

EDUCATION FOR ALL AND THE NEW DEVELOPMENT COMPACT

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Abstract – Over the past decade, the achievement of universal primary education, under the somewhat misleading rubric of ‘Education for All’ (EFA), has steadily built momentum in international forums as a focus for discussion and action. The present study looks critically at the evolution of consensus about EFA within the international community. The first section of this contribution provides an overview of ‘education for development’ in the form in which it has been inherited from the 20th century. The second describes what has changed in the context, rhetoric and practice of such ‘education for development’. The final section reflects on two questions: ‘Why has EFA now moved beyond international rhetoric to action?’; and ‘What can our experience with EFA tell us about the prospects for multilateralism and global governance in the 21st century?’

Zusammenfassung – BILDUNG FÜR ALLE UND DER NEUE VERTRAG ZUR ENTWICKLUNG – Über die letzten zehn Jahre hat die Errungenschaft allgemeiner Primärbildung unter der ein wenig irreführenden Überschrift ‚Bildung für alle‘ (Education for All/EFA) in internationalen Foren als ein Zentrum für Diskussionen und Aktionen stetig mehr Beachtung gefunden. Die vorliegende Untersuchung wirft einen kritischen Blick auf die Entwicklung von Einigkeit in Bezug auf EFA innerhalb der internationalen Gemeinschaft. Der erste Abschnitt dieses Beitrages bietet einen Überblick über ‚Bildung für Entwicklung‘ in der Form, in der das Konzept aus dem 20. Jahrhundert ererbt ist. Der zweite Abschnitt beschreibt, was sich im Kontext der Rhetorik und der Praxis einer solchen ‚Bildung für Entwicklung‘ verändert hat. Der letzte Abschnitt stellt Reflexionen über zwei Fragen an: Warum ist EFA nun über internationale Rhetorik hinaus zur Umsetzung fortgeschritten, und was kann uns unsere Erfahrung mit EFA über die Aussichten für multilaterale Verhältnisse und globale Lenkung im 21. Jahrhundert sagen?

Résumé – L'ÉDUCATION POUR TOUS ET LE NOUVEL ACCORD DE DÉVELOPPEMENT – Durant la dernière décennie, la réalisation d'une éducation primaire universelle, sous la rubrique quelque peu trompeuse de l'« Éducation pour Tous » (EPT) a continuellement donné une impulsion aux forums internationaux en étant au centre de la discussion et de l'action. La présente étude jette un regard critique sur l'évolution du consensus à propos de l'EPT au sein de la communauté internationale. La première section de cette contribution offre une vue d'ensemble de « l'éducation pour le développement » selon la forme qui nous a été léguée par le XXe siècle. La seconde décrit ce qui a changé dans le contexte, la rhétorique et la pratique d'une telle ‘éducation pour le développement’. La dernière section est une réflexion sur deux questions : ‘Pourquoi l'EPT a-t-elle maintenant dépassé la rhétorique internationale pour favoriser l'action’ ; et ‘Que peut nous apprendre notre expérience de l'EPT à propos des perspectives du multilatéralisme et du gouvernement global au XXIe siècle ?’

Resumen – EDUCACIÓN PARA TODOS Y EL NUEVO PACTO PARA EL DESARROLLO – A lo largo de la última década, el objetivo de lograr una educación primaria universal bajo el título un poco equívoco de “Educación para Todos” (EPT) ha impulsado permanentemente los foros internacionales como foco de debates y de acción. El presente estudio echa una mirada crítica a la evolución de un consenso en cuanto a la EPT dentro de la comunidad internacional. La primera parte de esta contribución provee una visión sinóptica de la ‘educación para el desarrollo’ en la forma en la que este objetivo se ha heredado del siglo XX. La segunda, describe qué es lo que ha cambiado en el contexto, la retórica y la práctica de esa ‘educación para el desarrollo’. La parte final reflexiona sobre dos interrogantes: ¿Por qué la EPT no ha pasado de la retórica internacional a la acción?; y ¿Qué nos puede decir nuestra experiencia con la EPT sobre las perspectivas de multilateralidad y gobernabilidad global en el siglo XXI?

Резюме – ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ ДЛЯ ВСЕХ И СОГЛАШЕНИЕ О ДАЛЬНЕЙШЕМ РАЗВИТИИ – На протяжении последнего десятилетия успехи, достигнутые во всеобщем начальном образовании, провозглашенном под лозунгом «Образование для всех» (ЕФА), сообщают непрерывный импульс и находятся в центре дискуссий и решений международных форумов. Данное исследование критически рассматривает эволюцию единого взгляда на ЕФА внутри международного сообщества. В первой части данной статьи предлагается обзор «образования для развития» в той форме, в которой оно было заимствовано из 20 века. Во второй части статьи рассматривается, что именно изменилось в контексте, дискуссиях и на практике такого «образования для развития». В заключительной части обсуждаются два вопроса: «почему в настоящее время ЕФА вышло за рамки обсуждений на международном уровне и перешло к принятию конкретных решений?» и «что наш опыт по ЕФА говорит нам о перспективах многосторонности и глобального управления в 21 веке?»

Over the past decade the achievement of universal primary education (UPE), under the somewhat misleading rubric of ‘education for all’, has steadily built momentum as a focus for discussion and action within the international community. The idea of UPE is not, of course, a new one. Rich countries have long made support for education a part of their international development efforts, and multilateral organizations have been active in the educational development of poorer countries since at least the end of World War II. However, the focus on education for development by the international community today is both strikingly different from that in past decades, and profoundly paradoxical. The idea of ‘education for all’ has become part of a broadly based consensus about ‘what works’ among bilateral and multilateral development agencies. It is also a rallying call for heads of state and international financial institutions, a focus for transnational advocacy, and an arena of expanding development practice characterized by widespread experimentation with new modes of aid delivery, new kinds of donor–recipient relationships and relatively high volumes of aid spending.

