and leads to discrimination against poor children.

- Government should be the employers of all teachers in the public education system, with salaries set through national processes of collective bargaining.
- Governments should undertake workforce planning from now to 2015 to determine the number of teachers needed year-on-year to get all children into school in acceptable class sizes (and a practice of 10-year comprehensive demographic-based education planning should always be maintained). Governments should then invest in significantly expanding teacher-training facilities to ensure that sufficient numbers of professional teachers are trained.
- In situations of unexpected or rapid expansion (e.g. following abolition of user fees), governments should first bring into the workforce any unemployed trained teachers or retired professional teachers, – and seek to attract back into frontline teaching any trained teachers who are otherwise employed. If there is a remaining gap then, in consultation with teacher’s unions, emergency measures may be taken to bring in a temporary new cadre – who should be given accelerated opportunities for full professionalization within a maximum of five years. Emergency measures may also be needed in situations of conflict but there should be explicit plans for time-bound transition agreed from the start.
- Clear agreements should be established on the minimum standards for pre-service teacher training, with reference to ILO / UNESCO standards. There is a need to improve the quality of present teacher-training provision and to develop regulatory mechanisms to ensure all facilities deliver quality training.
- National teacher’s unions should actively encourage existing non-professional teachers to become members.
- Existing non-professional

EI and ActionAid share a deep passion for securing quality basic education for all. Both organisations see education as a fundamental right and as a defining responsibility of governments.

teachers should be integrated into the professional workforce. They should be given access to quality distance education courses, backed up with face-to face formal courses in vacations and school-level mentoring and support, leading to public examinations which must be achieved within a maximum five-year timeframe.

- There should be an end to single-teacher schools. Progress should be made rapidly towards having one teacher per grade, at least one classroom per grade, adequate sanitation facilities, and a balance of female and male teachers.
- All teachers should have access to good quality professional development courses and ongoing training.

These positions should be taken forward vigorously by ActionAid and EI, advocating them to NGOs, national coalitions and governments, and challenging the World Bank directly over their support for non-professionals.

3. Positions on violence against girls in schools

Violence against girls in schools is too often ignored and yet represents a major obstacle for girls wanting to secure their right to education. EI and ActionAid should:

- Collaborate to break the silence on this issue.
- Build conceptual understanding around the wide scope of direct and indirect violence affecting girls at home, on the way to school and in school.
- Undertake joint research and agree clear positions.

- Ensure gender-based violence is addressed seriously in teacher training colleges.
- Influence curriculum review processes to ensure gender issues and gender violence are effectively covered.
- Campaign jointly for zero tolerance towards violence against girls, and to ensure perpetrators of violence are brought to justice.
- Ensure this is taken on by everyone and not just by women or women’s committees.

4. Education and HIV/AIDS

Both EI and ActionAid have considerable experience in the area of HIV and education. We recommend that:

- Governments should make a more comprehensive educational response to the pandemic and should recognise the important role played by teachers’ unions.
- Workplace policies are urgently needed in all countries to defend the rights of teachers and students living with HIV.
- All pre-service teacher-training courses should integrate significant core programmes on HIV and related gender issues, using participatory methods.
- Closely evaluated in-service training programmes on HIV/AIDS are also required.
- ActionAid and EI should work together on research into the impact of HIV on education and should work together to develop effective models or pre-service and in-service training.
- Increased engagement with parents and wider communities to challenge stigma and discrimination.

5. School-level governance

Different structures of governance exist in different countries but in the context of widespread decentralisation we recognise the important role to be played by school management committees or governing bodies. We believe that school management committees should be systematically empowered – but equally there are clear limits to the powers they should be given.

SMCs should not hire or fire teachers or set salaries. Governments should be responsible for employing teachers and salaries should be set by national processes of collective bargaining. Beyond these limits, EI and ActionAid recommend that SMCs should:

- Play a strong advisory role to head teachers and have clear links to district education authorities and school inspectorates. They should be empowered to register serious complaints against teachers (though not take disciplinary actions directly themselves).
- Have oversight of school budgets and be able to make recommendations about budget allocations (though not relating to salaries).
- Be active in strengthening relations with the local community, linking with Parent Teacher Associations and enabling parents to be involved in the life of the school, including mobilising parents to support teachers inside and outside the classroom.
- Be representative of all parents and actors in the local community (especially guaranteeing female participation), and have teachers' union representation.
- Be facilitated to develop district and national level platforms.

6. On privatisation and public education

Education is a fundamental right and a core government responsibility. Public education, even where under-resourced, remains the most effective means to guarantee quality education for all. Yet private education in multiple forms is on the rise everywhere, undermining the capacity for education to be an equalising force in society. EI and ActionAid recommend that:

- The rise of private education should be actively checked.
- The key means to reverse the rise of private schools is to improve the quality of public schools – getting more teachers, better infrastructure, more resources,

better salaries, manageable class sizes and better trained teachers.

- We should work together to fight for a common school system which is genuinely free, to ensure government schools work effectively and to win over parents so that they want to send their children to public schools.
- We should demand better regulation of private schools and an end to all government (and international donor) subsidies to private schools (and taxes on any profit-making institutions).
- All teachers in private schools should be governed by the same rules, regulations and salary scales as government teachers.
- We should exchange information about negotiation processes in the WTO and jointly lobby to oppose the inclusion of education in GATS.

7. On building a code of ethics

EI and ActionAid recommend that:

- We should work together, building on the existing work of EI to develop and popularise a code of ethics for teachers, which can be internalised by all stakeholders.
- We should prioritise a positive code, which has a collective character.
- Our starting point should be the rights of children to quality education and the importance of building wider human values of solidarity, a culture of peace and moral behaviour, etc.



Gideon Mendel / Corbis / ActionAid

Conclusion

Education International and ActionAid have achieved a high level of mutual understanding. Both are deeply committed to quality public education for all. Whilst there are inherent differences in organisational forms (between unions and NGOs), both have mutually reinforcing strengths as members of civil society. EI and ActionAid have committed themselves to working together to take forward the recommendations above.

All country delegations were encouraged to jointly convene workshops, inviting ActionAid and teachers' union representatives from neighbouring countries to share this agenda more widely. At an international level EI and ActionAid will monitor the progress of this partnership and will convene a second international meeting to maintain momentum, within two years.

Education International and ActionAid have achieved a high level of mutual understanding. Both are deeply committed to quality public education for all. Whilst there are inherent differences in organisational forms (between unions and NGOs), both have mutually reinforcing strengths as members of civil society. EI and ActionAid have committed themselves to working together to take forward the recommendations above.

For more information on the position paper please contact David Archer: david.archer@actionaid.org

African Education Ministers launch Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015)

by Julita Nsanjama

Introduction

The Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015) Plan of Action was launched at the Conference of African Education Ministers in Maputo, Mozambique in September 2006. Armando Guebuza the president of Mozambique delivered a strong keynote address, which emphasized the need to promote access and quality education for all African citizens.

Participants at the meeting included African Ministers of Education, the African Bureau of Education, the Centre for the Education of Girls and Women in Africa, UNESCO and the Conference of Ministers of Education for French-Speaking Africa. The Africa Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA), Education International Africa Office and ActionAid were among the few civil society organisations to be invited. There was little CSO participation, particularly of CSOs working on education in Mozambique. This clearly highlighted the need for increased engagement of civil society in such events whose outcomes may impact strongly on the education policy of many countries.

Review of the First Decade of Education

The meeting started with a thorough review of the First Decade of Education for Africa (1996-2006). The First Decade of Education had the following priorities:

- Equity and access to basic education;
- Quality, relevance and effectiveness of education;
- Complementary learning modalities;
- Capacity building.

It was reported that very little progress had been made towards the achievement of the First Decade of Education in Africa. The following areas were identified as weaknesses and challenges of the First Decade of Education:

- Unstable political climate during the period covered;
- Time lag between the formal declaration of the decade and the formal take off;
- Lack of support from international partners;
- Lack of adequate publicity in member states.

The Second Decade of Education

The Second Decade of Education for Africa runs from 2006 to 2015. A Plan of Action has been developed

The Second Decade of Education for Africa runs from 2006 to 2015. A Plan of Action has been developed with support from all countries in Africa

with support from all countries in Africa. The Plan of Action coincides with other development and education related plans such as the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All, which are also aimed at achieving universal primary education by 2015. The African Ministers agreed that the new Plan of Action would be implemented within the National Frameworks of Education Plans rather than as a separate programme.

It was agreed that the Second Decade of Education for Africa would have the following focus areas:

- **Gender and culture:** Eliminate gender disparities and ensure gender equality, girls and women's empowerment throughout the education system, while enriching the system with

the positive aspects of African cultural values.

- **Education Management Information Systems (EMIS):** Reverse the current phenomenon of 'data blank' and facilitate planning based on sound information and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the performance of education systems. The availability of well-functioning and sustainable EMIS at continental, regional and national levels is a necessity for this.
- **Teacher development:** Ensure the provision of sufficient teachers to meet the demands of education systems and to ensure that all teachers are properly qualified and possess the relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes to teach effectively. Teachers should also be properly supported and adequately remunerated, to ensure high levels of motivation.
- **Higher education:** Complete revitalisation of higher education in Africa, with the emergence of strong and vibrant institutions profoundly engaged in fundamental and development-oriented research, teaching, community outreach and enrichment services to the lower levels of education; and functioning in an environment of academic freedom and institutional autonomy, within an overall framework of public accountability.
- **Technical-vocational education and training:** Ensure that education systems in Member States are better able to provide the young generation with quality education that imparts key generic competencies, skills and attitudes that lead to a culture of lifelong learning and entrepreneurship in order to fit them into an ever-changing world of work.
- **Curriculum development and teaching-learning materials:** Ensure the development and provision of balanced, relevant, responsive and culturally sensitive curricula adequately supported by appropriate teaching and learning materials,

in all forms and levels of education in Member States.

- **Quality management:** Support improved access, relevance, equity and efficiency of education in Africa through the development and sustenance of sound quality management systems at national, regional and continental levels.

Civil society participation and engagement

ActionAid engaged in the process in collaboration with ANCEFA and Education International. It was noted that the Plan of Action did not define specific roles for civil society, though CSOs were assumed to be willing to engage in delivery at country level.

Arguments were presented by CSO representatives that civil society can play a much more important role in independently monitoring progress and ensuring accountability in the implementation of education plans.

The CSOs also observed that there was inadequate coordination with funding mechanisms currently in the pipeline. Such an ambitious plan requires adequate resources, yet there was no mention of the pledge made by Gordon Brown of \$15 billion for education in Africa and the recent Abuja commitment of Ministers of Finance (See article on page 24). The CSOs highlighted the outcomes of the Abuja meeting and the commitments made by Gordon Brown as opportunities to ensure adequate resources are available for the Second Decade of Education. CSOs lobbied the African Education Ministers to work closely with Ministers of Finance to ensure the success of the Second Decade. The Africa Union must avoid creating a parallel process and should rather ensure a strong African voice in existing processes, making sure all governments can take advantage of existing funding opportunities on their own terms.

Uprooting the challenges of girls' education in Northern Nigeria

by Azuka Menkiti, ActionAid Nigeria

Many girls in Northern Nigeria are denied a right to education. Northern Nigeria is a highly patriarchal society where preference for the male child cuts across all levels of society, perpetuating injustice and unfair distribution of opportunities. Such an environment prevents the development of education policies capable of guaranteeing access to education for girls. Girls are withdrawn from school to help earn income for the family. They are forced into early marriages, are expected to undertake household chores and take care of siblings or sick relatives. Statistics have shown that educational enrolments, retention and completion for the girl child in Northern Nigeria, and particularly in the north-west have remained abysmally low in relation to other parts of the country.

ActionAid Nigeria's project, *Enhancing Girls Basic Education in Northern Nigeria*, has focused on designing strategies to address gender inequality. The project aims to bring about attitudinal change and increase political support towards girls' education, promote gender-sensitive legislation, policies and regulations, and increase funding for the effective delivery of education services. The project focuses on bringing about change within the following key groups:

- Community;
- Decision makers;
- Public;
- Civil society.

The project has the following key strands:

- **Increasing citizen participation in school governance:**

Reports from communities revealed an absence of community involvement in the management of schools. Communities are not interested in the affairs of the school. The teachers, who in most cases are not local to the community, have little or no stake in ensuring effective delivery of teaching and learning. Weak monitoring systems encourage both a lack of commitment and motivation by the teachers. Both government and teachers are effectively unaccountable to the community. The need to increase accountability, transparency and responsiveness of education systems and at the

ActionAid Nigeria's project, *Enhancing Girls Basic Education in Northern Nigeria*, has focused on designing strategies to address gender inequality. The project aims to bring about attitudinal change and increase political support towards girls' education, promote gender-sensitive legislation, policies and regulations, and increase funding for the effective delivery of education services.

same time secure sustained and meaningful citizen participation at the level of school governance has led to the decision to establish school management committees.

The aim is to engage the community in order to shift attitudes and behaviours positively toward equity in school access and participation. Members of the SMCs include: the head teacher, parents' representatives and key local community leaders such as village heads, religious leaders, women's leaders, student representatives, social groups and officials from local

education authorities. The formation of these committees has allowed us to get the support of the key community decision-makers for girls' education and their participation in ensuring an enabling environment that will accelerate girls' access to education and enhance retention and completion.

Through the activities of the SMCs, many communities have been mobilized to engage with local government education authorities to demand the renovation of schools and the provision of child-friendly facilities, such as separate toilets for boys and girls, sources of drinking water, recreational facilities, etc. They have also demanded a participatory budget process that will result in people-centered budgeting and gender-sensitive policies that address specific issues affecting girls education.

■ **Community mobilization using local drama groups:**

Drama performances held in village squares, on market days, or at community weddings and festivals have yielded fruitful results in opening girls' access to education. One major barrier to girls' education in Northern Nigeria has been the negative perception of communities towards girls' education. Combined with this are cultural and religious attitudes about the roles of women, which restrict women to the domestic sphere. Community dramas are performed to change attitudes about the importance of education for girls and about the role of women in society. The theatre crew of between 12 and 15 members is sourced from within the communities; they identify key issues affecting girls' education and develop plays around them in the local language to portray the importance of girls' education.

■ **Committees of female role models:**

Linked to the drama performances is the formation of committees of female role models. These are designed to address the communities' fear that western education for girls is harmful to Islamic beliefs and traditional practices especially as it affects marriage and the role of women under Sharia (Islamic) Law. The role models are educated Northern Muslim women who come together to address the problem of girls' education. The committees plan and execute activities in the communities aimed at overcoming common misconceptions about women's education.

■ **Adult literacy classes:**

The use of the *Reflect* approach as a core methodology for the implementation of the project has yielded some unexpected outcomes in the girls' education campaign. One of these outcomes is the setting up of literacy classes for adults. Thanks to awareness raising and various capacity-building activities organized for community leaders, the awareness of the importance of education has increased within the communities. As a result, there has been an increasing demand for literacy classes for adults. Community leaders collectively agreed that there is a high correlation between adult literacy and attitudes towards girls' education.

Although these initiatives have had a considerable impact on both practice and attitudes, the need for more children to enter and complete their basic education is as critical today as ever, especially for girls in Northern Nigeria. While primary school enrollment rates for girls have increased tremendously through these initiatives, more than three million school-age girls in Northern Nigeria are still not in school.

Participatory curriculum design – an experience from Guatemala

by Francisco Cabrera, PRODESSA, Guatemala

San José Poaquil, situated some 115kms west of Guatemala City, is one of the many Maya-Kaqchikel communities in Guatemala. Here, local organisation, Asodekma, is carrying out an experience of participatory curriculum design. ActionAid and PRODESSA (a Guatemalan NGO working with Maya communities) are providing technical support and the project is financed by the Spanish NGO, Educación sin Fronteras.

The project is inspired by the Education Reform that came out of Guatemala's peace agreements in 1996. The peace agreements promised a profound reform of the education system to contribute to the eradication of poverty and exclusion. The Education Reform was intended to be conducted in a participatory way in order to be pertinent to the multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual reality of the country, giving the whole population access to good quality education. Civil society organisations have participated since 1997 in its design and in the national consultation, which legitimated the process with key actors such as teachers. The implementation phase was initiated in 2002. However, due to lack of political will within the current government, implementation has been far from smooth. A number of national and international NGOs are working to ensure that it does not become sidelined.