The last 5 years are in sharp contrast to the 1990s, post-World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) decade – which saw funds decline and little collective momentum behind education for all commitments. The paradox lies primarily in the fact that universal basic education has become a prominent concern of the international community in a period characterized by the fracturing of post-World War II multilateralism, and following a decade of decline in rich country support for foreign aid.

Then and now: Changes in context, actors, rhetoric, and practices

Writing in 1998, I described the evolution of a highly contradictory multilateral regime for international cooperation in education after World War II. The foundations of that regime were laid in the establishment of systems of mass public education in Western countries in the period between the late 19th and mid-20th century when many features of the social welfare state were institutionalized and accepted as ‘norms’ for state behavior (Mundy 1998). Not surprisingly, efforts to remake world order following World War II saw the inclusion of education as a universal right in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 26), and the establishment of UNESCO with its broad mandate to support (among other things) the universal right to education. UNESCO became neither center nor coordinator of the new regime. Instead, a rather diffuse regime for educational cooperation grew alongside the emergence of international development as a field of activity for United Nations organizations and for newly formed bilateral aid organizations. These organizations quickly took up the notion that education could be used as a tool in national development, and educational aid began to account for something between 5 and 10% of all aid flows.

Three key features of the education-for-development regime in the period from 1960 to 1995 deserve specific attention. First, although the notion of a universal right to education and of mass public education figured strongly in the international discourse (for example, in the UN Charter, UNESCO’s mandate, and host of international declarations at regional meetings of developing country governments in the 1950s and 1960s) this was not what was supported by major flows of funding or technical expertise. Most aid flows to education were focused at levels beyond primary schooling. The reasons for this were threefold: (1) Donors assumed that national governments would/should fund and provide universal primary schooling. (2) Recurrent costs like teachers and textbooks, which are the largest piece of any public education budget, were seen as ineligible for aid funding – to fund recurrent costs would be ‘unsustainable’. (3) The bilateral donors who dominated the field tended to want to tie aid to their own economic and political interests and thus were biased towards programs of post-primary training, foreign scholarships and institution-building (Table 1).

The second feature of the education-for-development regime was its profound decentralization and disorganization. At the level of norms and ideas,

Table 1. The Expansion of Educational Multilateralism, 1965–1995 (-n millions of constant 1994 US-\$)

	1961	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995
1. Bilateral educational aid (OECD countries)	na	3412.5	3628.8	4038.1	5962.4	4596.9	4073.4	3985.0
2. World Bank lending to education	0.0	230.3	409.5	636.9	772.9	1785.3	1663.6	1923.7
3. UNESCO								
(a) Total regular budget	228.3	298.6	401.2	483.8	532.1	721.4	423.8	417.9
(b) Education programs	52.1	69.5	84.5	105.0	98.5	169.3	81.7	89.3
(c) Extra budgetary support for education programs (<i>primarily UNDP</i>)	na	140.8	117.2	214.0	174.92	n/a	83.3	94.2
4. UNICEF	0.0	na	51.8	71.1	60.4	62.3	63.8	78.0
OECD/DAC GDP Deflator	14.24	16.41	19.29	35.14	56.94	51.97	89.36	109.5

Sources: OECD/DAC1995; Phillips 1987; UNESCO 1993; UNESCO Approved Program and Budget, various years; UNICEF, Annual Report, various years; World Bank, Annual Report, various years.

Notes: OECD/DAC Weighted GDP Deflator was used to calculate constant 1994 dollar amounts.

Row 1. Commitments, as reported in UNESCO 1993 and OECD/DAC 1996;

Row 2. World Bank Annual Report, "Trends in Lending" various years;

Row 3a. UNESCO Approved Program and Budget, various years. Figures refer to biennial budgets.

Row 3b. UNESCO Approved Program and Budget. Figures refer to biennial budgets.

Row 3c. Estimated Extrabudgetary Contributions as they appear in the Approved Program and Budgets. Figures refer to biennial budgets.

Row 4. Phillips 1987 and UNICEF Annual Report 1996.

one might argue that the institutionalization of state-led education systems in the Western world played a “chartering” or steerage role in the construction of an education-for-development regime (Meyers 1977; Anderson 1983). But as that regime developed, no formal system of governance or coordination among its many actors ever emerged. UNESCO, the putative leader in the field, kicked things off with ambitious regional conferences and targets for educational development. But it was weakened by limited resources and intense politicization in the 1970s and 1980s. Thus, UNESCO never developed the political capacity to coordinate the growing number of new agencies interested in educational development (Jones 1988; Mundy 1999). By the 1960s, UNICEF had begun to develop its own distinctive approach to educational development, acting on behalf of the world’s children but not in coordination with UNESCO.