The project to design a local curriculum for San José Poaquil began in 2005 and is now in its final stages. It is based on the following premises:

- A curriculum by its nature has a social, political and educational impact. It is an instrument that allows for the organisation and orientation of education towards a common ideal.



- The municipal curriculum of San José Poaquil is experimental. It is the first of its kind to be designed within the framework of the peace agreements. There are no previous experiences that could be used for reference.
- This is a pilot project that will be used as a model to be replicated in other municipalities and which will generate learning for future processes.
- The curriculum design is set within the framework of the Education Reform. In particular the Basic National Curriculum (primary level), which is itself the product of a national participatory consultation process.

The process

The curriculum design was organised in several stages. Prior to the actual curriculum work, the work carried out by Asodekma over the past few years building up to this process was reviewed. It is a local organisation with a track record of working with education and this is vital to the strength of its leadership in this project.

Stage One

Technical planning was done, looking at the following elements:

- Previous work of Asodekma.
- Involvement of the departmental and local education authorities (especially the bilingual education office).
- Setting up a technical team.
- Support of the Municipal Council for Education Reform.
- Responsibilities of the



organisations and individuals involved.

The main responsibilities established were:

- The responsibility of Asodekma and the Municipal Council for Education Reform to lead the process at the local level.
- The responsibility of Asodekma and especially the team of consultants to lead the technical process of curriculum design.
- The responsibility of PRODESSA to support and strengthen the Municipal Council for Education Reform as part of the process.
- The responsibility of Educación sin Fronteras to provide overall support for the project.

A preliminary timetable was put together as a result of this process.

Stage Two

Community consultations were done involving parents, community leaders, pupils and other community members. Over a period of time, the process was explained as well as the expected results, encouraging active participation

and collecting the many contributions made. The work involved **all** the teachers in the municipality (approximately 200). The work with the teachers was different as they are already very familiar with the subject. Although they didn't make as many contributions, those they did make were extremely valuable.

The various consultation processes did two things:

- Confirm the importance of and need for the local curriculum as well as the interest and enthusiasm of the community members and teachers to bring about significant change in education in the municipality. None of the groups consulted were against the process. In fact they were all very keen to contribute and this helped to legitimise the process.
- Identify key components for the curriculum design. The consultation focused on the identification of essential elements to be included as well as on the key elements of the Education Reform.



Stage Three

The technical process of curriculum design was based upon the contributions made. At this stage the work was done with external consultants specialising in the specific curriculum. As the consultants were external to the process, this involved a series of preparatory activities in each area in order to consult fully with the teachers and get further contributions to put together key competencies and identify the basic content of each curriculum area.

Unfortunately, this process didn't achieve the level of detail required, nor was there sufficient coherence between the contributions of the various consultants. It was therefore necessary to take a step back and identify three new consultants: one specialising in Maya culture and bilingualism, one in maths and one for the remaining areas of the curriculum. These new consultants worked to the same criteria and, using all the contributions so far collected, produced the technical proposal which included:

- Key competencies in each subject;
- Content for each subject;
- Grading by subject and school year.

Progress at this technical stage is very important. It must respond to the social needs and political proposals made by the community whilst also meeting the technical requirements of a curriculum within the framework of the Education Reform.

There has been a strong sense of participation, both with the community members and teachers at local level and with the various institutional actors. This has provided the strength to confront the problems that have come up on the way. There are high expectations for the implementation stage, which is due to take place in 2007. A great deal of learning is expected to come out of this, feeding in to the Education Reform at national level.

For more information contact Francisco Cabrera: reforedu@intelnet.net.gt

Education rights: An Activist's Guide to a Human Rights-Based Approach to Education

by Kate Newman

In early 2007, ActionAid will be launching a new publication, provisionally titled: *Education Rights: An Activist's Guide to a Human Rights-Based Approach to Education*. This is a resource pack for anyone working on education issues and interested in using a human rights-based approach, with a focus on people-centred advocacy, rights and power. It particularly targets work at the local level, showing how this work can be linked nationally and internationally to achieve the right *to*, and rights *in*, education.

The pack has been developed over the last three years and draws on thirty years of learning and experience by ActionAid, our partners, and coalitions of which we are part. It reflects the current realities and priorities in education as we see them, presenting them within a human rights framework and providing the ideas and methodologies to put this approach to education into practice.

There is an international consensus around education. It is generally agreed that education is valuable, that it is a right in itself and that it is central in promoting women's rights, and achieving gender equality. While this lack of controversy can be beneficial, it can also cause problems. Firstly because it is hard to keep education on the agenda, to make it high profile and exciting, but also, because although we might all agree that education is a 'good' thing, there is a wide variety of views around how education should be delivered, what makes quality education, who should be the decision-makers in education, how much funding should be given, which parts of the education system to prioritise, etc. The pack aims to get people thinking critically about education issues, and to engage others in these debates, to work from the grassroots upwards to transform education rights into a reality.

The pack takes human rights, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1949), as its basis. As a fundamental human right, education is clearly the responsibility of the state, and a core element of any development policy committed to

It is generally agreed that education is valuable, that it is a right in itself and that it is central in promoting women's rights, and achieving gender equality.

social justice. Securing the right to education is vital to enable people to secure other human rights. Yet the right to education is violated by governments around the world. In 92 countries, children have to pay to go to primary school.

The pack focuses on six strategic areas, which we feel are central to, and provide a framework for, a human rights-based approach to work in education:

1. Securing the constitutional right to education:

While the Education for All framework and the Millennium Development Goals provide a great vision for a better future for education, neither of these internationally-agreed targets have a legal standing. If governments fail to deliver on their promises there is little civil society can do to redress this. It is therefore important to identify other ways to hold governments accountable on the commitments they have made. The national constitution is perhaps the most powerful way to do this. This section begins by exploring ways of making abstract education rights understandable at the local level. It suggests ways of engaging with local people to

explore what the right to education means to them, and then working with them to develop strategies to achieve it. It then looks at national-level work that can support this process, outlining the key steps to develop a legal case for the right to education. It builds an understanding of how the right to education is legally constructed and how it can be made legally enforceable.

2. **Working with excluded groups:** Deciding who to work with is a key element of a human rights-based approach. By definition everyone has human rights, but often these are not recognised. In each society certain individuals and groups of people have their rights systematically abused. Their ability to access the right to education is undermined because of who they are and where they live. This might be because of cultural expectations, citizenship status, geographical location, caste, race, gender, disability or poverty. Those most excluded are likely to be discriminated against because of various aspects of their identity, and these multiple exclusions are frequently internalised, so that an individual may be unaware that they have any rights at all.

This section draws on a range of examples from practice to look at how you could work with a range of different excluded groups, for example pastoralists, HIV orphans, girls, and linguistic and ethnic minorities. It looks at the key issues facing a specific excluded group, and explores ways of working with that group directly, as well as how to challenge prejudice and discrimination in the school, the local community, and at different levels of government, to create the conditions to make excluded groups' education rights a reality.

3. **Financing education:** It is easy to say that children need to be educated and to subscribe

to the idea of education as a human right. However, prioritising education in public expenditure is a different matter. Governments' face many challenges in allocating their budgets and while they may publicly support education they may not always 'put their money where their mouth is'. This section explores tools which can be used to analyse education budgets and government expenditure, collecting information for analysis,

As a fundamental human right, education is clearly the responsibility of the state, and a core element of any development policy committed to social justice. Securing the right to education is vital to enable people to secure other human rights. Yet the right to education is violated by governments around the world. In 92 countries, children have to pay to go to primary school.

campaigning, mobilisation and advocacy work.

The budgeting process is a complex one, and there are various roles civil society can play at different points in the process. Decisions about what to prioritise and where to spend money are only the beginning of financing issues. This section explores the entire budget cycle, looking at the different roles which can be played at local, national and international levels, as well as the links between the different levels. For example, what is spent on education at local level is determined by national policy, which is

influenced by international policy agendas. By enabling people at local level to explore issues of education funding, various opportunities are created to locate the local context within the wider picture, and develop mechanisms for local people to engage in the big questions of national economic policy.

4. **Promoting citizen participation in education:**

Human rights, including the right to education, are denied to many because of structural power relations which exclude many groups of people from engaging in civil life, accessing information, or linking to the government and holding them to account. In many places around the world citizen structures are weak or non-existent. People are not aware of their right to education, and beyond this they are unaware of the right to participate, to monitor government and hold them to account, or to influence policy and practice. This section explores different ways to strengthen civil society action at local, national, regional and international levels. It focuses specifically on working with school management committees to build capacity. It also gives ideas about how to develop education networks or coalitions at different levels, and how to strengthen the breadth and depth of those coalitions already in existence.

5. **Securing rights in education:** This section looks more deeply at how to ensure rights in education, focusing on a range of issues including the school environment, the learning process and content, and links between the school and community. It also looks at specific issues, such as flexible calendars and school feeding programmes, which make it more likely that parents or guardians will send their children to school and encourage them to stay there. Ultimately, rights in education depend on the

government, on its ability to allocate sufficient resources to education, to invest properly in teacher training and support programmes, and to give political leadership to ensure that education contributes to the rights of the child, rather than undermining them. However, there are various ways that civil society organisations and local groups – of teachers, pupils and parents – can contribute to realising this right, both through continually pressurising government to fulfil its duty, and through some direct interventions. Much of the focus of this section is on how to develop alternative practice at local level, gaining school, teacher and local education authority support to mainstream these ideas, and then documenting practice and pulling out key lessons which can be used further up the system for advocacy and policy influencing.

6. Advancing a full Education for All agenda:

While the Education for All framework is broad reaching in its agenda, focusing across the education spectrum from early childhood care to primary and secondary education and adult learning, the Millennium Development Goals focus on universal primary schooling (and gender equality), diverting attention from other important education goals. The final section looks at how work at the local and national level can contribute to redress the imbalance. A slightly expanded role for civil society actors is explored in this section. It is recognised that there maybe a role for civil society in service delivery, at least in adult literacy and early childhood care and education, in order to develop models and evidence to influence government policy in these areas.

For more information and to order a copy of the forthcoming publication contact Egigayehu Summers: egigayehu.summers@actionaid.org

Funding change: sustaining civil society advocacy in education

by Kathryn Tomlinson, Research Project Manager, Commonwealth Education Fund

In a world in which education is held as an international and often national priority, civil society advocacy to ensure that this priority is realised relies, in practice, on limited and unpredictable funding. The Commonwealth Education Fund is currently the only international fund focused solely on supporting advocacy in education, but its activities will end in 2008. To help plan for its own exit by identifying nationally-appropriate ways to continue to support civil society organisations' advocacy work in education, the CEF commissioned an independent piece of research into advocacy funding and coalition building.

The Commonwealth Education Fund

The Commonwealth Education Fund works strategically with civil society in those Commonwealth countries most at risk of missing the education and gender Millennium Development Goals. It aims to make education a sustained domestic priority and to make public schools work effectively for all children. The work of the CEF and its partners is focused on coalition building, budget tracking and increasing access to education for marginalised children. The CEF works in 16 countries in Africa and Asia (Bangladesh, Cameroon, the Gambia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia), with a Secretariat in the UK. It is jointly managed by ActionAid, Oxfam GB and Save the Children UK, and funded by DFID.

The research

The CEF recognised the value behind the interagency collaboration to provide strategic funding for civil society advocacy and, perhaps most importantly, the value of the work undertaken by civil society organisations to pressure governments to fulfil their Millennium Development Goal commitments made in 2000. But it was acknowledged that an international fund may not be the best way to continue to support this work. So from June-December 2006, a research team, managed from the UK with researchers in each of the 16 countries in which the CEF operates, undertook a

substantial piece of qualitative research. The research examined the process of coalition building and the experience of coalitions in the education sector, as well as sustainable ways to coordinate funding for civil society work on education in each CEF country.

The team carried out semi-structured interviews with 529 individuals across Africa, Asia, Europe and America, along with structured observations, focus groups with coalition members, and a review of pertinent literature. In each country the research produced a report on *Sustaining Funding for Civil Society Advocacy*, as well as case studies on the national education coalitions supported by CEF. In the UK, the team compiled two international reports using this massive data pool. The first, *Funding Change: Sustaining Civil Society Advocacy in Education*, documents the state of funding for advocacy and recommends a mechanism to sustain funding in any country; the second, *Driving the Bus: The Journey of National Education Coalitions*, is a toolkit for anyone involved in coalitions to critically examine their development and improve their operation (Tomlinson and Macpherson, 2007a and b). Both reports will be launched by CEF early in 2007.

Changing agendas for civil society

The research documented the changing context in which civil society organisations operate today. The past decade has witnessed a rise of international civil society advocacy in education, particularly

with the establishment of the Global Campaign for Education, the recommitment to the Education for All goals at the Dakar World Education Forum in 2000 and the agreement on the Millennium Development Goals. These provide standards against which governments can be held to account and hence work as frameworks within which civil society can advocate to its government for better education.

Donors, international non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations agree that CSOs should be involved in policy processes and monitoring government implementation. While these actors saw some small role for CSOs' continued provision of services in hard-to-reach areas, southern government interviewees saw this as the main role for CSOs.

This points to one of the many challenges for CSOs engaged in advocacy: the limited will of governments to engage with them. In this context, **advocacy** is seen to include both social advocacy (mobilising people) with the ultimate aim of policy advocacy (to achieve policy and practice change). Such 'advocacy' (including monitoring, networking, budget tracking, research) requires good evidence. The organisations that undertake advocacy need support to develop their

proposal writing, financial management, networking and research skills.

Global funding for education

Significant developments in the international funding regime affect the funding available for civil society engagement in education advocacy. In particular, bilateral donors are increasingly using lump sum support to recipient governments in the form of direct budget support. **Direct budget support** has grown in the context of increasing donor harmonisation, recognition of the need to reduce conditionality of aid and for increased financial support for progress towards the MDGs.

The changing role of CSOs, associated with a view of the state as duty bearer for provision of education to its citizens, has affected how donors support civil society.

Social Funds and Challenge Funds were intended by donors to act as a counter-balance to the weight of funding channelled to governments, by encouraging local CSOs to set the agenda for work with poor and vulnerable groups. But there is limited evidence of success of these funds in achieving these aims. As successors to these, Local Funds are nationally-based funding mechanisms intended to stimulate partnerships for development. It is in the form of Local Funds that there is potential for taking forward indirect donor support for civil society advocacy in education.

Drawing on the Commonwealth Education Fund's experience in 16 countries, as well as 13 Local Funds planned or in operation across Africa and Asia, the research documented lessons that may be used in developing future funding

mechanisms. These included the need for a multi-stakeholder board and independent implementing agency to avoid domination by single agencies; harmonised reporting to donors to increase accountability, a separation of management and grant approval functions to encourage transparency, and, perhaps most significantly, the need for funds to provide both **grants and capacity building** to improve grantees' potential for effective advocacy.



Jenny Matthews / ActionAid

The case for a civil society education fund

The research found that there is widespread support for collaboratively managed funds that provide both grants and capacity building to CSOs undertaking education advocacy. Money to support civil society advocacy work will continue to be sourced internationally, as there is insufficient commitment of private and national money to such a fund. But international funding has weaknesses, including the reproduction of inequality by southern organisations' reliance on northern donors, the distortion of an organisation's purpose and the limitation such funds place on whom the recipient may criticise. It is noted that national context varies and that in south Asia there is considerably more reluctance to use foreign funding than in countries in Africa with a history of donor dependency.

But the reality is that northern governments contribute finance to southern development and, consequently, that there are recipient country expectations of that money. There is also the undeniable need for funding in order to continue civil society's advocacy work in education. Any fund must negotiate delicate power dynamics, including potential domination by national elites; CSOs and INGOs are not immune to such struggles. Any new fund will need a structure that is able to manage and control these dynamics to ensure the fund operates as transparently as possible. An additional benefit of establishing independent funds would be that national education coalitions would be relieved of the role of grant manager for funds channelled to member CSOs. Many coalitions are used by donors to play this role, but it distorts their core purpose, of coordinating action towards a common aim. An independent fund would allow coalitions to focus on their core work, while providing donors with a conduit for funds for civil society.