The World Bank entered the arena in the 1960s, and overtook UNESCO in terms of expertise and flows of funding by 1980. But the Bank paid little attention to coordinating the educational activities of other donors, instead concentrating on the development of an economic rationale for its educational activities to support its own distinct approach to educational development (Jones 1992; Mundy 2002). Alongside this fragmented multilateral effort, virtually every industrialized country also included education-sector programs in its bilateral aid program, at wildly varying levels of between 3 and 30% of total bilateral official aid. No single bilateral donor outweighed the others financially or could claim to provide intellectual or political guidance to the others – not even the United States, despite its status as hegemon in the global system. The net result was an education-for-development regime characterized by many small to medium-sized, short-term, bilateral transactions, often working at cross-purposes. For four decades – from the 1960s through the 1990s – ambitious attempts at global level coordination of education for development activities failed, and usually failed quite quickly. (Examples of failure include: UNESCO regional conferences of the 1960s; OECD DAC efforts to coordinate education-sector activities among OECD members in the 1970s; the World Bank’s initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1980s; and the Jomtien World Conference on EFA in 1990).

The diffuse nature of the educational-aid regime also played out in its growth as an epistemic and professional community. From high-level manpower planning to vocational education, non-formal education, adult literacy, higher education and back again, a vague and expansive menu of what was ‘needed’ was reported or endorsed in a succession of international conferences and publications. A growing professional expert community on educational development, largely housed within international organizations and research institutions, could do little to harness donors behind a common agenda because their own assessment of priorities changed so rapidly or diverged quite widely (Chabbot 2003). Apart from major divisions between those who viewed education as a productive investment and those who saw it as a human right were many smaller divisions between those who saw in

higher education, primary education, vocational and non-formal education etc. the next 'magic bullet' for development (Mundy 1998: 464). A fractious epistemic community allowed for a very loose coupling between rhetorical commitments and practical activities – creating in effect a smorgasbord of priorities and approaches from which donor countries might choose according to their own geopolitical and economic interests. Countries like France, England, and later Australia focused attention on scholarships and provision of teachers; others adopted vocational, adult and literacy education as the focus of their support (Nordics), all outside of any systematic or coordinated effort to support national planning for educational change (King 1991).

Finally, this regime had a fairly limited range of actors and a fixed array of aid modalities. It was dominated by 'official actors' – a handful of multilateral organizations (UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank) and bilateral aid organizations. Southern governments were the targets (or recipients) of the regime, but often not active participants within it (Samoff 1999, 2001). Few non-governmental actors were involved or recognized within the official regime. They remained outside its conferences and conventions, despite the existence of international teachers unions and international humanitarian and religious organizations with an interest in education that predated official educational aid activities (Mundy and Murphy 2001). By and large, educational development was seen as the job of national governments, supported by bilateral donors and international organizations, with their funds and expertise. Aid modalities followed from this basic framework, and focused on bilateral grants or loans tied to the provision of 'technical cooperation' (read: Western training and provision of Western experts).

What emerged after World War II was a highly decentralized regime that reflected some of the fundamental structural features of the world polity. While the global importance of education was widely accepted, a set of common priorities for educational development never gained traction or played much of a steering role among the growing group of international donor organizations active in educational development. Donor countries, worried about decolonization and the Cold War, engaged in a paradoxical pattern of involvement in the regime: on one hand offering rhetorical support for the idea of universal, equitable, mass public education, while on the other channeling their education development aid funding to post-primary education and programs of high-level expertise and training. International organizations developed competing programs, priorities and approaches to educational development with only the most minimal coordination.

Despite global commitment to the universal right to education, the highly state-centric structure of world politics limited appetite for collective action or coordination. Flows of expertise and funding were highly fragmented and often based on geo-political or economic interests of the bilateral donors and the idiosyncratic approaches of specific multilateral organizations, rather than on any collective prioritization of global educational needs, or coordinated effort within individual developing countries.

What has changed: The new EFA multilateralism

While it is important not to overstate the case, the education-for-development regime has experienced some sweeping changes over the last decade. These changes are particularly dramatic when placed alongside what has been widely assessed to be the failure of the international community to achieve the goals established for education at the World Conference on EFA in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 (Torres 2000; Chabbott 2003).

These changes may be grouped into the following categories: embedding education in a new consensus on global development; the construction of clear educational targets and monitoring efforts; new forms of donor coordination at the country level; the emergence of new actors and partnerships within the international education for development regime; and evolution of new aid flows and aid modalities.

Embedding education in a new consensus on global development

Since 1995, some of the most dramatic shifts in the education-for-development regime have come on the heels of renewed efforts to build consensus about priorities for international development. Partly spurred forward by international organizations and donor agencies, whose funding fell precipitously at the end of the Cold War, and partly by the development of new non-governmental networks highly critical of globalization, the 1990s saw education receive accelerating attention in a series of international conferences and proclamations (see Table 2).

Several authors have characterized this new ‘consensus’ as part of a broader rapprochement between the neo-liberal and pro-economic globalization approaches to development endorsed by the IMF and the World Bank in the 1980s–1990s, and the equity-and-globalization skeptical approaches adopted by the United Nations: a kind of global “third way” (Therien 2002, 2005; Ruggie 2003). It is very clear that both the United Nations and the Bretton Woods organizations have increasingly seen advantages in working on a common set of priorities. The Bretton Woods institutions now address poverty and equity issues regularly, while the UN organizations are less skeptical of the role of the market and private sector in development. Ruggie (2003: 305) describes this as the formation of a conceptual consensus that

encompasses the centrality of governance, the rule of law, education, and health to economic success; the positive role of investment, including skills and technologies embodied in foreign direct investment; the need for further debt relief and other forms of development assistance for poor countries; the urgency of lowering trade barriers imposed on developing country exports by agricultural subsidies and other non-tariff barriers in the rich countries; the protectionist potential posed by pursuing social and environmental objectives through linkages to trade agreements; and the need for governments and international institutions alike to forge partnerships with the private sector and a wide range of civil-society actors.

Table 2. Evolution of basic education as a global development priority

	Year	Forum	Commitment or action
United Nations Conferences	1989	Children's Summit	Covenant on the Rights of the Child (right to free primary education)
	1990	World Conference On Education for All Jomtien, Thailand	190 states are signatory World Declaration on EFA
	1993	World Conference on Human Rights	UPE by 2000
	1995	World Summit for Social Development Copenhagen	Vienna Declaration and Program of Action
	2000	World Education Forum (Jomtien follow-up) Dakar Senegal	States obliged to promote gender equality, esp. in education "Universal and equitable access to education" is one of ten commitments
			Dakar Framework for Action
			1. Expand early childhood education 2. Free UPE by 2015 3. Access to life skills 4. 50% improvement in illiteracy 5. Eliminate gender disparity 2005 6. Improve quality of education
2000		Millennium Summit and Millennium Declaration	World Bank presents idea of a Fast-track Plan: "no countries seriously committed to EFA will be thwarted by their lack of resources"
			Millennium Development Goals Goal 2: achieve UPE Goal 3: promote gender equality and empower women (Target 4: eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary school)
2002		United Nations Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey Mexico	Commits governments, international financial institution and United Nations organizations to work through new forms of development partnerships and coordinate external aid in France and United States promise first increase ODA in a decade*

Table 2. Continued.

	Year	Forum	Commitment or action
G7/8 OECD	1996	OECD Development Assistance Committee "Shaping the 21 st Century"	Commits OECD governments to coordination of aid at country level and to a common set of development priorities including universal access to primary education
	2000	G8 Ministerial Meetings	Commitment to fund viable national education plans
	2001	G8 Ministerial Meetings	Commitment to debt relief for education
	2002	G8 Ministerial Meetings	Re-affirmation of commitment to education
	2003	OECD DAC meeting	Establishment of an education taskforce for 2002 G8 meeting
IGOs	2005	Commission for Africa Report	Endorsement of EFA Fast-track Plan as funding mechanism for EFA
	1999	IMF/World Bank Poverty Reduction Strategy Initiative introduced	Commitment to increase bilateral assistance for UPE
	2000	UNESCO appointed coordinator of interagency follow up on EFA and DAKAR	Rome Declaration on Harmonization (OECD/DAC 2003)
	2000	IMF, OECD, UN and World Bank	Endorses the idea that Northern governments should provide funding necessary for governments to abolish user fees
	2001	Millennium Development Project Launched	Establishes basic norms for educational expenditures in budgetary allocations
	2002	World Bank Board introduces new policy actively opposing user fees in education	works; also gives criteria for debt relief
	2002	World Bank IDA introduces grant facility	High level Task Force and EFA Working Group established
			EFA Global Monitoring Task Force to work with revitalized UNESCO Institute for Statistics
			In 2002, UNICEF, UNESCO endorse the EFA Fast Track Plan & call on G8 to do so
			"A Better World For All" statement sets out agreed and common priorities and targets for development
			Working groups to suggest ways of meeting MDGs and monitor one of 7 committees is for education
			For first time some education sector funding provided on grant rather than loan basis

Table 2. Continued.

Year	Forum	Commitment or action
2002	World Bank Managed Fast Track Initiative	Countries with credible (IMF/WB approved) poverty reduction strategy paper and an education sector plan can join, but fund remains limited to \$ US 200m over 3 years
2004	Fast Track Initiative Re-endorsed	Funding for the Catalytic Fund rises to \$243.4 million

*France announced increase of ODA to 5% in 5 years and 7% in 10 years; the United States promised to increase core funding to developing countries by 50% over 3 years.

Education early emerged as a central part of this new international consensus or compact about development. This is reflected not only in the priority given to education within the Millennium Development Goals, but also the near-revolutionary attention that the World Bank and the IMF now pay to the achievement of universal access to basic education in their country programs (Millennium Development Project 2005a, b).

The elevation of education within the new official development agenda is perhaps not so surprising, since education figures prominently in both equity and productivity conceptualizations of development. As such it straddles the divide between neoliberal and social welfare orientations. The following quotation from the World Bank (2002a, b: v), now regarded as one of the leading advocates for greater public spending on basic education, illustrates this straddling role played by education in the new official discourse of development:

The expansion of educational opportunity, which can simultaneously promote income equality and growth, is a win-win strategy that in most societies is far easier to implement than the redistribution of other assets, such as land or capital. In short, education is one of the most powerful instruments known for reducing poverty and inequality and for laying the basis for sustained economic growth, sound governance and effective institutions.

Pronouncements and commitments by governments and multilateral institutions have further been matched by major endorsements from private sector and civil-society organizations – including members of the World Economic Forum, the new Global Campaign for Education and several US-based non-governmental consortia (Mundy and Murphy 2001; World Economic Forum 2005). All of this signals the establishment of a global-level consensus about the role of basic education in development that is unprecedented in terms of scope, density, consistence and persistence. The solidity of the consensus is reflected in the seeming ease with which the Millennium Development Project Task Force on Education is now arguing for a new “Education Compact” to parallel the new development compact devised at Monterrey (Millennium Development Project 2005a, b):

Bold political leadership is needed in a compact between developing countries and donors ... Under the compact each side is responsible for doing its part. Donors make a serious commitment to and respond to countries that are doing things right, assured that the external resources are being well used. Developing countries take on the tough political reforms in their systems with confidence that they will have sufficient and predictable financial support to deliver on promises made to their own citizens.