A model civil society education fund

All funds have an agenda, and any fund that focuses on advocacy is to

some extent drawing on a northern, donor-related agenda. It is vital for the content and details of the agenda of any new fund to be set by in-country stakeholders who are most engaged in developing civil society education advocacy. But a common structure for national civil society education funds (CSEFs) is recommended, on the basis that the concept has widespread approval across the research areas, in countries which operate in the same global context of PRSPs, EFA targets and MDGs. Additionally, the donors that might contribute to such funds have similar requirements across the globe. The research thus recommends a model designed to fulfil the essential criteria of accountability, transparency and accessibility.

A CSEF should provide grants and capacity building to civil-society organisations engaged in education advocacy. The organisation should consist of a board and an implementing agency. The implementing agency should be responsible for three units, namely financial management, capacity building and evaluation. Any or all of these units may be sub-contracted; the implementing agency should retain a core staff of director, administrator and project officer(s). The board must be multi-agency, constituted of people who both give to and gain from (non-financially) its operation, with a formalised relationship to government. The fund should, ideally, be located outside of any other organisation. The fund should provide varying sizes of grants, smaller ones to be approved by the implementing agency, and larger ones by the board.

Many bilateral donors are generally supportive of the idea of national civil society education funds as long as they are transparent, accountable and have sound financial management. Bilateral funding is now more

A mechanism could also be established so that whenever donors coordinate funding to support a government education sector plan, an additional 3% would be triggered to support civil society advocacy and monitoring work, to be managed through the civil society education fund.

accessible at country level rather than at headquarters, which supports the view that national funds are now more desirable than an internationally-managed model. In addition to applications for in-country donor contributions, mechanisms for obtaining and managing money could include the establishment of an endowment fund. A mechanism could also be established so that whenever donors coordinate funding to support a government education sector plan, an additional three per cent would be triggered to support civil society advocacy and monitoring work, to be managed through the civil society education fund.

The road ahead

There is both a need and widespread support for the establishment of national civil society education funds. These funds would assist civil society organisations to continue their important advocacy work but also provide donors with a nationally-owned mechanism to support the developing relationships between governments and civil society in advancing along the road to Education for All. Establishing such funds must be a nationally-owned process, and although the task might be complicated, their creation is likely to be highly instrumental in sustaining civil society advocacy in education.

For further details, contact
Chike Anyanwu, CEF Coordinator:
chike@commonwealtheducationfund.org

How the rights-based approach to macroeconomics can increase spending on education

by Rachel Moussie

Over the past year, ActionAid has been looking at the impact of IMF policies on financing for education and at how these macroeconomic policies differently impact girls and boys access to schooling.

This analysis can be taken still further. The present macroeconomic framework has failed not only to generate economic growth but also to fulfil citizens' economic, social and cultural rights. We know that the kinds of restrictive policies imposed by the IMF have led to serious budget cuts to education, leaving many children, especially girls, out of school. We also know that these policies have constrained spending on health and HIV/AIDS, leading to an unnecessary loss of life. We know that women and girls, and the poor continue to be left out of any positive gains from education, health and economic growth.

Rather than readjusting current macroeconomic policies, there needs to be a new point of departure. Instead of macroeconomic policies defining how much investment can go into social sectors, rights-based objectives should define macroeconomic policies.

Why pay attention to the macroeconomic framework when working on education and women's rights?

By signing up to the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All goals, countries have stated their commitment to prioritising spending on education, particularly girls' education. To achieve the education and gender goals the government must increase spending in education to abolish user fees, build more schools, purchase more textbooks and hire more teachers. Considering the budget constraints most developing countries face, scaling up investments in education is a challenge. This is made more difficult as a result of macroeconomic policies that constrain governments from spending available resources.

The kinds of restrictive policies imposed by the IMF have led to serious budget cuts to education, leaving many children, especially girls, out of school. We also know that these policies have constrained spending on health and HIV/AIDS, leading to an unnecessary loss of life.

At the moment, the macroeconomic framework prioritises economic objectives over all other social and political objectives. Macroeconomic policy is only designed to achieve objectives such as macroeconomic stability and economic growth. It is not concerned with how this growth will then be distributed between women and men to meet their economic, social and cultural rights. In contrast, a rights-based macroeconomic framework would start from the premise that all humans must be able to enjoy their economic, social and cultural rights.

Who determines the macroeconomic framework?

In most countries it is the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank that determine macroeconomic policies. In effect they decide how much the government can spend every fiscal year. To ensure that the government does not spend more than this amount, caps are placed on the national budget. Within these limits the Ministry of Finance then allocates resources to the different sectors.

The IMF also plays an important role in determining national monetary and fiscal policies. Charged with ensuring the health of the international macroeconomic system, it defines key policies which it considers countries must follow in order to be 'stable'. It includes restrictive macroeconomic policies, such as single-digit inflation targets and low fiscal deficit targets, as conditionalities in developing countries' loan arrangements. If a government does not respect these targets then the IMF will stop loan disbursements and signal to donors, private creditors, and foreign companies that the country is macroeconomically unstable. As a result, private investment in the country will slow down and economic growth rates will fall.

What is a rights-based macroeconomic framework and how is it different from the present macroeconomic framework?

Rights-based macroeconomics is about developing an economic system centered around meeting human needs and rights, rather than on the notions of scarcity, efficiency and maximization of economic growth. It is concerned with placing the inequities between men and women at the centre of any economic analysis, so that the macroeconomic policies that lead to growth also lead to an equal distribution of this growth between women and men.

Because education is necessary to broaden the skill base of the labour force and is influential in transforming inequalities between men and women, it is seen as a key area of social sector investment. Educating girls is vital to empowering women. With access to education, girls can acquire the assets, skills, and knowledge to access better opportunities and quality services. Increasing girls' access to education is the first step towards an equitable distribution of economic and social resources.

For more information please contact Akanksha Marphatia: akanksha.marphatia@actionaid.org or Rachel Moussie: rachel.moussie@actionaid.org

Present Macroeconomic Framework

- Macroeconomic stability refers to the government's ability to respect the macroeconomic targets set in its IMF loan arrangement such as single-digit inflation rates and low fiscal deficit levels. Keeping to these targets is expected to expand the market and lead to economic growth.
- Macroeconomic policies are designed and implemented to maintain a balanced budget. When government spends more than is available in the budget, it jeopardises macroeconomic stability, and discourages private investment in the country. Private investment is necessary for economic growth. Therefore, **balanced budgeting** is needed to stimulate growth.
- Imposes **restrictive monetary and fiscal policies** such as single-digit inflation rates and low fiscal deficit levels with the expectation that this will attract private investment. To reduce inflation the government is forced to raise interest rates. As a result, it becomes more expensive for private businesses to borrow money. This constrains private investment and slows down economic growth. This end result ironically contradicts the objective of these policies.
- Primarily focuses on how to make the market economy more efficient by **increasing private business investment**. It does not prioritise investments in social sectors to better the health and skills of the labour force as this increases government spending and threatens macroeconomic stability. Cutting spending in health and education shifts the burden of providing these services away from the state towards families and communities.
- The level of output is only defined in terms of the **market economy**. Work that is not remunerated, such as women and men's contribution to running homes and raising families, is not included in these statistics.
- Meeting low inflation and fiscal deficit targets are a priority. Because of the belief that increased public spending could lead to higher rates of inflation and deficits, there is often a **strict ceiling imposed on the national budget**. This ceiling leads to caps on the public sector wage bill, limiting pay and blocking recruitment of new teachers and health workers.
- Pursuing a balanced budget means macroeconomic policies are developed along a **short to medium-term timeframe**. This is to allow them to maintain a balanced budget even in light of changing economic circumstances, such as a bad harvest or rising oil prices.

Rights-Based Macroeconomic Framework

- *'The 'soundness' of macroeconomic policies is judged in terms of whether they succeed in bringing societies closer to achieving social justice. Social outcomes such as provisioning of needs for all, freedom from poverty and discrimination, social inclusion and development of human capabilities, the ultimate goal of macroeconomic policymaking.'*¹
- Macroeconomic policies are designed and implemented to meet citizens' needs; taking into account the differences between women and men's needs. In **needs-based budgeting**, temporary deficits may be justified in order to make key investments in areas such as girls' education which will yield long-term returns.
- Calls for more **expansionary monetary and fiscal policies**. A rights-based approach to macroeconomics joins other progressive economic theories in arguing that inflation rates can rise up to 10-20 per cent without jeopardising economic growth.² If governments spend more in social sectors, it will create a healthier and better skilled workforce. A more efficient labour force attracts private investment even if fiscal deficit levels rise above levels recommended by the IMF.³
- A rights-based macroeconomic framework would look at whether both **women and men**, from the poor to the richest sectors of society, **benefit from the expanded opportunities that private investment** could provide. To benefit from these opportunities, women and men must have equal access to quality education and health care. The State, as primary provider of these rights, must therefore increase its investments in these sectors.
- Integrates the **social reproductive economy** into any economic analysis. This refers to the activities people, mostly women, engage in to ensure the well being of families and communities. These activities contribute to a healthy and skilled labour force.
- **Discourages cuts in social sectors**. When government limits spending on health, women as primary caregivers are expected to take on these responsibilities. When government cuts back spending on education and imposes user fees, girls are the first to be kept home to help with household chores. Because building peoples', especially women's, capacity is prioritised, it encourages more investment in education and health.
- To reap the benefits of investing in education takes 10-15 years. Transforming inequalities between men and women also takes time. Therefore rights-based macroeconomics calls for a **long-term timeframe** for government economic planning and investment.

¹ Elson, Diane. and Nilufer Cagatay. 2000. 'The Social Content of Macroeconomic Policies.' *World Development* 28:1347-64.

² Pollin, Robert. and Andong Zhu. 2005. 'Inflation and Economic Growth: A Cross-Country Non-Linear Analysis.' *Political Economy Research Institute. Working Paper Series No. 109*; Chang, H., and Grabel, I., 2004, *Reclaiming Development: An Alternative Economic Policy Manual*, Zed Books, New York; Bruno, M. 1995. *Does Inflation Really Lower Growth? Finance and Development*, Vol. 32, no. 3., pp. 35-38.

³ Cardim de Carvalho, F. *Crowding out or crowding in? 2 ways of looking at the world; 2 ways to achieve the MDGs*, Institute of Economics, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Signs of change: will the 'Abuja Commitment' bring the IMF to the table?

A chain of events in 2006 have the potential to bring the IMF to the table to discuss how macroeconomic policies can enable a scaling-up of spending on education:

The Abuja Commitment: new hope for education

After years of watching G8 countries debate the problems of Africa, Finance Ministers from across the continent met in Abuja, Nigeria in May 2006. They focused on scaling up efforts to achieve and sustain the MDGs. As part of their promise at Gleneagles, the UK has earmarked \$15 billion in long-term predictable aid to education over the next 10 years. Whilst the pledge is far from education's fair share of aid promised at the G8 meeting in 2005, it is a significant increase.

Ministers of Finance also recognized the need to resolve contradictions between currently restrictive macroeconomic frameworks and scaling up public spending. Recognizing the role of the IMF in establishing these policies, ministers, donors and IFI (international financial institutions) representatives agreed that the Fund needs to detail how frameworks can be more flexible and current budget ceilings expanded. The IMF agreed to *'...assist individual countries to review their macroeconomic frameworks with a view of strengthening and aligning them towards scaling up for meeting MDG targets,'* promising to *'...report on progress during annual meetings.'*

Annual IMF/World Bank meetings: building on the momentum

ActionAid did not participate in the official meetings, in protest and solidarity with the colleagues being detained and deported by the Government of Singapore. However, education issues did gain a certain momentum. An FTI meeting included presentations of 10-year education plans from 17 African countries as a follow up to the Abuja Commitment. The promise of long-term aid by the UK

In May 2006 in Abuja, African Ministers of Finance declared:

'On education, many African countries have already produced comprehensive and costed plans to achieve the education MDGs by 2015. We commit to a total of twenty (20) countries – Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Tanzania and Uganda – providing 10-year education plans by September 2006. In addition, Liberia and Sudan have committed to making the maximum use of partners' technical support in striving to meet this timetable. We will write to the G8 setting out our commitments to present these 10-year plans at the IMF/World Bank Annual Meetings in September 2006. The plans will demonstrate how Africa can meet its education targets with increased resources. We welcome the UK's commitment to provide at least US\$15 billion over the next 10 years starting in April 2006. We ask our other development partners to meet their share, and allocate long-term predictable financing through expansion of the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) and through bilateral programmes. An important signal of development partners' commitment and credibility will be an agreement to fill the existing education financing gap for FTI countries for 2006 and 2007.'

Financing for Development: The Abuja Commitment to Action

The UK has earmarked \$15 billion in long-term predictable aid to education over the next 10 years. Whilst the pledge is far from education's fair share of aid promised at the G8 meeting in 2005, it is a significant increase.

put the need to reform the macroeconomic framework right at the centre. Ministers openly stated that they need to pursue alternative policies, and diverse financing options. There were also references to wage bills and the need to hire more qualified teachers in the long run. In general, country ownership of and national identification with

education plans was a strong advocacy point.

To further raise this issue, the ActionAid International Education Team distributed a 14-page draft brief on the IMF and education to African Ministers of Education and Finance. Disappointingly, the IMF was not invited to this meeting despite the request from Ministers of Finance in Abuja for the IMF to work on more flexible policies to enable increased spending. However, the follow-up to the Abuja meeting is now set for March 2007, in Accra, and presents new opportunities to bring the IMF to the table to discuss alternative policies.

Opportunities

In order to build on this momentum, ActionAid preproposed a paper for the EFA-FTI meeting in Cairo in November 2006, exposing how IMF-imposed public sector wage bill caps



threaten to undermine the achievement of EFA. This paper, *Cancelling the Caps*, shows that many countries will not be able to recruit the teachers desperately needed to achieve their education goals. Half of the countries with FTI-endorsed plans are faced with wage bill caps and yet, until now these caps have not been actively addressed in developing national education plans. In 2007 there are many opportunities to follow up this work, for example:

1. **March 2007:** With the follow up to the Abuja meeting now set in Accra, we have an opportunity to bring the IMF to the table and finally respond to the request on reforming the macroeconomic framework. Opportunities to lobby the Ghanaian Government and other sympathetic Education and Finance Ministers from other countries will no doubt arise in the following months.
2. **April 2007:** The Spring IMF/WB meetings in Washington DC also offer an opportunity to raise the issues. ActionAid will release a well-substantiated report on the IMF and education financing. Focusing on the need to address public sector wage bill caps and expand fiscal space. Also in April a meeting of major meeting of donors is planned in Brussels to explore how to 'keep the promises' on Education for All financing.
3. **During 2007:** Findings from 25 country studies on the IMF and education will help to build national-level advocacy work, pressurising Ministries of Finance to put achievement of education and other development goals at the centre of fiscal and monetary planning. ActionAid will also be organising sub-regional capacity building workshops across Africa, Asia and Latin America together with national education coalitions and teacher unions.

For more information please contact Akanksha Marphatia akanksha.marphatia@actionaid.org or Rachel Moussie rachel.moussie@actionaid.org of the International Education Team.



Summary Report from Cairo: Fast Track Initiative partnership meeting and EFA High Level Group meeting

ActionAid and the Global Campaign for Education were prominent in the two Education for All global meetings in Cairo in November 2006. ActionAid had three main concerns going into this meeting. Firstly, we wanted to put public sector wage bill caps on the agenda (we produced a paper for the conferences *Cancelling the Caps*). Secondly, we wanted to introduce the concept of National Civil Society Education Funds – following the learning from the Commonwealth Education Fund sustainability mapping process. Thirdly, we wanted to demand that adult literacy be addressed by the Fast Track Initiative and not just primary schooling. The Global Campaign for Education was focused on securing more ambitious financing from donors and on democratising the governance structure. David Archer reports on some of the key outcomes.

The two key annual global meetings on education were held back-to-back in a five star hotel next to the Great Pyramid in Cairo, Egypt in November 2006. The meetings struggled to match the grandeur of the location. The so-called 'High Level Group Meeting' on EFA was a sad misnomer. UNESCO once again failed to convene the Heads of State and Heads of UN agencies that this meeting is supposed to attract. Rather than a meeting of 10 or 20 key people, there were instead over 300 ministers, donor professionals and bureaucrats – with a handful of civil society activists. There was little meaningful discussion as a series of monologues cancelled each other out. This clearly needs to change if the meeting is to play the role it was given when conceived in Dakar.