There is, nonetheless, still much to debate within this compact. For example, among the “tough political reforms” being referred to are: reducing unit costs of primary education, making good use of the private sector, introducing standardized testing regimes and decentralizing control, each reminiscent

of the 1990s liberalization movement in education (Millennium Development Project 2005a, b). Furthermore, this compact suggests relatively little about how to work in contexts not characterized by 'good governance' – weak, corrupt, collapsed or post-conflict states are left off the map.

What is notable, however, is the degree to which the compact requires reforming "the donor business". For example, the Millennium Development Project urges donors to "commit new funds [7–17 billion US-\$ per year] in a new way through a strong coordinated global effort that rewards and reinforces countries' measurable progress".

International consensus about selected education priorities

The new development consensus has established a clear hierarchy of global educational priorities, along with measurable time-bound targets for their achievement. The most widely and consistently endorsed goals are universal access (sometimes completion) to quality primary education, and the achievement of gender equity in education, beginning with the primary level (see Table 1). While a wider and more sophisticated array of goals was adopted at the World Education Forum (Dakar 2000) and at Jomtien (including the idea, for example, of publicly provided education and adult literacy and non-formal education), it is these two educational goals that have been endorsed as part of a common platform by heads of states and international organizations, these that are most often the focus on new pledges and commitments, and these that are the most closely and widely monitored.

The background to the establishment of these educational priorities can be traced to the OECD's Development Assistance Committee's endorsement of 'Shaping the 21st Century', in which OECD governments promised to increase bilateral aid, harmonize their activities, and focus on a handful of top development priorities – including universal education. This was followed by a joint declaration among the IMF, OECD, World Bank and UN in 2000 entitled 'A Better World for All' which promised closer coordination, more attention to country ownership of development and tighter focus on specific development priorities (including education).

Both agreements fed into the Millennium Development Summit and Millennium Development Declaration (2000), which aligned the United Nations (and its agencies), the Bretton Woods institutions, and OECD governments behind a unifying substantive framework. The Declaration sets out 8 Millennium Development Goals with time-bound, measurable targets. The MDGs include halving world poverty by 2015, reducing infant mortality by 2/3, halving the spread of HIV/AIDS, combating malaria, halving the number of people without safe drinking water and promoting gender equity and environmental sustainability. The achievement of universal primary education and gender equity in education are Goals Numbers 2 and 3 in the MDGs.

These documents and declarations move beyond the establishment of a common ideology and approach to global development within the international community. They suggest an unprecedented degree of interest in coordination among international aid organizations and governments of rich countries, as well as an unusual appetite for setting out a small focused list of priorities attached to clear targets. As we will see below, commitment to targeting and coordination is also being experimented with in new ways at the recipient country level.

Early evidence also suggests that the new consensus is being backed by both new efforts at monitoring progress (these include several efforts at closer monitoring of internationally set education targets. The UNESCO-led EFA Monitoring Group, for example, has tried to ensure that national EFA Plans are in place; and with the help of the UNESCO Institute of Statistics it collects data to monitor progress towards EFA goals, including donor funding. The United Nations, through its Millennium Development Programme, has established a Task Force under economist Nancy Birdsall to look at progress towards gender equity in education. The World Economic Forum's Global Governance initiative, which also plans to track the achievement of the multilateral development goals, has one of seven groups focused on education) and some new funding (see discussion below of the Monterrey Declaration on Financing for Development). Notably, education has been one of the first arenas to see a global initiative emerge that aims to operationalize the Monterrey commitments – in the form of a multilateral 'Fast Track Initiative' described below.

New forms of donor coordination and target setting at the country level

One part of the new development consensus that has enormous implications for educational development is the new interest in achieving coordination of donor efforts within recipient countries. Coordination implies 'harmonization' of donor initiatives around a common framework of priorities and targets that can be used to hold recipient governments accountable. The first and possibly farthest reaching of these coordination efforts has been the introduction in 1999 of a World Bank and the IMF joint 'Poverty Reduction Strategy Initiative'. The initiative engages recipient governments in the development of a national development plan whose focus is not simply growth but poverty reduction. The 'Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper' in turn is intended to be pivotal in IMF and World Bank funding decisions (indicating eligibility for debt relief and other programs), and acts as a common platform for the contributions of bilateral donors.

The PRSP is novel in several ways (World Bank 2002b). It requires governments to formally integrate social development goals with plans for macroeconomic stability, liberalization and debt repayment into a medium-term expenditure framework that bridges what had previously often been quite separate planning exercises with WB, UN and IMF. It commits the IMF to

a poverty and social development mandate and bridges the focus on growth, stability and equity that had previously divided donor organizations. It requires governments to conduct wider consultations about national plans than in the past, and to take more 'ownership' of development planning. But it also works in the opposite direction, by providing a common set of targets and plans that can be used by donors and citizens to hold governments accountable.

There is a large, fractious debate about the ultimate impact of PRSPs on national sovereignty and 'ownership', including an impressive empirical literature that suggests that PRSPs often impose specific (IMF-driven) targets that favor stability and liberalization over social development (McGee and Hughes, 2002; Gould and Ojanen 2003). For our purposes, what is worth noting is that the PRSP process has had the specific effect of bringing about the much tighter integration of educational-development planning into national development expenditure planning (Carnoy 1999). As part of this process the PRSPs create the need for much more sophisticated planning regimes within Ministries of Education, and also tend to establish certain 'indicative targets' for educational expenditures that both favor reallocation of resources to primary education, and to specific line items (i.e., from teachers' salaries to teaching materials) (Alexander 2002). On the other hand, the PRSP process has also helped to make this information available for public scrutiny in an unprecedented fashion (see Global Campaign for Education 2004). Alongside PRSPs have grown some interesting initiatives by non-governmental actors to track expenditures against PRSP commitments (Dyer et al. 2004).

In addition to the far-reaching PRSP process, a large number of additional initiatives among donors to achieve national level coordination of development efforts have cropped up in recent years. This includes the 'harmonization' initiative spearheaded by the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD (through which governments have formally committed to pool resources and coordinate aid), and formalized in the 2004 Rome Declaration on Harmonization (with the UN, Bretton Woods and OECD governments as signatories). It also includes widespread experimentation among bilateral aid donors with 'Sector Wide Approaches' (SWAs) in which individual bilateral programs of assistance are increasingly planned in the context of a coordinated plan for specific subsectors. In many SWAs, bilateral funds are pooled together to provide direct budgetary support. What is sometimes not recognized is how frequently education has emerged as the key sector in which donors experiment with these historically novel efforts at donor coordination and pooling of resources (see Riddell 2000; Samoff 2001, 2004).

Finally, two education-specific efforts at country-level coordination and target setting are worth mentioning. In the wake of the Dakar World Forum on Education, UNESCO has interpreted its mandate to include assisting nations and regions to develop and monitor the implementation of national

‘EFA plans’. The World Bank, for its part, has spearheaded the Fast Track Initiative. Initially conceived of as a new, OECD-government sponsored, World Bank-hosted financing facility that would ensure that no developing countries with clear plans for achieving UPE would fail to make progress due to lack of resources, the Fast Track has not been funded at anticipated levels by governments of rich countries. It has now been re-conceptualized as a facility that gives governments additional resources to help them plan for, access and manage large programmes of pooled sector-wide funding from bilateral and multilateral donors.

To this end the Fast Track Initiative has introduced another internationally driven planning exercise into the education sector. Countries who apply must have a PRSP and a ‘credible’ national education plan for delivering publicly financed and free primary education that aligns with a matrix of specified norms for educational quality and access. Among the benchmarks for acceptance into the Fast Track are an appropriate ratio of primary to post-primary education sector expenditures, plans to achieve set teacher/student ratios, and specific levels of teacher remuneration (World Bank Development Committee March 2004). (As of January 2005, 16 of the original 18 applicant countries had been endorsed for Fast Track support, although the FTI still is not endowed to meet their resource needs.) Countries without a credible education sector plan, or without a track record of educational planning that could attract major donors, can apply to the Analytical Fast Track process (which provides technical assistance in getting a national plan in place) (since its creation in November 2003 in Oslo, the number of donors that have made pledges to the Catalytic Fund increased from four to five. Current contributors to the CF are Belgium, Italy, Norway, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Contributions and pledges for the calendar years 2004–2007 amount to a total of approximately US-\$ 255 million (FTI Newsletter September 2004)). All Fast Track countries are supported in developing an empirical base for tracking and monitoring progress towards key Fast Track Initiative objectives.

A certain degree of fragmentation and inter-agency competition is apparent across these various initiatives – reminiscent of the diffuse system of the pre-2000 education-for development regime. Even coordination among IFI-led initiatives remains disjointed – thus, according to a recent World Bank report, “as yet there is no regular process to ensure that the connection is made between a country’s PRSP, its MTEF [medium-term expenditure framework], its FTI program and its annual budget” (World Bank 2004b: 17). The Fast Track Initiative itself is not sufficiently funded to allow it to finance all the countries meeting its criteria, and has been subject to wide-ranging criticism regarding some of its benchmarks. Again, there is ample room for debate about the Fast Track. One part of the international community seems to view the Fast Track as a loose coordinating body to ensure donor coordination. Staff within the World Bank seem more interested in the way it can “become a force for building elements of output orientation,

performance measurement, autonomy and accountability into schooling systems” (Pritchett 2004).

Despite such debate, the principles that underpin PRSPs and the Fast Track Initiative and the additional OECD/DAC mechanisms now in place to coordinate international educational for development efforts at the country level are remarkable. They imply a rather more elaborate, consistent and publicly transparent indicative framework for coordinating education sector aid than has been in place before. Such a framework, simple and transparent, yields much more easily to broad public debate. As an example, consider the tendency of international financial institutions to assert their view that the private provision of basic education is a crucial element in educational reforms. In the recently revised Fast Track Initiative benchmarks, strong debate led to the setting of a benchmark (10%) of primary pupils at privately financed schools (EFA/FTI Secretariat). These new coordinating mechanisms also imply an increasing willingness on the part of rich countries to forgo the traditional, sovereignty-based bilateral model of foreign aid in favor of collective action. (The United States and Japan, however, remain outliers. The former has become decidedly less multilateral in its aid provision, while the latter continues to focus on building schools, not sectors.) Experimentation with pooled funding, direct budgetary support, and funding of recurrent costs of primary level education each suggest that UPE is steadily being recognized by rich governments as a global public good in need of collective rather than unilateral action.

New actors, new partnerships, new accountability politics

Another aspect of the new educational multilateralism that is unprecedented is the inclusion of new kinds of actors in both international and national education - for - development policy arenas. It is not just that new partnerships with civil society and private sector organizations have come to be seen as essential by official political actors on the international stage (Ruggie 2003). There has also been a remarkable growth of effective transnational organizations representing coalitions of civil society and private sector actors. As Mundy and Murphy (2001) have shown, transnational advocacy networks on such issues as debt relief, ODA reform, and globalization have frequently taken up the issue of the universal right to education as one part of their broader advocacy efforts. In addition, a strong transnational advocacy network on EFA has also emerged. Initiated by OXFAM International, Action Aid and the international association of teachers’ unions, Education International, the Global Campaign for Education now counts a large number of national civil-society EFA coalitions around the world, as well as some of the largest international non-governmental organizations involved in education (OXFAM, CARE, ActionAid, Global March). Originally viewed

by the international community as an under-utilized resource in the provision of educational services, today INGOs have taken on new and unanticipated leadership in international EFA efforts. INGOs have asserted themselves as advocates and policy activists.