The Fast Track Initiative meeting that preceded the High Level Group (HLG) at least had some substance to discuss – particularly the mobilisation of more resources for education and the democratisation of the governance. However, one cannot help but feel that a well-trained primary school teacher could facilitate better discussion and a better learning environment. There are serious issues about the process used in these big international meetings. One would have hoped that people concerned with education would be better at

There are serious issues about the process used in these big international meetings. One would have hoped that people concerned with education would be better at applying progressive pedagogical approaches so that all participants are actively engaged.

Aside from lamenting the process, the outcomes were actually quite positive. We had a number of successes on public sector wage bill caps. In both meetings there was a high level of interest from donors and southern Ministers in the *Cancelling the Caps* paper.

applying progressive pedagogical approaches so that all participants are actively engaged.

Aside from lamenting the process, the outcomes were actually quite positive. We had a number of successes on public sector wage bill caps. In both meetings there was a high level of interest from donors

and southern Ministers in the *Cancelling the Caps* paper. The final one-page summary of conclusions from the FTI meeting, presented by the co-chairs, included a call for more engagement of the education constituency with *'the macro-economic framework, the PRS process and specific issues such as fiscal space'*. The HLG meeting went even further with the final communiqué, approved by all delegates, including the following as one of six bullet points on financing:

'We recommend that EFA partners engage in dialogue with Ministers of Finance and the IMF to encourage countries to develop the fiscal space to increase investments in EFA and to enable them to remove constraints such as public sector wage bill caps.'

On National Civil Society Education Funds the report to plenary recommended that the FTI look into this concept actively in the coming year. There seems to be real interest in the idea from the Netherlands, Sweden, Japan, US, Germany, UK and the FTI itself (each with slightly different motives). One key area of interest is in the idea of a 'trigger'. Every time FTI donors / bilateral agencies support a national education sector plan an **additional three per cent** should be triggered to go into a civil society fund to support advocacy, budget tracking, wider citizen engagement, capacity, etc. This has the potential to fill a key gap in the aid architecture; it can give donors a means to ensure that governments are held accountable as they should be – by their own citizens rather than by external donors (See CEF article, page 19).

On **adult literacy** there was less progress in the FTI meeting, though there was some continuing visibility in the HLG meeting. The FTI continue to insist that they support sector-wide plans and refuse to accept the need to extend the indicative benchmarks to reflect this. We need to pursue other spaces to keep literacy on the agenda. The Minister of Education in Nigeria has agreed to co-host with ActionAid a major global

conference from 14-16 February 2007 on adult literacy and the ActionAid research, *Writing the Wrongs*. This could be a major step forward.

In respect of GCE concerns, there was good reform of the **governance structure** of the FTI agreed, with a move to include three CSO representatives and four Southern government representatives on the expanded Steering Committee. This is a significant democratisation of the FTI and should make it more responsive and more effective.

There was also progress in the FTI meeting towards being more ambitious in mobilising funds and harmonising FTI with the 'Abuja process'. An 'Amsterdam+5' conference of donors in March / April 2007 in Brussels will try to get much higher political commitment to education (Amsterdam+5 refers to the meeting that set up the FTI five years ago).

There was also agreement to **re-schedule the EFA timetable in 2007** so that:

- the EFA Global Monitoring Report comes out in October (in 2007 this will focus on the mid-term review of EFA goals);
- the EFA Working Group meets to review it in November in Paris (Ministers and donor professionals will discuss the mid-term review and make recommendations);
- the EFA High Level Group meets in December in Senegal.

This should help all of us who want to see a truly high-level political meeting, as the High Level Group cannot repeat the work of the Working Group the previous month. Perhaps next year at last we can get some proper political leadership on education. And maybe one day we will have meetings that respect basic principles of good pedagogy!

For more information contact David Archer: david.archer@actionaid.org

From schooling access to learning outcomes: an unfinished agenda and an unfinished evaluation

by David Archer

The World Bank published the results of its two-year evaluation of its investments in primary education under the title: *From Schooling Access to Learning Outcomes: an Unfinished Agenda*. Looking at over \$10 billion of investments, the final report is critical of the Bank's narrow focus on access, but fails to follow through many of the critical insights generated over the course of the evaluation. Clearly it is a sign of progress that the Bank wants to support learning outcomes, and not focus only on simplistic investments in infrastructure which have had limited impact. But behind this new agenda lie some new dangers – and a much more exciting agenda could and should have emerged from the evaluation. David Archer, a member of the external panel for this independent evaluation, offers his critical comments.

It is important to welcome this evaluation of investments in primary education as a sign of some limited learning in the World Bank. However, the final report fails to capture some of the exciting insights gained from the preparatory work and country studies. The final report does not read as an evaluation so much as an advocacy document, which is somewhat too single-minded in its focus on learning outcomes.

Outcomes vs. access – a trade off?

Clearly, **learning outcomes** are important – no one will disagree with this. The question is how to operationalise this new focus and the evaluation gives few orientations for this. Does it mean less attention should be paid to access? The report claims not – asserting that expanding access and improvements

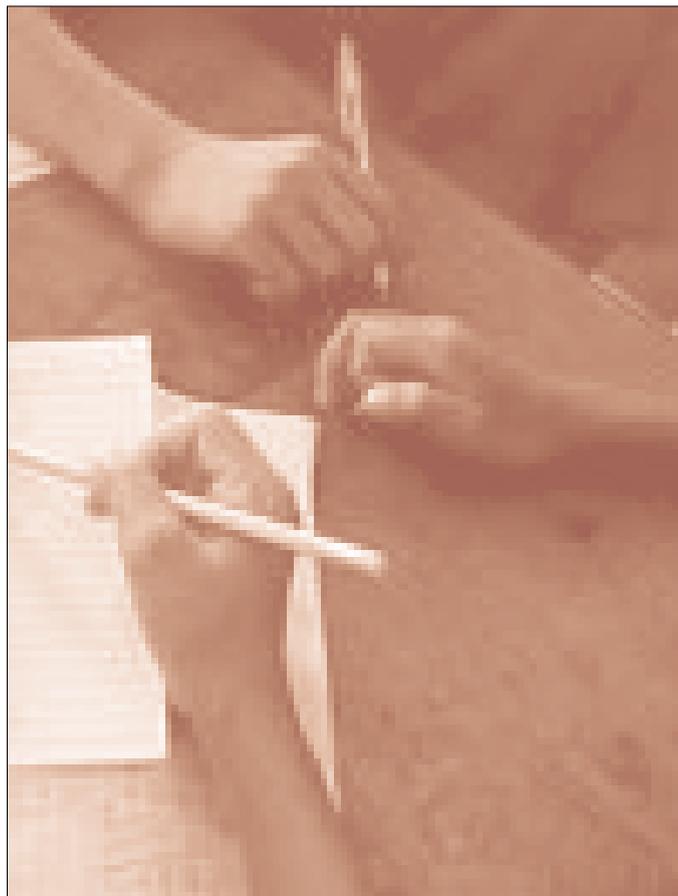
in learning outcomes do not have to be traded off against each other – but it is not very strong on this point. I would go further and say they **MUST NOT** be traded off. When 100 million of the poorest children remain out of school, shifting our focus from access to outcomes would have serious implications for equity. The report should have paid more attention to the **remaining challenges in achieving universal access** to primary education.

Part of the concern here comes from a worrying subtext which suggests that measures like the abolition of **user fees** are a bad idea as they impact negatively on quality (i.e. that progress on access has undermined outcomes). This may be the case, but it ignores the fact that education is a fundamental right and that charging children to go to primary school is the most blatant violation of that right. The sooner fees are abolished the better and this should have been stated simply and clearly rather than urging caution. No single measure has such a dramatic impact on equity within an education system – bringing millions of poor children into school. Rather than questioning the wisdom of governments (or political leaders) taking such abrupt measures, the emphasis should be on ensuring a **rapid response** (with coordinated international aid through mechanisms like FTI) to situations where fees are abolished so that quality is not affected.

Unfortunately this evaluation, spanning 16 years, ignores the Bank's own role in the controversial issue of user fees in education. It should have done a more systematic job in scrutinising the Bank's positions as they have shifted over the period – and it should have been **unequivocal** in calling for abolition of all costs that prevent poor

children going to school.

There is a danger, that the shift of attention to outcomes will be seen as substitute for much needed attention to **inputs** which in fact are vital to achieving those outcomes. One impact of this attention on outcomes may be to massively increase investment in testing of pupils (which in itself does not contribute to learning) rather than focusing on inputs that might really improve learning. Most inputs are



Jack Piore / ActionAid

obvious: ensuring there are sufficient numbers of well-trained teachers, who are teaching classes with manageable numbers, sufficient books and learning materials in enough classrooms. The report fails to highlight the extent to which the Bank's focus since 1990 has been too narrowly focused on the last of these, infrastructure, often at the expense of other inputs.

Teachers vs. para teachers

Perhaps the biggest omission in this report is in regard to the most important input: **teachers** – an input the Bank has systematically ignored over the past 16 years. Many of the

country evaluations documented the deterioration in teacher quality and teacher conditions in recent years – and the failure of the Bank to pay sufficient attention to this. The call for focusing on quality outcomes should naturally lead to a call for a renewed focus on quality teachers – but it does not. As it is, very little attention is paid in this final report to the critical issues of teacher recruitment, training, retention or deployment.

Rather, in places the report seems to do the opposite, promoting the hiring of 'local teachers' as an effective measure. The Executive Summary says 'recruitment of local, often untrained, youth' is one of the 'most promising' measures – and elsewhere the 'high dedication' of these contract teachers is celebrated. The term 'local teachers' which creeps in seems to be an attempt at re-branding 'para teachers' or 'contract teachers'. In fact the spread of these **non-professional teachers** (a more accurate term) is something that has been actively supported by the Bank in recent years, often with a very negative impact on learning quality. In the final report there is no analysis of Bank interventions in this

area and how they have sometimes actively undermined the teaching profession. For example the Mali study documented how the Bank's Voluntary Departure programme led to the loss of 12.5 per cent of the teaching workforce (even at a time of expanding enrolments) and the Bank did nothing to stop the closure of teacher education institutions. Instead in **Mali** the Bank explicitly supported the hiring of 'unqualified non-public-service teachers' – and did nothing to support the training of them. There are many other examples of the Bank promoting 'non-professionals' and these should have been more closely documented

in the final report.

On the positive side, the report does include a **qualifying refrain** made after calls for more local teachers: ‘as long as those teachers have access to professional growth opportunities and job security’ – something the Bank has failed to do in the past. It is also good to see the call for more ‘evaluative research’ on contract teaching and to see some of the concerns raised about whether it is cost-effective, equitable or sustainable in all settings. But if this report is serious in its call for quality learning outcomes then it should have been much more systematic in looking at the teaching profession and challenging the introduction of unqualified teachers. The moderating clause calling for ‘professional growth and job security’ feels tokenistic in this regard, failing to call for minimum requirements or time-bound processes of qualification. In practice, non-professional teachers are being seen as a long-term cheap-labour solution in many countries. This has a devastating impact on the teaching profession as a whole, undermining status and morale, and destroying teacher associations and unions. This is probably the **biggest single threat** to achieving quality learning outcomes for all children.

Macro-economic constraints

Another key problem in this evaluation is that the Bank fails to address the contradictions between IMF macro-economic prescriptions and the achievement of education goals. Some of the country studies commissioned for this evaluation showed these contradictions clearly, for example where the Bank built schools but owing to IMF limits on public sector wages there were no teachers to teach in the schools (e.g. in Pakistan, Peru and Mali). The recruitment of non-professionals as cheap labour is presented as unavoidable in situations of increasing enrolment, when new teachers are needed but the government cannot increase its spending on salaries. In fact there should be more attention paid to why wage bills are capped in the first place.



Jerry Matthews / ActionAid

The country studies done for this evaluation show again and again that Bank investments in education have been undermined by macro-economic constraints on governments, whether it is the freezing on hiring of teachers in Pakistan or low spending in Peru linked to IMF policies.

The country studies done for this evaluation show again and again that Bank investments in education have been **undermined** by macro-economic constraints on governments, whether it is the freezing on hiring of teachers in Pakistan or low spending in Peru linked to IMF policies. This fits with the experiences of many other countries (see *Contradicting Commitments*, ActionAid 2005). Governments cannot even contemplate the ‘trade offs’ between a rise of one per cent in inflation

and the recruitment of more teachers – as the inflation target is sacrosanct. The IMF talks openly of the ‘sacrifice ratio’ – whereby investments in education and health are sacrificed in the name of macro-economic stability. It is important for the World Bank to take a stand on these contradictions and to use its influence with the IMF to seek solutions. Building new schools is of little value if governments are at the same time blocked from employing new teachers. The Bank should be championing the benefits of investment in education and helping countries remove the constraints that prevent them from making such a sound investment.

Fast Track Initiative

On a related issue I welcome the recognition in the report that an increased focus on learning outcomes will ‘**raise the unit costs of primary education**’. I also welcome the considerable attention paid by this report (at least in its recommendations) to the Fast Track Initiative (the main mechanism for coordinating donor aid for education). Unfortunately the report fails to call directly for the Bank to put its own money into FTI! The country studies showed that despite widespread rhetoric about **donor coordination**, in practice donors have been poor at this – and the Bank has not helped. This evaluation should have recommended that the World Bank harmonises its work with other donors, behind government-led education sector plans, but inexplicably it does not. In effect, the Bank is encouraged to continue with a discredited projectised approach, picking off bits of education that it can claim as its own.

One reason why the evaluation should have demanded that the Bank channel its own support through the Fast Track Initiative is that it has not been very successful in **allocating money** to where it is most needed. Since 1990 the most rapid growth in borrowing for primary education has been in East and Central Europe and the greatest volume of borrowing now is in

Lending to primary education has actually fallen in the period 2000-2004 compared to 1995-1999. Moreover, direct lending to primary education has fallen significantly. It is only lending from other sectors (that include some component of education work) that prevents this decline from being very dramatic and evident.

Latin America. But the greatest need is in Africa (where increases have been slow and still fall short) and in South Asia (where commitments are now reducing).

Shift from primary education

Unfortunately, from my participation in this External Panel, I see an alarming shift in World Bank investment away from primary education – effectively abandoning the MDG agenda. There is an increasing investment in secondary and particularly higher education – and the policy attention to these areas suggests that they will increasingly attract a larger share of the resources from the existing education budget. The focus on the knowledge economy is already attracting significant staff time and resources that would previously have been focused on primary education. **Lending to primary education has actually fallen in the period 2000-2004 compared to 1995-1999. Moreover, direct lending to primary education has fallen significantly.** It is only lending from other sectors (that include some component of education work) that prevents this decline from being very dramatic and evident.

An increase in the Bank's spending on education will certainly be needed if it is to respond to learning outcomes – and it would also be essential if the Bank was to



Gideon Mendel / Corbis / ActionAid

take on the full EFA agenda. The World Bank was co-sponsor of Jomtien and Dakar, apparently buying into the EFA framework. Yet a defining part of the Bank's education narrative since 1990 has been a repeatedly reductive focus on UPE – sidelining and ignoring adult literacy and early childhood education. In many documents, including those prepared for this evaluation, UPE and EFA are conflated. This final report should have done more to acknowledge the impact of this: how the Bank's focus on primary education has impacted on other parts of the EFA agenda. It is an unsatisfactory fudge (and a denial of the Bank's power) to say that the Bank's contribution to EFA has been through UPE. This is of particular importance given the widespread evidence of inter-dependency in the EFA goals. The impact of early childhood education and the home environment on learning outcomes in schools are recurrent themes in the country studies. It is clear that little progress can be made on learning outcomes if we fail to consider the role of early childhood education and adult literacy (which is key to the home environment).

HIV/AIDS

Another key gap in this report concerns HIV/AIDS. It is shocking that most country studies did not raise HIV/AIDS as an issue, despite

this being in the terms of reference. The impact of HIV/AIDS on education in the past fifteen years is one of the biggest developments in the sector, particularly in Africa. The role that education plays in helping respond to HIV/AIDS is crucial and yet still under-regarded. The final evaluation report should, at the very least, make a big issue of the fact that the reports did not touch on HIV/AIDS. There is enough ignoring of HIV/AIDS in the education sector already, without the Bank adding to the deafening silence.