The GCE and other civil-society organizations have increasingly carved out a place for themselves as the makers and monitors of global EFA goals (Murphy and Mundy 2002). GCE in particular has been instrumental in pushing bilateral donors, international organizations and members of the Group of 8 industrialized countries to make concrete commitments of resources for EFA. They have also emerged as policy watchdogs at the international and national levels, raising issues of adequate financing and equitable distribution of opportunities in national educational planning exercises and in international forum. In the last 2 years, for example, GCE or its members have produced research and policy papers on the educational dimensions of PRSPs in individual; provided substantive criticism of the indicative framework for national educational planning set out in the Fast Track Initiative (Rose 2003); produced a 'report card' on developing-country and rich-country contributions to meeting EFA and MDG goals; and launched a campaign at the annual World Bank/IMF meetings to highlight the negative impact of IMF conditionalities on the achievement of EFA in Zambia (GCE 2004). GCE or its members are now represented on virtually every High Level Working Group or international forum on EFA. Their inclusion and action has introduced a new dynamism to international political alignments – they clearly hope to leverage greater and more coordinated collective action while at the same time introducing more accountability for recipient governments and donor governments to EFA commitments.

In addition to these non-governmental organizations and civil-society coalitions, several private-sector organizations have recently become active supporters of a global education for all initiative. These include the World Economic Forum, a consortium of business organizations which has spearheaded a Global Governance Initiative to monitor achievements of the MDGs (including education) and is actively pursuing discussions about private/public EFA partnerships; the Commonwealth Education Fund (which brings private sector and public sector funding in the UK), the International Business Leaders Forum, and a series of EFA research and advocacy initiatives funded by the Hewlett Foundation.

New resources

The emergence of a common set of development priorities has set the stage for the first increases in official development aid from OECD countries in over a decade. Although levels still have not reached pre-Cold War highs, they have continued to make a modest advance over a 3-year period, and promise to increase further. The European Union and the United States have led the way in

this regard, pledging their first substantive increase in ODA in more than a decade at the March 2002 Financing for Development conference in Monterrey.

The Development Assistance Committee of the OECD suggests that aid flows are set to rise to \$75 billion by 2006, from \$52 billion in 2001, according to pledges made in Monterrey. The following five countries: Belgium, Finland, France, Ireland and the United Kingdom have laid down a clear timetable for achieving the 0.7% of GDP target for official development aid. If all DAC countries were to meet their express commitments, the ODA to GNI ratio would increase to 0.30% by 2006, and 0.32% by 2010 (from 0.22 in 2001), with just under threequarters of the increase coming from the European Union (OECD/DAC 2004). Some G8 governments have recently promised an even greater acceleration of ODA commitments. There are also interesting proposals for increasing immediately available funding – as, for example, the United Kingdom's proposal for an International Financing Facility, and France's proposal for a new international tax (the IFF would take donor commitments and a down payment and use these to back international bonds that could generate an immediate expansion of funds for development).

A large number of OECD governments (including the six largest ODA donors) have now also made clear pledges committing themselves to increased funding for UPE, as can be seen in Table 3. However, the scope of these commitments is only beginning to be reflected in the actual disbursements of ODA, as shown in the OECD/DAC figures presented in Table 4. What can be seen here is that ODA for education is still lagging.

Several things are worth noting about changes in the overall flow of bilateral funding to basic education. First, the majority of aid to education still flows through bilateral, not multilateral channels. Second, while overall flows of aid to education are down, flows to basic education have grown very rapidly. Basic education now accounts for at least one-quarter of all aid to education, up by more than 60% in the period between 1998/9 and 2000/1, or from US-\$ 486 to US-\$ 800 million. Six countries account for more than three-quarters of all flows to basic education (France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States), but more than one-half of all DAC countries have increased the proportion of ODA going to basic education. Finally, while these numbers suggest a positive trend, several analysts have suggested the US-\$ 1.5 billion currently spent represents only a fraction of what would be needed to finance the achievement of UPE by the 2015 target, which a recent World Bank analysis estimates as requiring US-\$ 3.7 billion per year through 2015 (Bruns et al. 2003).

It is now widely recognized that much of the additional funding for the achievement of basic education will require donor governments to assume some of the recurrent costs of the primary education systems of least-developed nations for an extended period of time. Again, in a sharp departure from past trends, donors have become increasingly willing to channel

Table 3. New EFA Actor and Initiatives Since 2000 and OECD/DAC Member support for basic education 2000–2004