In **conclusion**, I welcome the fact that the Bank has conducted this evaluation but I feel that this final report is incomplete. Critical issues do not find enough space: particularly issues around the teaching profession, macro-economic policies and the failure of the Bank to target resources to where they are most needed. The implications of the call for greater attention to 'learning outcomes' are not made clear enough and the Bank's past, present and future global role in basic education are not adequately analysed. Ultimately this is an unfinished evaluation. **It seems that a more fully independent evaluation of the Bank's investment in education is still urgently needed.**

For more information please contact David Archer:
david.archer@actionaid.org

Rewriting the future: Education for children in conflict-affected countries

by Katy Webley

Introduction

Today, 77 million children who should be in primary school are not. These children are denied their right to education, a fair chance in life, access to skills and knowledge, and the route to a better life for themselves and their country. Every day, these children wake up to a life characterised by hardship and work, and a bleak outlook for their future.

There are various factors keeping these children out of school, but one of the biggest barriers, and the most difficult to tackle, is conflict. As well as killing and injuring millions of children, conflict disrupts normal life, forces millions of families to flee their homes, separates children from their families, and reduces schools to rubble.

Save the Children has calculated that, of the 77 million primary-aged children not in school, at least 39 million live in fragile states affected by armed conflict.

Within conflict situations, systems tend to shut down. The traditional response from the international community is to initiate an emergency response, focusing on emergency aid such as shelter, food, water, sanitation and healthcare. Education is frequently left out of emergency responses, whether they are to natural disasters or conflict situations. When signs of normality return and the international responses start to focus on longer-term development, education is given greater priority and is seen as a key component in helping a country return to stability.

The problem with this approach is that countries slip in and out of conflict situations, and in and out of emergency levels and development phases, as we have seen recently in Timor Leste and Sri Lanka. Children often spend their whole childhood living in an emergency situation, receiving, at best, only emergency aid – such as in Somalia and parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo. By the time a country is considered to have entered the development phase, there may be no foundations left on which to build. For example, in Southern Sudan, there are few schools, an incomplete curriculum, a dire shortage of teachers with any

Save the Children has calculated that, of the 77 million primary-aged children not in school, at least 39 million live in fragile states affected by armed conflict.

training, and no education systems in place.

Education is recognised as a basic human right for every child, whatever its circumstances. At the current rate of progress, however, even if promises are kept, the goal of universal primary education by 2015 will not be met. This is because conflict issues or proposed solutions for educating children affected by conflict, are largely absent from educational planning documents, international conferences on education, and debates about education for all. Urgent and effective action must be taken if the Millennium Development Goals on education and the Education for All targets adopted by the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000 are to be met.

Unless children affected by conflict are protected and educated, their futures, and the future of their nations, are seriously imperilled. Yet the world would be a better place for all of us if every child had an education and every child had a fair chance in life.

Education is recognised as a basic human right for every child, whatever its circumstances.

That is why 28 International Save the Children Alliance organisations across the world have joined forces to rewrite the future for the millions of children who are being denied an education because their countries are in conflict, and because the international community is failing them.

We will be working with children and their communities to meet our commitment to get three million out-of-school children into school by 2010, and to improve the quality of education for a total of eight million. We are also calling on the international community and national governments to ensure that the 43 million children in conflict-affected countries get the quality education to which they are entitled.

Education rewrites the future in Nepal

The civil war that has torn Nepal apart over the past 10 years has claimed the lives of 12,000 people. The Maoist insurgency, dedicated to overthrowing what it sees as an outdated, repressive monarchy, controls much of the countryside. Schooling in rural areas has been badly affected, with schools being targeted along with other government facilities. Schools are commandeered by both the Maoist rebels and the army, and both students and teachers are abducted to join rebel forces. Schools are often closed due to bandhs (strikes) called by the rebels. Attendance rates, not high to begin with, have dropped. A fifth of all primary-aged children do not attend school. More than half of all girls and 80 per cent of 'lower caste' Dalit children are not getting a basic primary education, many because they do not have the necessary birth registration forms because local registrars will not risk

travelling to remote villages. Nevertheless, classrooms are overcrowded, and only a third of primary school teachers have been trained.

Save the Children has been working in Nepal for 22 years. Over the last 10 years, our work has been increasingly affected by the conflict, and has involved working with both the government and the Maoist rebels, and building up the trust of local communities. By working at a local level, we have been able to demonstrate that children can become the focus for constructive collaboration, even in a conflict zone.

In one district heavily affected by the civil war, we encouraged families to set up education committees made up of representatives of 10 to 30 households within a hamlet. First they did local research, identifying which children were not in school and why. This information was then incorporated into a school improvement plan, and each committee took responsibility for sending all children over the age of six to school on a regular basis. We were able to get the district education office to support the school improvement plan. This made the rebels suspicious but, through the committees, community members told the rebels that if they would not support them, they would have no right to come to the villages asking for shelter and food. The Maoists eventually agreed and became involved in the schools instead of destroying them.

Enrolment now exceeds 90 per cent in these communities. All the schools have renovated or new classrooms and teachers are using more active and interactive learning approaches. Over two years, the pass rate increased from 39 per cent to 68 per cent, and the drop-out rate has fallen from 23 to two per cent. Parents are even moving their children back from private schools in larger towns to enrol in the local schools. With so many children graduating from primary school, there was growing demand to extend the local school to include high school grades. After much discussion, the community decided to invite the District Education

Networking and advocacy work will be undertaken to change national education policies and practices based on consolidated learning from the local work. This may include developing new teaching-learning materials and other information materials/resources; reviewing and reforming the curriculum to insert disaster risk reduction in relevant places and popularizing the methodologies and processes used at local levels.

Officer to visit their village, through Save the Children. Initially he refused because of the possibility of being kidnapped, but the rebels promised not to harm him. When he came it was the first such visit in the 32 years since the school had been set up, and he agreed that the school could be extended. Save the Children committed \$10,000 for the

construction, the District Education Officer agreed to provide the necessary teachers and furniture, and the community provided labour. Having initially refused to support a government-sponsored scheme, the rebels ended up collecting funds, getting materials donated, such as concrete and contributing labour.

Save the Children will continue to work with the Nepalese government, the Maoist rebels, other partners and local communities to replicate our experience in other districts. We will support the government to increase school enrolment to 90 per cent throughout the country and increase the primary education completion rate. By 2010, we aim to have increased literacy from 57 per cent to 70 per cent and for 40 per cent of children to have early childhood development opportunities. Although Nepal has a clear plan and targets for education, the government does not allocate enough resources and has weak monitoring and evaluation systems. The international community must therefore create a climate in which Nepal accepts that it must – and can – reach its education targets.

Rewriting the future – recommendations

Save the Children is challenging the



Warwick Page / Panos Pictures / ActionAid

world to ensure that the 43 million out-of-school children living in conflict-affected fragile states have access to the quality education every child deserves and has a right to. Save the Children recognises that, while governments are the principle duty-bearers in ensuring that the rights of their citizens are fulfilled, in countries affected by conflict governments may be weakened and unable to fulfil their basic obligations without support. We believe, therefore, that the international community has an obligation to ensure that all children, including children living in countries affected by conflict, enjoy their right to education. If the world is to meet the objectives on education as agreed in the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All targets set in Dakar, then urgent and effective action needs to be taken.

Save the Children calls on world leaders, organisations, governments and individuals to publicly pledge their support for the right of all children to education and to take immediate and sustained action to implement the following changes and ensure that these 43 million children have access to quality education.

National governments must take steps to:

- Abolish primary school fees while taking appropriate steps to protect and improve the quality of education.
- Ensure adequate numbers and quality of teaching staff by reforming teacher development systems and upgrading teacher pay and conditions of service.
- Design school curricula that impart an early understanding of human rights, social justice, teamwork and the process of peace and reconciliation, and which assist children in protecting themselves from dangers associated with conflict, such as increased risk of landmines and HIV and AIDS.
- Resource schools and/or alternative education centres.
- Protect children and teachers from violence by government

forces and/or armed militia by ensuring that perpetrators are subject to prosecution under national law.

- Promote understanding of the right to and the value of education among parents, children and the wider community.

Donors and international agencies must ensure education is part of immediate humanitarian relief work by:

- Providing quality education as a frontline service in all humanitarian responses within the first 30 days, using the INEE (Interagency Network for

distress, recruitment into armed groups, family separation and abuses related to their displacement.

- Promoting the creation of alternative basic education programmes that include school outreach centres, out-of-school programmes and flexible-hour schooling, particularly when security prevents children from going to regular schools.

Ensure adequate financing of education in conflict and post-conflict countries by:

- Increasing their engagement with conflict-affected fragile states and leading the way in exploring financing mechanisms that enable

The international community has an obligation to ensure that all children, including children living in countries affected by conflict, enjoy their right to education. If the world is to meet the objectives on education as agreed in the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All targets set in Dakar, then urgent and effective action needs to be taken.

Education in Emergencies) Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies as the benchmark for quality.

- Ensuring that education as a humanitarian response is resourced and co-ordinated, and that a percentage of funds raised through UN flash appeals for emergencies are earmarked for the education sector.

Ensure child protection through and within quality education by:

- Supporting the establishment of well-managed school spaces to protect children from physical harm, psychological and social

funds to be channelled effectively to meet basic needs, particularly in the absence of an effective government.

- Increasing allocation of long-term predictable aid for education in conflict-affected fragile states, with a significant proportion of this aid being used to provide basic education.
- Expanding the Education for All Fast Track Initiative to enable conflict-affected fragile states to benefit from increased aid and technical support through the FTI, with a corresponding increase in overall FTI resources.

ActionAid welcomes this important work by Save the Children and is committed to putting the education of conflict-affected people higher up the political agenda. However, we also acknowledge that many of the children referred to in the Save the Children report (e.g. in Ethiopia, Nigeria and Pakistan) are out of school for reasons other than conflict. In countries seriously affected by conflict (Liberia, DRC, Sudan etc) ActionAid believes interventions such as alternative education centres need to be used with caution, ensuring that they are temporary and do not absolve the governments of responsibility to deliver on education rights over the longer term.

The Elated Schools campaign in Sri Lanka

by Saroj Das

The tsunami that struck Sri Lanka on 26 December 2004 left its mark on society creating immediate and long-term impact on the country and its people. The impact was particularly severe on the most deprived sectors of the population – such as very poor rural communities, crowded urban or plantation locations and disabled children whose existing vulnerabilities exacerbated their situation.

‘As an empowerment right especially in a disaster context, education is the most important tool by which economically and socially marginalized adults and children who are struggling to restore their lives and livelihoods can lift themselves out of poverty.’

Within this context the recognition of education as a fundamental human right is very significant. Education occupies a key place in Human Rights and is essential to the achievement of other rights. Despite the pledges made by the Sri Lankan government to honour international commitments and charters to provide education for all, thousands of children still remain deprived of educational opportunities, many of them as a consequence of poverty. As a result of the tsunami, a near breakdown of the education sector was experienced as almost 200,000 children were affected; 3,372 students were killed, 6,610 were injured, 126 teachers were killed and a staggering 49,230 children were displaced. Actions taken so far by the government and international community to return normality to the sector have been insufficient.

In the wake of the tsunami a number of NGO partners of ActionAid met informally and decided to form an organization they later called the Siyath Foundation. This has the short-term goal of developing safe schools and enhancing disaster preparedness. Its long-term goal is to support the government to improve the quality of education, focusing on bringing all children back to school and retaining them therein. A platform was initiated to capture the interests and voices of the children and communities of Sri Lanka with a view to influencing post-tsunami reconstruction. Special efforts were

As a result of the tsunami, a near breakdown of the education sector was experienced as almost 200,000 children were affected; 3,372 students were killed, 6,610 were injured, 126 teachers were killed and a staggering 49,230 children were displaced.

made to include groups that are disadvantaged economically, socially and culturally.

Back to School Campaign

To push forward the outcomes of this platform, the Elated Schools Development Organization (ESDO) was formed. The first phase of ESDO’s work began in February 2006, with the launch of a nationwide ‘Back to School Campaign’ which was aimed at helping affected and displaced children to get back into school. ESDO is concentrating on six educational zones (Ambalangoda, Galle, Matara, Tangalle, Hambantota – Sinhala language and Kalmunai – Tamil language).

The campaign involved the collaboration of civil society, government and other stakeholders to raise public awareness about the



issues affecting education in disaster situations and agree solutions for tackling them. The broad objectives of the campaign were to:

1. Generate unwavering commitment to attract all children back to school.
2. Provide meaningful quality education with the capacity to meet any situation in appropriately-designed physical and social school settings.
3. Building close cooperation between the state education structure and the NGO sector to collectively endeavour to bring all children back to school and retain them at least up to the compulsory education level.

The campaign brought efforts from all sectors and every level of society, starting with a top-level design committee including well-known education experts, Education Ministry officials, and members of ActionAid and Siyath. Similar committees were established at the education division level and school management committees were involved at the school level.

Elated School Campaign

In the second phase, this initiative took the shape of a ‘Safe School Campaign’ which engaged and empowered communities to demand inclusive schools in close proximity to communities. The ‘Elated School Campaign’ was also initiated, covering 115 schools in



The campaign highlighted the need to develop a new vision to establish a ‘dream school’ where the future education of the children would be in the hands of the children, parents, teachers and local communities of Sri Lanka.

affected areas. The campaign highlighted the need to develop a new vision to establish a ‘dream school’ where the future education of the children would be in the hands of the children, parents, teachers and local communities of Sri Lanka. In this respect, art schools, creative writing, drama and various other activities were conducted in the affected zones. Community dialogue and teacher trainings were also organized to build a better rapport between the state and the community in order to come up with an effective reconstruction process for education. Through these campaigns, efforts have been made

to restore normality to the lives of the thousands of children directly and indirectly affected by the tsunami. ESDO’s initial focus has been on giving a voice to voiceless disadvantaged communities and providing a workable plan to provide worthwhile education for all children.

People’s Charter

In February 2006, to mark the completion of one year of work and rehabilitation in the education sector, ESDO organized a workshop to share experiences on education in disaster situations. Participants included local organizations, government representatives and international delegates. The workshop was an opportunity to discuss and to present the critical issues identified during the campaigns to the Sri Lankan government for its consideration and action. Recommendations were also made for the improvement of the education sector but more importantly, the ‘People’s Charter’ was developed and presented to the government.

The charter is a comprehensive social agenda which outlines not only the concerns of the people

around disaster preparedness in the education system but also offers step-by-step solutions for the establishment of and sustainability of safer schools that deliver quality education for all Sri Lankan children. The charter called upon government to:

- Ensure that all construction of school buildings should be completed by 31 December 2006. During the transitional period the education facilities and plans to create an environment to provide continuous education should be declared.
- All pledges made for reconstruction of schools, progress made and the information of available resources for reconstruction, should be made available to the general public.
- International minimum standards should be maintained and awareness raising should be done in the case of educationists, communities and children.
- Potential risks in education should be identified at all times, and risk reduction strategies should be promoted in a systematic manner.

Disaster risk reduction through schools in Malawi

by John Abuya

The ActionAid disaster risk reduction through schools (DRR) project is being implemented in seven countries and is funded by DFID. The project is aimed at making schools in high-risk disaster areas safer by embedding strategies for disaster preparedness and mitigation into school curricula. Its ultimate focus is to influence national policy and ensure the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (UN plan aimed at reducing casualties and damage caused by natural disaster) within education processes.



Members of the PVA team cross to another village by boat because the village is not accessible by land.

Malawi has a population of close to 12 million people of which 65 per cent live under the poverty line. In recent years the country has experienced different weather phenomena attributed to climate change; notably decreases in precipitation and temperatures, which often cause weather-related disasters, particularly droughts and floods. Extreme climate-related events experienced in Malawi have worsened over the last few years. Previous to 2001, only nine districts were classified as flood prone. In 2001, 16 of Malawi's 28 districts were affected, and 14 were affected in 2002. By the end of January 2003, there was localized flooding in 22 districts, causing eight deaths, damaged homes, and crops. Heavy rainfall during the first half of the 2004/05 rainfall season has resulted in flooding and hailstorms in some parts of 11 out of 27 districts in Malawi. In the last two years, adverse climate conditions, chronic poverty, reliance on a single crop, and a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS have resulted in a humanitarian crisis situation that has affected 3.5 million people. Currently, there is

Education delivery in Malawi has been adversely affected by the disasters. The school is usually the strongest structure in a community and as such is often used as a shelter to accommodate people displaced by floods.

looming hunger that will affect approximately 2.5 to 3 million.

Education delivery in Malawi has been adversely affected by the disasters. The school is usually the strongest structure in a community and as such is often used as a shelter to accommodate people displaced by floods. Learning in schools has also suffered due to prolonged absenteeism by students who are displaced or are forced to work in order to help their families with basic needs. Despite this, there are no official strategies in place to mitigate the effects of such disasters

on education.

The disaster risk reduction through schools project is being carried out by ActionAid Malawi to reduce vulnerability to disasters around schools and provide strategies for mitigating their impact. It aims to make the most of the potential that schools have to help communities get involved in disaster risk reduction. The project methodology is two-pronged, ensuring implementation at both the district and national levels.

Nsanje District

One of the districts most affected by extreme climate conditions is Nsanje, located in the Shire Valley at the southern tip of Malawi. Frequent floods have caused loss of life, animals, crops, habitats and infrastructure; outbreaks of pests and diseases; displacement of people and environmental degradation. During the 2004-5 floods, 107 households were displaced and 168 hectares of crops affected. In addition, droughts have caused crop failure, drying of water reservoirs (dams, fish ponds, lake levels, and rivers), famine, loss of human and animal lives, loss of biodiversity and environmental degradation.

The DRR project will focus on four primary schools and the surrounding communities, with the possibility of extending to other schools in subsequent years. Most primary and secondary schools in disaster-prone areas of Nsanje are affected by the recurring floods. The schools suffer from frequent closures, high dropout rates, absenteeism, damage of infrastructure and loss of school property. Families are often temporarily relocated and pupils either do not attend school at this time or seek re-enrolment in nearby schools.

The project will work with pupils, parents and teachers, school management committees and local institutions, including village development committees and area civil protection committees (responsible for emergencies and disaster response and mitigation). The village development committees and civil protection committees will

help mobilise the communities to participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project. The DRR project is designed to complement ActionAid's other education work in the area, which focuses on education quality, implementation of Education For All action plans, reducing drop-outs among girls and out-of-school youth, mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS targeting orphaned children, affected teachers, and truancy.

Four schools were initially identified for the project: Thangadzi One (564 pupils), Kaombe (312 pupils), Ndione (522 pupils) and Nansongole (184 pupils). However, the government has declared that the areas around Ndione and

The DRR project is designed to complement ActionAid's other education work in the area, which focuses on education quality, implementation of Education For All action plans, reducing drop-outs among girls and out-of-school youth, mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS targeting orphaned children, affected teachers, and truancy.

The DRR project in other countries

Whilst all countries in this seven-country project will share a core basic model there will also be considerable diversity in approach or emphasis arising from the existing experiences and competencies of the partners involved in each district / country. For example, in Nepal, children's clubs in schools will be a key means for introducing disaster risk reduction – and reaching the youth in communities is seen as key. In Bangladesh there are plans to develop a specific code of conduct around education delivery in the context of disasters. In India, 'emergency response teams' will be formed and trained to help schools

recognise, respond and recover from a disaster. A particular focus will be placed on psycho-social counselling in schools with training modules developed for teachers, children and

community members. Haiti sees important roles for schools to be involved in budget tracking work in the context of disasters. Meanwhile Kenya is committed to working on disaster preparedness with a child-rights perspective and Ghana will seek to directly link the Ghana Fire Service and National Disaster Management Organisation into schools. Organisations in many other countries are now coming forward, interested to do similar work in this crucial area, looking at the pivotal role that schools can play in reducing risks in disaster-prone contexts. This global project is coordinated from Nairobi in Kenya.



The primary school at Kaombe.

Nansongole schools are not habitable and that the communities must move. A Participatory Vulnerability Analysis (PVA) conducted in May 2006 revealed that due to floods the two schools are often closed for up to six months at a time. During this time, the children are denied their right to education and the people have no access to health services and clean water.

The communities of Thangadzi and Kaombe have started implementing action plans developed during the May PVA. The river Thangadzi causes a lot of flooding and regularly disrupts schooling. As an action point from the PVA, the river is to be desilted and trees planted along the riverbanks to control the flooding. A survey of the river has been conducted and work will begin soon with the participation of the

community and with the District Assembly providing technical support.

National advocacy work

Work at the national level aims to build stronger voices to advocate for policies that address issues of disaster risk preparedness in the education system. To gather support for this work, ActionAid has held several consultative meetings with the Ministries of Agriculture, Food Security and Education as well as the Department of Disaster Preparedness. A consortium of NGOs implementing DRR with funding from DFID UK has been formed. Members include Tear Fund and Christian Aid, with ActionAid as the lead. The consortium has been meeting to discuss ways of working together and to plan a joint launch of the programme.

For more information please contact
John Abuya:
john.abuya@actionaid.org

More than words: Comparing policy and practice in Tanzania and Vietnam in light of the International Benchmarks for Adult Literacy

by Jude Fransman

Why literacy for adults?

Although literacy has been internationally recognised both as a human right in itself and a crucial instrument for the pursuit of other rights (as well as countless additional human, cultural, social, political and economic benefits) today it is still denied to some 771 million adults around the world. Moreover, over the last decades for want of political will and resources, in most countries adult literacy has slipped by the wayside as a priority area for education.

Despite recognition of the many potential individual and societal benefits of adult literacy, there is a common acknowledgement that these benefits are highly dependent on the appropriate execution of programmes and policies within a given country. Indeed, the ‘failure’ of many literacy campaigns and programmes to deliver concrete ‘results’ is often cited as a reason to limit support for adult literacy.

International Benchmarks for Adult Literacy

The need for a better understanding of ‘what makes adult literacy programmes work’ was the inspiration behind a recent study conducted by ActionAid and the Global Campaign for Education. Adult literacy programmes around the world were surveyed in order to derive key policy Benchmarks that might be used to assess whether a government’s strategy for literacy is effective (see box).

Interrogating the Benchmarks in Tanzania and Vietnam

These Benchmarks emerge from the largest ever global consultation of its kind and show that adult literacy programmes can be affordable and effective. However, the ways in which they are interpreted, prioritised and applied will differ somewhat according to the context.

As a means of substantiating the Benchmarks, follow-up research was

International Benchmarks for Adult Literacy

1. Literacy is about acquiring and using reading, writing and numeracy skills, and thereby the development of active citizenship, improved health and livelihoods, and gender equality.
2. Literacy should be seen as a **continuous process** that requires regular and sustained learning. There are no magic lines to cross.
3. **Governments must take the lead responsibility**, providing leadership and resources, working in systematic collaboration with civil society and decentralising budgets and decision-making.
4. Governments should invest in ongoing **feedback and evaluation** mechanisms, data systematization and strategic research.
5. **Facilitators should be paid** at least the equivalent of the minimum wage of a primary school teacher for all hours worked.
6. Facilitators should receive substantial **initial training and regular refresher training**, as well as having opportunities for professional development.
7. Facilitators should work with **groups of no more than 30 learners** and there should be at least one trainer/supervisor to 15 learner groups.
8. Learners in multilingual contexts should be given an active **choice about the language** in which they learn.
9. Learners should be actively stimulated through the use of a wide range of **participatory methods** and through addressing issues of relevance to their lives.
10. Governments should stimulate the market for **production and distribution of suitable reading materials and should support production of materials** by learners and facilitators.
11. Governments should commit **between US\$50 and US\$100 per learner per year** for at least three years.
12. Governments should dedicate at least **three per cent** of their national education sector budgets to adult literacy. International donors should fill any remaining resource gaps.

Adapted from the Report ‘Writing the Wrongs’ (2005).

conducted in the United Republic of Tanzania and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in collaboration with ActionAid and the Ministries of Education in each country. In exploring two very distinct literacy policy environments, the research aimed to establish the extent to which the Benchmarks apply in each country and are in fact desirable. Focusing on the use of the *Reflect* approach as a methodology for adult literacy by both governmental and non-governmental institutions around the countries, the research also examined the compatibility of *Reflect* with the Benchmarks and the broader policy environment.

Key Findings

The literacy challenge is far greater than reported: In Vietnam, the research revealed serious inadequacies in official literacy statistics which mask significant inequalities and even exclude data on certain groups altogether. Moreover, evidence of participation, completion and achievement rates in both countries show that schooling alone is not solving the literacy deficit. There are still a considerable number of children who drop out before completing the first five years of primary school and even more alarming, of those who do complete many do not acquire the necessary competencies in literacy and

numeracy. Many studies in both Tanzania and Vietnam also stress that the ‘relapse-rate’ is high and this is exacerbated by the lack of a sustaining literacy environment. Unsurprisingly, the literacy deficit is particularly prominent amongst the most excluded and vulnerable groups – women, the elderly, ethnic and linguistic minorities, people with disabilities, people affected by HIV/AIDS and people living in remote rural areas. Unfortunately, both government and non-governmental programmes often fail to respond to demand from these vulnerable groups and to mitigate obstacles that are likely to impede participation.

The Benchmarks provide a sound framework but in reality are a long way to being met. Greater political will and resources are imperative: although there is an overwhelming consensus to most of the Benchmarks *in principle*, areas such as the pay and professionalization of adult literacy facilitators, a culture of evaluation and needs-assessment and the development of a literate environment fall seriously short of the targets and are unlikely to be met in the foreseeable future. Moreover, the status accorded to adult literacy within Ministries of Education and in the agendas of donor agencies and even NGOs is low and ever decreasing. If political will is not enhanced, the substantial advances made in adult literacy in both Tanzania and Vietnam since the 1960s, are likely to be severely undermined. Key inconsistencies include:

- **Understanding and evaluating literacy:** While both countries are moving towards a broader and less dichotomous definition of literacy (embracing life-long learning and functional skills) the national data fails to reflect this definition and neither country benefits from a satisfactory culture of evaluation – though claims that this is underway have been made in both Tanzania and Vietnam.
- **Governing and financing literacy:** The trend towards greater decentralisation and civil society-government partnerships is



Michael Amendolia / Network / ActionAid

apparent in both Tanzania and Vietnam. However, there remains a tendency to see civil society organisations as service deliverers rather than advocates of rights. Cross-sectoral collaboration is also low. Adult literacy does not receive anything near to three per cent of the education budget in either country and donors are not filling the gap. Even traditionally supportive agencies like SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency), CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) and NORAD (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation) have terminated their adult literacy projects in the shift to targeted budget support.

- **Teaching and learning literacy:** There is a wide diversity of pedagogic approaches in each country ranging from ‘chalk-n-talk’ reproductions of primary classes to genuinely active, participatory and relevant learning. Training also differs significantly but examples of good practice were seen in both governmental and non-governmental programmes. Though learning groups are usually organised with ratios similar to the Benchmarks, facilitators are severely under-compensated. In Vietnam *Reflect* facilitators are (non-local) primary teachers paid over-time. In Tanzania they are local people but

Evidence of participation, completion and achievement rates in both countries show that schooling alone is not solving the literacy deficit.

since responsibility was handed to the government, they have thus far received no payment. The locality of facilitators also has implications for the language of instruction.

- **Sustaining literacy:** For Vietnam and Tanzania as with most countries, this is the toughest Benchmark to meet as it means working with policy areas outside the realms of the education sector (in printing and publishing, with the media etc.). And yet, it is also debatably the most crucial of the Benchmarks. What is the motivation to develop literacy skills if there is nothing available to read? Books, newspapers and magazines are largely unavailable in Tanzania and unaffordable in Vietnam. There is little desire to invest in book collections over and above, for example, computers, radios and TVs. Innovative strategies such as mobile libraries or locally produced newsletters have been underutilised.

Reflect is a powerful tool to meet the Benchmarks but still faces challenges:

Because *Reflect* operates in the most disadvantaged areas, the programmes in both Tanzania and Vietnam are optimally placed to respond to learning needs in a number of ways. Firstly, *Reflect* networks might be used to fathom the true extent of illiteracy and the real learning priorities of the most excluded around the country through community-based needs assessments. Secondly, since *Reflect* circles are community based and relatively low cost they can be based in more remote locations, reaching people who might otherwise not access classes. Thirdly, since the teaching and learning topics of each circle respond directly to the development needs of the community, *Reflect* helps to mobilise participants to launch

community-development initiatives such as building small roads or vegetable gardens. And finally, *Reflect* is one of the few adult literacy initiatives that work towards developing a professionalised and sustainable cadre of adult literacy facilitators. A gradual movement towards training local facilitators instead of relying on external primary teachers (Vietnam) or local government officials (Tanzania) has been put in place, to ensure sustainability of the programmes and genuine relevance to the needs and priorities of the community.

However, challenges exist:

- First and foremost, the success of *Reflect* relies on meticulous training of facilitators and supervisors/trainers. On visiting a *Reflect* circle it is immediately clear whether or not a facilitator understands and uses the methodology appropriately. Where it works, a welcoming, dynamic and stimulating environment can be created. Where it doesn't, a facilitator may be reduced to imitating a primary teacher but without the professional experience. It is vital that trainers are carefully selected and monitored.
- An additional challenge is the recent movement away from a service-delivery and towards a rights-based approach, which has serious implications for the payment of facilitators, partnerships with government, training policy and the provision of assistance to programmes. There is a general assumption by governments that civil society should foot the bill for adult literacy. *Reflect* cannot be mainstreamed in a sustainable way without government support and financing.
- Finally, (in the case of Tanzania) a critical tension exists between the relative priority accorded to the literacy and empowerment/development components of *Reflect*. Literacy is clearly not the priority for *Reflect* circles and promotion of *Reflect* seems to advertise other benefits over literacy outcomes. Perhaps the

Reflect methodology for acquiring literacy can also be called into question. Although it builds on locally identified issues, culminating in a selection of generative words, it nevertheless sometimes results in rather passive 'copying from the blackboard' activities rather than more active alternatives such as creative writing (journals, stories etc.) or functional writing (letters, filling out forms etc.).

Mutual learning, moving forward

Though challenges exist and resource constraints taint every solution, there are clearly strong adult literacy initiatives underway in both Vietnam and Tanzania and real evidence of impact on everyday lives. While the Benchmarks are perhaps something of a dream in a context such as Tanzania, they might still act as useful guidelines to help to reformulate strategies for better coherence in policy and practice and are largely compatible with the government's Integrated Community Based Adult Education (ICBAE) programme and the national *Reflect* programme from which it draws much of its methodology. In Vietnam, while current provision fails to meet the needs of the poorest and most excluded, the *Reflect* methodology goes further than most in targeting these particularly vulnerable groups. At the same time, the government's recent commitment to install Community Learning Centres (CLCs) across the country provides a potentially inclusive infrastructure for access to lifelong learning opportunities for all adults. It is therefore suggested that the institutionalisation of *Reflect* within CLCs across Vietnam (as has been done through ICBAE across Tanzania) is a potentially effective and sustainable means of ensuring relevant ongoing literacy opportunities for all ages within a complementary 'literate environment'. Conversely, the establishment of something akin to CLCs in Tanzania would significantly enhance the country's own literate environment and improve the motivation for learning to read and write.

Re-visiting the Benchmarks

In light of these findings, the Benchmarks themselves might be strengthened in a number of ways:

- Firstly, the Benchmarks might benefit from greater contextualisation, stressing the need to fully recognize the policy environment in which they will operate and the literacy situation in the country: understanding and responding to demand and particularly that of the poorest and most excluded is key.
- Secondly, they might include a call for higher prioritisation of literacy within Ministries of Education (some countries even have autonomous Ministries of Adult and Non-Formal Education but a department with a vote on the budget is the absolute minimum).
- More practically, there needs to be greater prioritisation of the Benchmarks. National governments might be encouraged to develop their own prioritisations on the basis of national needs.
- Greater effort might be made to tie the Benchmarks for Adult Literacy into the EFA agenda since this is the priority of most education sectors and the bulk of budgetary support from bi- and multilateral donors is channelled through EFA activities.
- More attention might also be given to gendered strategies within literacy policy and practice (and not just as an equitable outcome or a topic for discussion though this is also important). Examples might include careful consideration of whether same- or mixed-sex groups are appropriate and the impact that the gender of facilitators may have on learning groups.
- Finally, there should be a far greater emphasis on the development of a sustainable literate environment. This serves children and youths as well as adults and is one of the greatest incentives for motivation of learners and inspiration of facilitators.