New actors and initiatives	
Global Campaign for Education formed 1999	Membership organization of national and regional of NGOs and civil-society organization, INGOs with goal of leveraging achievement of funding for education for all. Includes Northern and Southern national and regional coalitions.
Commonwealth Education Fund	United Kingdom government and businesses fund NGO coalitions in education
World Economic Forum (Education initiatives launched 2002)	Global Governance Initiative: Tracks and monitors commitments to the MDGs. One of seven working on education. Workshop on private/public partnership in EFA (Nov. 2004)
United States Basic Education Coalition	NGO coalition to pressure more and better ODA for basic education, funded by the Hewlett Foundation
Universal Basic Education Project (UBASE), American Academy of Arts and Sciences	Multi-year research effort bringing together diverse social scientists to review best practices, effects of EFA, funding of EFA etc., funded by the Hewlett Foundation
United States Centre for Universal Education, Council of Foreign Relations International Business Leaders Forum	Lobby and research body advocates for more and better ODA for EFA, funded by the Hewlett Foundation
Donor countries	Works with the Prince of Wales, UNDP to establish framework for global corporate social responsibility 2005: “Business and the Millennium Development Goals”
Canada	2001: Canada says will double its resources for basic education to \$100 million per year; Canada endorses Fast Track Initiative
Nordics	Norway pledges to increase ODA for basic education by 15%
Japan	Japan announces \$2 billion for education over next 5 years
France	Commitment to the Fast Track Initiative
Netherlands	The Netherlands committed to 135 million euros for education initiatives 2003 – 2.5 billion ODA promised for education, 76% on basic education 2003 – Funds for Fast Track Initiative committed and funds for Global Campaign for Education committed

Table 3. Continued.

United Kingdom	UK announces increase in Aid for education
	UK establishes Commonwealth Education fund to support NGO advocacy in education
United States	1989 Basic Education Coalition of US NGOs established to lobby for more and better education aid
	2000 – US President signs legislation opposing ‘user fees’ in ODA
	2001 – Gene Sperling, former member of President Clinton’s council of economic advisors, begins basic education project and US GCE coalition
	2001 – US announces an African Education Initiative (\$100 million)
	2002 – US pledges \$100 million more in education aid to Africa (\$20 million for 5 years)
	2001 Universal Basic Education Project (American Academy of Arts and Sciences, funded by the Hewlett Foundation)
	2004 Tabling of the Clinton/Lowey EFA Act to provide \$500 million by 2005 and 2.5 billion by 2009 for establishment of universal basic education systems; establishes high-level EFA interagency task force

Table 4. Official development assistance (ODA) for Education 1990–2002

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Overall education (% bilateral ODA)	9.8	na	8.4	9.5	10.7	11.2	10.8	na	10.6	10.7	7.8	8.6	8.7
Basic Education(% bilateral ODA)	na	na	na	0.1	0.6	1.2	1.3	na	1	1.2	1.5	2.1	2.2
Total DAC ODA (bilateral and multilateral constant US-\$ billion)	55.1	60.1	57.6	54.1	55.8	49.8	48.8	44.8	48.6	49.8	49.6	52.4	(59.1)

Source: OECD/DAC Reports, 1991–2003; EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003. Note: 2002 figure for DAC ODA is in current dollars.

aid as direct budgetary support over somewhat longer time horizons. The European Union and the British now prefer this modality, and other donors (including France, and the United States through its Millennium Challenge Account) have begun experimenting with it. It is as yet unclear what criteria donors will use to decide the duration and extent of this new willingness to backstop national budgets.

Conclusion: EFA as a measure of change

In this contribution, we have sought to establish the basic parameters of an important series of shifts in the way that one aspect of multilateral activity in education is conceptualized, organized and enacted – that focused on assisting the poorest countries with their educational development. The present account points out several unprecedented shifts in this set of activities. Education is now embedded in a widening consensus on the core features of ‘good’ global development, a consensus that appears to bridge what had been a fundamental divide between those agents that have been more concerned with social equality and skeptical about the emergence of a global market, and those less concerned with equity, who view global economic growth through greater global integration as inevitably positive.

The international community has gone farther than in the past in establishing a clear, common set of priorities in education, focusing on time-bound targets for the achievement of universal basic education. New forms of donor coordination at the country level and global levels, and new aid modalities (most notably forms of pooled funding of recurrent budgetary costs of schooling) are now well established and growing. Transnational civil-society actors – from both the private sector and the non-governmental sectors – are on board. ODA funding itself seems set to increase.

What we can say with confidence about these changes is that many of them are surprising. They involved shifts that would not have been predicted a decade ago (e.g., increase in aid and aid to basic education; introduction of new actors). Furthermore, the degree to which the field of education has become an experimental ground for the new development compact is often underappreciated.

A move towards donor coordination, pooled funding and direct support of recurrent costs of primary education implies an important shift in the commitments of G8 governments to redistributive forms of multilateralism that are far different from the old bilateral regime of development. Yet these changes are recent, may actually be rather fragile, and are certainly open to considerable contestation. To paraphrase from Therien’s critical reflections on the wider emergence of a global development compromise, the new focus on basic education as a strategy for poverty reduction may be seen as a victory for those who continue to frame the problem of development as one of individuals who are not well adapted to the demands of the market, and

states that need to bear responsibility for development failures. It contrasts markedly from an understanding of development focused on structural inequalities that require both national and global measures of redistribution (Therien 2004/5; Maxwell 2005: 4). It is also at odds with the emergence, post 9/11, of renewed emphasis on using aid as a security perimeter by the United States. Finally, these changes in the aid-to-education regime are relative, not absolute shifts. Many of the older pathologies of educational ODA persist in the new regime. For example, the gap between rhetoric and resources, a hesitancy to empower multilateral channels of funding, and tensions between competing planning efforts (PRSPs, EFA, Fast Track Initiatives) and competing lead agencies (UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank) all remain.

Our initial sense is that what we are seeing is the opening up of an important and active phase in the re-structuring of governance at a global level. It is a phase that will almost certainly involve the redefinition of the appropriate scale, modes, and extent of global action in the field of education. With all its limitations and diverse interpretations, universal public access to free basic education has now achieved status and legitimacy as a global public good on a scale not realized during the 20th century.

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