New *Reflect* initiatives in Bangladesh

Reflect & ICTs

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have the potential to play a crucial role in enriching participants' *Reflect* analysis and *Reflect*-based endeavours to fight poverty and injustice. There are already some initiatives that could be labelled *Reflect* ICT, as participants learn to access and use information from a variety of sources to establish their rights. However, more work is needed to help people to use these new technologies. *Reflect* practitioners feel it is important to progress carefully, making sure that ICT work is appropriate to the specific conditions of Bangladesh and is not imposed on the *Reflect* programme in an artificial way.

Following an international workshop held in Dhaka in 2005, ActionAid Bangladesh launched an action research project looking specifically at *Reflect* and ICTs. We have engaged in a process of consultation with eight partner organizations, the probable participants, and other organisations that are involved in similar initiatives. This research will form the basis of our *Reflect* and ICTs project.

Reflect and Disability: Break the Barriers

In the course of our work with *Reflect* we had become aware that Persons with Disability (PWD) continued to be marginalised. They were included in the *Reflect* groups but remained passive participants, provided with only sporadic support. Their problems were often ignored and issues of disability were rare in discussions.

In Bangladesh, disability is often seen as a curse of god or as the result of sin committed by the ancestors of a disabled person. PWDs are seen as 'dependent' and 'barriers to development'. Because of this, PWDs are socially excluded and marginalized. Rather than viewing PWDs as victims who need help we are focusing on removing social barriers, creating an environment in which PWDs are free to pursue their rights. We want to shift our work with people with a disability from a service-based to a rights-based approach. Our goal is that persons with a disability will live a life of

dignity without discrimination and free from poverty.

In order to explore the potential of *Reflect* to address this issue, the *Reflect* Development Unit, along with the Disability and Enabling Environment theme of ActionAid Bangladesh, have launched an action research project; *Reflect and Disability: Break the Barriers*. Eight partner organisations are involved in the project, running some 46 *Reflect* circles between them since January 2006. Some of the *Reflect* circles are made up of people with similar disabilities and others are mixed – we will monitor any differences in outcomes of these two models. During the course of the project we shall be assessing the usefulness of the various tools and techniques in order to identify which are most appropriate in this context. We will work with the groups to develop leadership skills and support their possible transformation to fully-fledged organisations, working together to fight poverty, discrimination and marginalisation.

For further information please contact the *Reflect* Development Unit, ActionAid Bangladesh: hossain@actionaid-bd.org

Reflect in Africa – a Snapshot

KENYA PAMOJA members in Kenya are working to ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes. They have promoted *Reflect* to improve access to and increase participation in adult and continuing education, promote education for all, improve school governance and budget tracking, address the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS and encourage conflict-resolution among pastoralist communities. EPID-Kenya has begun a pilot project on school governance. The project covers 16 primary schools in Kirisia division of Samburu district. The aim is to build and enhance community ownership of and participation in education planning, decision-making and management of schools.

NIGERIA In areas of Nigeria where *Reflect* is being implemented there is evidence of increased engagement between communities and local authorities through the provision of more spaces for interaction and learning. This has resulted in actions in the education sector such as the provision of new desks and chairs and an increase in the number of teachers for rural schools. An increasing number of *Reflect* participants have entered the formal education system, enrolling in secondary school. In Kupto and Fade, which are predominantly Muslim communities

and known for their indifference towards women's empowerment, there has been improved enrolment of girls in school as a result of *Reflect* activities.

UGANDA Building on Save the Children US Uganda's early childhood programme, an education initiative called *Reading for Children* has begun. The aim is to introduce and sustain reading for pleasure and to reinforce reading skills in older children and adults. The project was piloted with ten *Reflect* circles in Nakasongola district, involving some 309 children between the ages of 4-7. In Pallisa District, Eastern Uganda, ActionAid is collaborating with the local authorities to support community seed bank initiatives. ActionAid is providing the *Reflect* circles with foundation seed of improved local varieties from National Agricultural Research Stations. Communities are then supported through their *Reflect* circles to multiply seed and rotate the surplus.

ZAMBIA In Namwala, *Reflect* circles have been effectively advocating for the Namwala District Hospital to start disbursing anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) to HIV patients. Namwala has now become one of the first rural district hospitals to start administering ARV treatment. The majority of people no longer have to travel to the provincial hospital or Lusaka to access the drugs.

Reflect for ESOL resource materials

by Emma Pearce

ActionAid has published a new *Reflect for ESOL Resource Pack* adapting the *Reflect* approach for use in teaching ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) to refugees, asylum seekers and other long-term immigrant groups in the UK. The pack has been widely distributed to teachers at colleges and community centres across the UK and has been greeted with enthusiasm. During 2007-8, we plan to pilot the materials in four locations nationally in order to explore its potential in a variety of contexts and look at possibilities for mainstreaming the approach within ESOL teaching.

Over the past few years we have been exploring the possibility of adapting *Reflect* for work with refugees, asylum seekers and long-term immigrants in the UK. We had been contacted by a number of organisations that were interested in working with *Reflect* in this context and we were drawn to respond to this by the recognition that these groups are often marginalised and disenfranchised within British society. They face a multitude of barriers and prejudices in accessing services and meeting their daily needs and asserting their rights in an unfamiliar environment. We felt that *Reflect* could help to give refugees, asylum seekers and other marginalized groups a greater voice in their own community, challenging stereotypes and confronting social exclusion, racism and isolation.

Reflect can play a key role in linking the learning of ESOL to wider processes of social integration and community cohesion. In a predominantly monolingual society, such as the UK, those who do not speak English are often ignored and marginalised. A *Reflect*-based approach to learning English can help equip participants with a greater understanding of the issues they face, whilst also developing their language skills in areas that are relevant to their lives. Learners will learn language skills alongside other skills, enabling them to participate in the national

economy, become active citizens and access their basic rights and entitlements.

In England, ESOL is viewed in policy terms as an element of Skills for Life, the government's strategy for improving adult basic skills, including literacy, numeracy and ESOL. In 2001, a National Core Curriculum was introduced for ESOL. This emphasises a learner-centred approach to ESOL. Providers and teachers are expected to be aware of the range of needs, skills and aspirations of each learner and the implications of these for the learning. Among other things, the Curriculum hopes to address participants' short-term goals, their education and employment aspirations, their trauma and personal learning difficulties. The

Reflect can play a key role in linking the learning of ESOL to wider processes of social integration and community cohesion. In a predominantly monolingual society, such as the UK, those who do not speak English are often ignored and marginalised.

Curriculum also emphasises the need to take account of techniques for teaching mixed-level groups and groups of learners with very mixed educational backgrounds as well as learners whose listening/speaking skills are much higher or lower than their reading/writing skills.

However, most of the materials that have emerged so far, whilst often very visual and learner friendly are still prescriptive and classroom-bound. As a flexible approach that starts with the learner, building on their existing skills and experiences and focusing on their aspirations and needs, *Reflect* can play a valuable role in addressing these issues. In addition, the visual nature of the *Reflect* approach means that students can participate fully from the beginning of the course, however limited their literacy or language skills.

The resource pack

Although *Reflect* is now used in many different contexts and with different aims, the original Mother Manual was written primarily for literacy work with rural communities in the developing world. It was also generally assumed that participants would be working in their mother tongue. Whilst encouraging ESOL teachers to make their own imaginative use of the resources available, we ultimately felt that it was necessary to produce a new pack of materials with a specific focus on second language teaching and on the issues faced by refugees and other immigrant groups living in the UK.

With the support of experienced *Reflect* practitioners from the Ghana, India and Uganda, we were able to run some short workshops on *Reflect* for ESOL, hosted by organisations interested in using the approach in their own work. In the process, we received considerable help both from the *Reflect* practitioners and from experienced ESOL practitioners to adapt *Reflect* for the specific challenges of ESOL teaching in the UK. Written by ESOL teacher, Piers Cardiff, and Kate Newman and Emma Pearce from ActionAid's International Education Team, the Resource Pack was finally published in summer 2006.

The Resource Pack is divided into three sections:

Section 1:

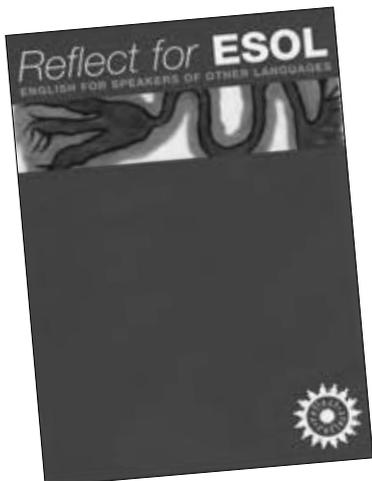
Provides an overview of the *Reflect* participatory process, starting from discussion, analysis and learning through to practice, reflection and action.

Section 2:

Is made up of eleven core modules covering the themes of education, budgets, community, family, health, housing, information, schools, migration, prejudice and work. Each module provides guidelines for structured work over several sessions. Step-by-step instructions are provided for developing innovative visual materials with learners, the construction of which involves clear patterns of language use, set within purposeful contexts. Each module also offers questions for discussion and action, and guidelines for how to maximise the language outcomes from the process.

Section 3:

Includes a selection of the participatory tools used in *Reflect*, including graphics such as the tree, matrix and river, as well as photos, video and role-play.



The materials are not designed to run in sequence. The aim is not to provide a step-by-step guide for ESOL teaching, but to generate ideas to help facilitate a critical and collaborative learning process. The materials can be used to develop a specific scheme of work based on the *Reflect* approach, or dipped into to supplement an existing ESOL course. Practitioners can choose a relevant theme from those described, or work with their group to choose a new theme and develop it to reflect their own ideas and the specific needs and identities of the group.

The tools and themes described in the Resource Pack can be adapted for use at any stage in the learning process. The process can work with mixed language groups or single language groups. It can be used with people with similar levels of English or with mixed ability groups. Learners at pre-entry stage and beyond can use their first language to develop materials and acquire, or bring in ESOL skills at their own pace. Pictures and graphics aid communication and encourage an easy transition to literacy skills. In a more advanced group the graphics encourage lively debate, helping to draw in those who may be otherwise reluctant to participate. Any ESOL provider could work with *Reflect*, be they community-based organisations, further education colleges or local authority centres. The size of a group could be anything from 10 to 30 members.

Next steps

The Resource Pack has now been widely distributed to teachers at colleges and community centres across the UK. There has been a great deal of enthusiasm among ESOL practitioners for the *Reflect* approach which they see as offering an exciting and creative alternative to traditional teaching materials.

The next step is to systematically pilot the materials in a variety of contexts across the UK. Although the materials are user friendly and ideally can be used off-the-shelf by experienced teachers, some familiarisation or orientation workshops will be important to ensure more effective practice. Feedback from teachers will be essential to enriching the materials and situating them clearly within the ESOL curriculum, so we are keen to build a climate of collaboration and support from the start. We want to draw out policy lessons from the diverse experiences as well as producing guidelines for how to introduce this approach in the training of ESOL teachers. Most of all we want to rigorously test whether the materials work – both in terms of helping learners with language acquisition and helping them with the use of language in real contexts to resolve issues in their lives.

We are now looking to identify suitable partners for intensive testing in four locations across the UK. Each partner will receive training and ongoing support. They will need to commit to running at least two *Reflect*-based ESOL courses in the 2007-8 academic year and to collaborate in systematic testing and documentation of the approach. We are also interested in hearing from colleges and community centres that would like to be involved as self-report sites, receiving training in the approach and then feeding back on their experience of using *Reflect* in their ESOL work with refugees and other long-term immigrants.

The Resource Pack may be of reference to *Reflect* practitioners in other countries, who are interested in using the approach to teach a second / dominant language. For further information contact Emma Pearce: emma.pearce@actionaid.org

Deadly Inertia: A cross-country study of educational responses to HIV/AIDS

by Tania Boler and Anne Jellema

The AIDS epidemic has become a global crisis – currently threatening the lives of some 38 million people, and devastating entire societies. Education systems have a critical role to play in fighting this epidemic, due to their capacity to reach very large numbers of young people with life-saving information and skills. A complete primary education can halve the risk of HIV infection for young people; and in fact, basic education has such a powerful preventative effect, especially for young women, that it has been described as the ‘social vaccine’. At the same time, however, as the epidemic gains pace it poses increasing risks to education itself, threatening to stop children from enrolling, teachers from teaching, and schools from functioning.

Faced with these awesome challenges, the education sector appears gripped by a mysterious paralysis. Few if any countries have mounted ambitious nation-wide efforts to mobilise all schools in the fight against AIDS. Our research, undertaken in 2004 in coordination with the first-ever UN Education Sector Global HIV/AIDS Readiness Survey, found that only two of 18 countries reviewed had a coherent education sector AIDS strategy that was actually being implemented. In other cases, strategic plans either did not yet exist; or they were largely ignored because they had been developed in isolation from other policy and budgetary processes. No action had been taken in 17 out of 18 countries to prevent potentially crippling teacher shortages, and governments were turning a blind eye to the educational needs of orphans and HIV-positive children. In most cases, donor aid was not helping governments to address these problems more systematically; rather, it tended to be directed towards a series of stand-alone initiatives that enjoyed little ownership from government.

An effective education vaccine

demands, first, a fully funded plan to achieve universal primary education. A complete primary education is the threshold at which young people's risk of infection starts to fall significantly, and secondary education brings additional protective benefits. However, the protective benefits of education are being missed when one in two African children either never enrol in primary school at all or drop out before finishing. In most of the countries studied, large proportions of the children most at risk of HIV infection – girls, working children, the very poor and children affected by conflict – are not in school at all, or drop out too early to benefit. These countries urgently need coordinated support from the international community, for example through an expanded Education for All Fast Track Initiative, to expand access to education and achieve UPE.

Keeping children in the classroom

Second, an effective AIDS response must include special measures to ensure that HIV/AIDS infected and affected learners are not left out. Unfortunately, although the plight of AIDS orphans has been highlighted internationally, the educational responses have been misguided, unsustainable and one-dimensional. The widespread practice of providing school bursaries is a temporary, quick-fix solution, which does not tackle the pressing need to remove user fees and reduce other costs of schooling. Furthermore, although school bursaries may reduce the financial barriers facing OVCs (orphans and vulnerable children), they do not address the pressing psycho-social needs of these highly vulnerable children.

Evidence exists that in many countries, children who are (or are suspected to be) HIV positive are being turned away at the school gate. Although civil society has a role to play in combating stigmatisation, only governments can guarantee and uphold the right of HIV positive children to attend school. In this responsibility – a responsibility to one of the most vulnerable and powerless groups in society – they are failing shamefully. Rather, efforts to keep HIV positive children in the classroom have been

largely left up to individual teachers and school committees, who not only have to fund these efforts themselves but also have to battle the prejudices of the local community without any assistance or leadership from the Ministry of Education. Despite heroic initiative by some schools, AIDS-related stigma and lack of resources more often than not causes the schools to give up on these children.

Workforce issues

AIDS also poses a grave threat to the education workforce, yet policies to address workforce issues can only be described as abysmally inadequate. Teacher shortages, already severe in much of Africa and South Asia, are expected to worsen significantly in the wake of AIDS. However, most of the countries that we reviewed didn't have any plans in place for coping with AIDS-related staffing crises. The UN Global Readiness Survey found that only about 25 per cent of high-prevalence countries have plans to train more teachers to cope with increased attrition, and only about 10 per cent have reviewed or amended their human resource policies in light of the AIDS challenge. Only one country of the 18 we reviewed was monitoring attrition rates and using this information to plan for the future.

Moreover, because teachers are perceived as guardians and role models of children, those with HIV have been particularly vilified; and with little prospect of confidential counselling and testing services or affordable access to treatment, they are afraid to disclose their status. Yet no country in our study had adequately put in place laws or procedures to protect teachers from AIDS-related discrimination.

HIV/AIDS education

Too much government and donor money is being spent on poorly designed interventions that go unimplemented because the most basic ingredients – resources, ownership, training, even basic data – have not been put in place first. In the absence of comprehensive system-wide planning for HIV/AIDS, both donors and Ministries of Education have concentrated efforts on getting prevention messages and materials into the classroom. This is a highly visible

intervention that can seemingly be implemented as a stand-alone project, but in practice it is impossible to teach children about HIV in classrooms that lack the essential ingredients for successful teaching and learning – about any subject. In most of the 18 countries studied, classrooms were too overcrowded, management systems too under-resourced and teachers insufficiently trained to deliver HIV/AIDS messages effectively. Not surprisingly, implementation of HIV/AIDS education remains piecemeal. It fails in three key areas: materials, content and training. Insufficient quantities of materials are reaching schools, the realities of sexual transmission are not covered, and training to enable teachers to handle the new topics is woefully inadequate. In only three of the 18 countries had Ministries of Education made systematic attempts to train teachers on HIV and AIDS.

On all of these counts, the plans and policies of most of the 18 countries studied are shockingly inadequate. However, the blame cannot simply be passed onto national governments. The international donor community has also failed to deliver leadership and political commitment. Few donors are pledging the coordinated large-scale assistance that would be needed to implement a programme of free and universal access to education in the face of HIV/AIDS – and few countries struggling with the economic and social impact of the epidemic can afford to finance such steps themselves. Finally, education NGOs are surprisingly under-informed about the epidemic. Their contributions have been patchy at best; at worst, some NGOs have used AIDS as a vehicle to promote ideological and religious messages of their own choosing.

But whilst the response to date is undoubtedly too little, it is not too late. By acting in concert now, donors, governments, and civil society can give our young people a fighting chance to stay safe from AIDS. It is not too late to break the deadly inertia.

To access the full report:
http://www.actionaid.org/index.asp?page_id=794

Girl Power: the impact of girls' education on HIV and sexual behaviour

by James Hargreaves and Tania Boler

2006 marked the 25th anniversary since the first diagnosis of AIDS. This year, over one hundred countries pledged to ensure universal access to AIDS prevention, treatment and care by 2010. However, despite these grand promises, countries and donors are failing to launch the type of large-scale prevention efforts that are needed to reverse the spread of HIV.



The AIDS epidemic continues to evolve, staying one step ahead of our attempts to prevent it. There are 8,500 new HIV infections every day. One of the latest facets of this dynamic disease is the increasing feminisation of AIDS: in Africa, where the HIV and AIDS epidemic has hit hardest, 74 per cent of young people living with HIV are women.

HIV prevention campaigns often fail to address the increased vulnerability of young women because they fail to deal with the simple fact that many women lack the power to determine who to have sex with, or when and how to have sex. The new challenge is how to empower young women to assert their sexual and reproductive rights. Of the possible solutions, giving girls an education is widely recognised as the best way to provide this girl power.

However, in the rush to tackle the AIDS crisis, our response has forged ahead of the evidence, especially as some of the research on girls' education and vulnerability to

HIV has yielded mixed results. The most rigorous way to make sense of the different pieces of evidence is to conduct a systematic review – examining all possible evidence according to a predetermined set of criteria. To date, there has only been one such review, which was conducted four years ago – a long time in the context of a rapidly evolving AIDS epidemic.

Given the importance of basing our response to HIV on solid evidence, ActionAid collaborated with the researcher from the original review – James Hargreaves – and conducted a systematic review of all the research published between 1990 and 2006 in eastern, southern and central Africa to address the following research questions:

1. What is the impact of girls' education on sexual behaviour and HIV?
2. What difference does primary or secondary education make to women's vulnerability to HIV?
3. What are some of the possible mechanisms underlying the relationship between HIV and girls' education?

The results show strong evidence that, early in the epidemic (before 1995), more highly educated women were more vulnerable to HIV than women who were less well educated. The most likely reason is that more highly educated people had better economic prospects, which influenced their lifestyle choices such as mobility and number of sexual partners. They were also more likely to live in urban areas where HIV prevalence rates were highest. At that stage, even for the educated, there was also a general information vacuum about HIV and AIDS in Africa.

However, as the epidemic has evolved, the relationship between girls' education and HIV has also changed. Now, more highly educated girls and women are better



Gideon Mendel / Corbis / ActionAid

able to negotiate safer sex and reduce HIV rates. The more education the better. Across all the countries reviewed, girls who had completed secondary education had a lower risk of HIV infection and practised safer sex than girls who had only finished primary education. Put simply, education is key to building 'girl power'! There are also inter-generational benefits of education, with more highly educated adults having a positive bearing on young women's condom use. Moreover, more education empowers boys and men to practise safer sex, thus reducing their own, and their partners', risk of infection.

Despite the power of girls' education and numerous international commitments to education, the reality is that the vast majority of girls in Africa will not complete primary education, let alone manage to get to secondary school. A key obstacle is the rising cost of education. Most children in Africa have to pay to go to primary school, paying increasing amounts as they rise through the grades, particularly if they enter secondary school. This leads to the exclusion of many children from education, especially girls. If we are to see the real benefits of educating girls, then fees need to be removed and governments and donors need to be urged to invest more in primary and secondary education. Any increase in funding to education should not be seen as an alternative to the universal goals of HIV prevention, care and treatment but rather as a complementary response that lays a solid foundation for our HIV prevention efforts.

The gap between the epidemic and the response is – in some countries – narrowing. This report shows that it is possible to stay ahead of the virus but only when individuals (particularly women and girls) have the power to choose who they have sex with, and when and how they do so. Educating girls and women is one huge step towards turning around the AIDS epidemic in Africa.

To access the report:
http://www.actionaid.org/index.asp?page_id=79

Violence against girls in schools: Developing a Model Policy in Southern Africa

The right of girls to education is one of the most critical of all rights – because education plays such an important role in enabling girls to access and secure their other rights. Yet this right is systematically violated. Since 2004, ActionAid has been conducting research on violence against girls in schools in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Vietnam and Zimbabwe. This has showed us that violence faced in and around schools is a significant factor in forcing girls out of the education system. Examples that were highlighted included:

- Sexual harassment in the school environment by education staff, teachers and male pupils.
- Girls being employed as child labourers, bearing the main burden of housework, resulting in physical and mental fatigue, absenteeism and poor performance.
- Corporal punishment and public shaming by school authorities and teachers, which perpetuates the cycle of absenteeism, low self-esteem and violence at home and in schools.
- Patriarchal practices, cultures and traditional hindrances, such as early marriages.
- Poverty leading to vulnerability to trafficking and transactional sex, especially with older men.
- The exclusion of girls who are married (even where they have been forced into early marriages against their will).

It is against this background that Ministry of Education officials, education policy experts, civil society activists, teachers' unions, and women's rights experts from across southern Africa met in Harare in May 2006. The conference was convened by ActionAid and the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa. Following this conference a cross-section of participants were delegated to draft a 'Model Policy on the Prevention, Management and Elimination of Violence against Girls in Schools'.

This Model Policy is designed to help Southern African Development Community (SADC) governments as well as other African countries to develop an Integrated Single Comprehensive Policy on Violence against Girls (VAG). It can be adapted to suit the local context. There is never a one size fits all. Civil society groups and movements can use it as an advocacy tool in their negotiations with governments. The Model Policy focuses only on VAG within schools or the education sector. It does not claim

to address violence in the family or in society generally.

There have been past efforts to contain and even eradicate VAG in schools. In most countries in the SADC region, there are various policies and laws that deal with violence against children. For example, Zimbabwe has put in place guidelines for addressing child abuse in schools, while Lesotho and Namibia have child welfare and health legislation that addresses the welfare of children and their protection from abuse. However, these policies and legislation are not specific to violence against girls nor are they consolidated; rather they are scattered in various instruments to deal with child abuse and health in general and they are implemented by different authorities. This fragmentation of policies and legislation is a major challenge. We hope that the Model Policy below helps to show how a more coherent response can be made to prevent violence against girls in schools.

EXCERPTS FROM THE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child state that every child has the right to education. However these rights for the girl child are curtailed by violence, which either prevents them from accessing education entirely or ends their participation in formal education prematurely. As stated in the preamble to the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women, women and girls do not enjoy human rights as men do because of perceptions of the roles and places of women in any society. It is this discrimination that the EFA goals acknowledge, particularly goals two and five that relate to the creation of specific conditions for girls and women to access education. It has therefore become imperative to create a policy that recognizes the need for girls to be protected against violence in schools and to put in place measures for support when such violence occurs.

GOAL OF THE POLICY

Engender respect for girls' rights to education in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All goals.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

1. To develop a comprehensive policy framework that provides mechanisms and creates guidelines for protecting girls against violence in schools.
2. To coordinate and consolidate existing policy frameworks addressing violence against girls in schools.
3. To support the development, adoption and adaptation of legislation on issues of violence against girls in schools.

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

This Policy shall operate in the context of the current national legislative framework and will be implemented in a binding manner as with all legislation, government policies and regulations. In particular, this Policy serves to buttress the commitments government has made to eradicating all forms of violence against women and girls in line with the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

In addition, this Policy consolidates the provisions of any existing Education Act to the extent that it provides for protection of children from any form of violence or abuse in and around the school environment, as well as consolidating relevant government policies with respect to corporal punishment and the non-exclusion of pregnant girls from school. This Policy also operates in the context of current criminal legislation and common law as it relates to verbal and physical assault, sexual violence, exploitation and inhuman/degrading treatment. The Policy's implementation is consistent with the government's efforts to protect the health and general welfare of vulnerable persons, especially the girl child.

The provisions in this Policy shall be binding upon all stakeholders, except to the extent that they are in direct contradiction or inconsistent with existing national legislation, or the national constitution.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAKEHOLDERS

The full Model Policy goes on to outline detailed roles and responsibilities for different constituencies:

- Government and Ministries
- Schools / institutions
- School boards / governing bodies
- Girls with special needs
- Teachers and Teacher Unions
- Teacher training colleges and in-service training

Below we include just the first of these.

Roles and Responsibilities of Government and Ministries

1. Prevention

All legislation shall be synchronized to be consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child with respect to the right of girls to access education. It is imperative that operatives in government, especially in the Ministry of Education appreciate that the issue of violence against girls lies in the broader context of discrimination against women and gender-based violence.

Specifically government shall:

- Legislate, provide and enforce the right to compulsory and free basic education.
- Ensure that the Ministry of Education guarantees that all curriculum and learning support materials are gender sensitive and do not depict any gender stereotypes.
- Accelerate efforts to synchronize all legislation, including codified customary law to define a child as any person below the age of 18 years.
- Ensure that the Ministry of Education provides policy guidelines that each government or private school/educational institution shall refer to in developing specific policy on violence against girls and whose enforcement shall be monitored by Ministry of Education inspectors/standards officers.
- Commit to accelerating efforts to consolidate all legislation and policies with respect to violence against children into one piece of comprehensive legislation.

2. Reporting and Identification

The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with other relevant ministries and departments will design tools and methods for collection of sex disaggregated data on violence in schools.

- A national database will be set up within six months of the adoption of this Policy.
- The information collected will be updated on a quarterly basis to reflect trends in violence against girls and will be used to help government to design appropriate intervention strategies based on accurate data.
- Government medical health centres, police stations and other designated places shall routinely collect this data and feed into the national database.

3. Dealing with perpetrators

Government and other employers of teachers shall draw up teaching service regulations, which will make violence against girls a chargeable offence and provide sufficient enforcement mechanisms against such acts of violence against girls.

4. Assisting survivors

- Government shall undertake to provide schools with resources to facilitate the re-entry of pregnant and other violated girls into schools.
- The government shall commit to raising awareness nationally of the re-entry into schools policy for pregnant and other girls. This will be done through various media.

5. Capacity building

- Government shall ensure that parents send girls to receive the first x years of uninterrupted schooling and outline penalties for parents who neglect to send their children to school.
- To facilitate access to basic education, the welfare arm of government and civil society organizations shall avail resources to orphaned and vulnerable children and other children who because of poverty would be unable to access free and basic education.
- Government, through the Education for All coordinators, police and the gender directorates in the Ministries of Education and Justice, shall allocate resources for monitoring that all children, and in particular girls, access free and basic education.
- Government shall undertake to make education a continuous process through the provision of alternative and diversified learning modules for youths, especially girls, who may have dropped out of formal education, and ensure that these alternative and diversified modules are not discriminatory in practice or negatively impact on the youths and adults for whom they are designed.
- Government shall undertake nationwide campaigns using various media, such as community radio and newspapers, mainstream newspapers, radio and television to raise awareness on the availability of free and basic education for children and adults alike.
- Government shall embark on a nationwide campaign, targeting many audiences and using various media and methods, to highlight the issue of violence against girls in schools and the need to eradicate it.

The full Model Policy, *Making the Grade*, is available on request from Everjoyce Win: everjoyce.win@actionaid.org or Victorine Kemonou Djitrinou: victorine.djitrinou@actionaid.org



Katarina Tomasevski, the leading global expert on the right to education, died on 4 October 2006. She was best known for her formidable work as the first United Nations Special Rapporteur on Education, a position she held from 1998 to 2004.

Katarina was born on 8 February 1953 in Yugoslavia. Brought up mostly by her grandparents, she studied at the Law School of the University of Zagreb where she excelled, winning the Rector's Prize in 1972, 1973 and 1975 and editing the students' journal *Pravnik* (Lawyer). From there she moved to the remarkably different environment of Harvard Law School, where she began her fascination with international law, writing her thesis on 'Economic Boycotts and International Law'. Rather than stay in the West, Katarina chose to return to the University of Zagreb for her doctoral thesis on Terrorism and Contemporary International Law.

Katarina was an activist lawyer with indefatigable energy. From 1979-1989 she worked with the International Council of Defence for Children International, coordinating the first international survey of imprisoned children, which encompassed 32 countries in all regions. She also played a key role in preparing background studies and briefing papers to assist the drafting of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. She was one of the first lawyers to work on HIV/AIDS, for example as the Legal Officer of the WHO Global Programme on AIDS in the late 1980s and as a leading member of the Global AIDS Policy Coalition with the Harvard School of Public Health in the 1990s.

Remembering... Katarina Tomasevski

by David Archer, Head of International Education, ActionAid.

Katarina was always committed to developing the capacity of lawyers across Africa, Asia and Latin America, for example as a leading member of the International Third World Legal Studies Association. Particularly she was committed to promoting the role of women, for example through the Women in the Law Project of the International Human Rights Law Group. She was on the Board of countless human rights organisations, from The Gambia to Malaysia, and on the editorial board of leading journals, such as the Human Rights Law Journal. She was a consultant to agencies ranging from ActionAid to Article 19, from UNICEF to Save the Children and the Overseas Development Institute.

Teaching human rights was Katarina's great passion. Amongst many other locations she taught at the London School of Economics, the Centre for Africa Studies of Edinburgh University, the United Nations University (Tokyo), the Institute for Social Studies (the Hague), the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (Serbia), the Inter-American Human Rights Institute (Costa Rica), the Centre for Human rights at the University of Pretoria (South Africa). Most recently she was Professor of International Law and International Relations at the University of Lund teaching and a visiting professor at the law school of the University of Peking.

It was no surprise when Katarina was appointed as the first United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education in 1998. Her annual reports to the Commission on Human Rights became important landmarks. Her country missions and investigations of alleged human rights violations, challenged governments from the People's Republic of China to the United States of America. Perhaps most famously she challenged the World Bank for its role in the denial of free education (especially for supporting the euphemistically termed 'cost-sharing'). The power of the World

Bank in setting education policies around the world angered her greatly. She would repeatedly ask the simple but very pointed question. 'Why is a bank in charge of education?'

In 1999 Katarina set up the Right to Education Project which functions as a public access resource centre and research network dealing with the human rights dimensions of education. This is an immense voluntary effort with a website (www.right-to-education.org) which has become an indispensable reference point for anyone working on international education.

Over the past three years Katarina compiled a remarkable Global Education Report called 'Fee or Free' which provides country-by-country evidence on where children have to pay to go to school. This immense undertaking was finally published in September 2006. She classified the countless different types of fees charged for accessing education in each country of the world. All the fees she documented are in direct contradiction to the fundamental right to education that is guaranteed in numerous international treaties and most national constitutions. This work leaves an incredible legacy for activists around the world. Indeed, she was also working on an *Activist Guide on the Right to Education* with ActionAid and Amnesty International, which will be published in 2007.

Towards the end of her life, Katarina contracted a terminal illness and knew for at least a year that she was going to die. After three years of struggling with organ failure she decided she had had enough of examinations and medication. Not wanting to end up as a 'patient', she opted to continue her valued work and managed to complete her epic publication, Katarina persevered and remained incredibly active to the end. She was an inspiration to everyone who knew her and will continue to be so for education and human rights activists around the world for many years to come.