

Education Action



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Further information on all projects available from Emma at ActionAid.

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Editorial

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the 25th edition of *Education Action*.

We start this edition with an introduction to *Promoting Rights in Schools*, an exciting new initiative that supports children, parents and other community members to monitor rights violations in their local schools and to advocate for quality education at both the local and national levels. PRS has been successfully piloted in Nepal and The Gambia and has been shown to be very effective in linking school-level issues with national policymaking.

Ed Atkins and Angela Melchiorre from the *Right to Education Project* look at the links between education and child marriage. In many countries, children are legally allowed to marry whilst still at school age, and the age at which girls can marry is often younger than that for boys. This can seriously jeopardise these children's education. Further articles on the right to education look at the issues of public-private partnerships, and the right to education in Palestine and India.

Camilla Croso, the new president of the *Global Campaign for Education*, is our Education Activist for this issue (see back cover). She updates us on developments following the GCE 4th General Assembly and the agreement of its new three-year strategic plan, which places the promotion of education as a fundamental human right high on its agenda.

Girls account for 57% of the 67 million children out of school. Articles on ActionAid's TEGINT and SVAGS projects look at the work that the organisation is doing to achieve the transformation of *girls' education* by addressing gender inequalities and challenging violence against girls in schools and in the wider community in a number of countries across Africa.

Rachel Moussie presents a new programme that uses *Reflect* to to analyse women's unpaid care work. Women use a

simple time diary to identify the different tasks that they carry out throughout the day, and the impact that this has on their lives. This is linked with work in the community and also at national level to make sure that women's unpaid care work is made visible to policymakers and that their demands are heard.

The GCE International Adult Literacy Benchmark 12 proposes that governments should spend at least 3% of their national education budgets on *adult literacy*. In an article by Mary Cobbett which looks the financing of adult literacy internationally we see that this is very far from being achieved. The article gives an overview of trends in the financing of adult literacy and offers some reflections and recommendations on the issue.

Kas Cascant-i-Sempere and Zakir Hossain Sarker give an update on the *Reflect* Evaluation Framework which was published two years ago and has now been successfully piloted in a number of countries in Africa and Asia. Becky Winstanley looks at how the approach has been used to develop language and literacy skills with migrant workers in the UK. And there are further updates on *Reflect* work in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Finally, David Archer presents People's *Action to End Poverty*, the new ActionAid strategy for the period 2012-2017. The strategy is the result of a year-long participatory process involving ActionAid staff and external stakeholders. The first step was a 'Taking Stock' review of the progress that ActionAid had made against its previous strategy, *Rights to End Poverty*. This was followed by a series of consultations, including participatory sessions with partner organisations and a five-day international conference for staff to develop the new strategy. The strategy commits the organisation to five core objectives and ten key change promises aimed at "deepening ActionAid's impact in a fast changing world".

We hope you enjoy the magazine.

Emma

Abbreviations:

ANCEFA	Africa Network Campaign on Education for All	M&E	monitoring and evaluation
ASPBAE	Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education	NGO	non-government organisation
CLADE	Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education	PRS	Promoting Rights in Schools
CER	Citizen Education Report	PTA	parent teacher association
CSO	civil society organisation	REF	Reflect Evaluation Framework
EFA	Education for All	RTE	Right to Education
FTI	Fast Track Initiative	SMC	school management committee
GCE	Global Campaign for Education	SVAGS	Stop Violence Against Girls in Schools
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals	TEGINT	Transforming Education for Girls in Nigeria and Tanzania
		ToF	training of facilitators
		ToT	training of trainers

Education is a universal human right. It is the responsibility of the state and a core element of any development policy committed to social justice. Yet for many children worldwide, it is a right that remains unfulfilled. ActionAid is working to ensure that girls and boys equally enjoy a quality public education that respects their rights.

The Right to Education Project promotes social mobilisation and legal accountability, focusing on the legal challenges to the right to education. The cornerstone of the Project is a wide-reaching website on education rights: www.right-to-education.org

Providing quality education through Promoting Rights In Schools

by Julie Juma, International Education Team, ActionAid

The Promoting Rights in Schools (PRS) initiative is a collaborative approach between ActionAid and the Right to Education Project which aims to secure free, compulsory, quality public education for all.

The PRS initiative is supported by a comprehensive resource pack that includes:

- a charter of ten rights that, together, describe what an 'ideal' school that offers quality education should look like;
- information on the origin of each of the ten rights;
- a set of indicators for each right;
- a template for data collection;
- an outline of the participatory methodology for using the charter and indicators.

What is it for?

The state is the core duty bearer responsible for respecting, protecting and fulfilling education rights. Schools, their governance structures (e.g. school management committees and parent teacher associations) and the education ministry are the key institutions of the state that can be held accountable for achieving these goals. However, the resources that schools receive are also determined by the finance ministry, donors, international financial institutions (e.g. the World Bank and, International Monetary Fund) and to some extent, private providers.

The PRS approach therefore supports links between programme work at the school level and advocacy and policy efforts in national and international forums. Above all, it aims to build the capacity of students, children, communities and local civil society organisations, not only to advocate for quality education but also to be able to articulate these needs through a longer-term process of promoting critical consciousness.

The ten rights are clearly derived from international human rights treaties or conventions and are all

situated within and build on the '4A' framework, developed by the late Katarina Tomaševski, which states that education should be:

- **Available:** education should be free and government-funded with adequate infrastructure and teachers;
- **Accessible:** systems should not discriminate and positive steps should be taken to reach the most marginalised;
- **Acceptable:** the content of education should be relevant, culturally appropriate and of quality;
- **Adaptable:** education should respond to changing needs of society and to different contexts.

Whilst very powerful, these 4As are not instantly understood or easily useable. The ten rights in the PRS approach speak directly to citizens and offer a clearer framework for engagement at local, national and international levels. Though work can focus on any one right, the use of the full set of rights is encouraged because they are all inter-connected.

Future plans

The results of the pilots in The Gambia and Nepal (see p.5-7) are an indication that the PRS is a powerful tool that can be used to monitor rights violations in schools and to get all the education stakeholders engaged in a constructive dialogue. Local, district and national reports on the state of education rights, based on citizens' perspectives and mobilisation are proving to be powerful accountability tools. This research-to-action approach promotes evidence-based advocacy and campaigning, which we hope will lead to sustainable change.

In addition to the pilots, regional training workshops have been conducted for ActionAid staff in Africa (Mombasa) and Asia (Hanoi). It is expected that in 2012 the initiative will be rolled out in a number of countries across Africa and Asia.

The charter of ten rights

- 1. Right to free and compulsory education:**
there should be no charges, direct or indirect, for primary education. Education must gradually be made free at all levels.
- 2. Right to non-discrimination:**
schools must not make any distinction in provision based on sex, race, colour, language, religion, political opinion, nationality, ethnicity, ability, or any other status.
- 3. Right to adequate infrastructure:**
there should be an appropriate number of classrooms, accessible to all, with adequate and separate sanitation facilities for girls and boys. Schools should be built with local materials and be resilient to natural risks and disasters.
- 4. Right to quality trained teachers:**
schools should have a sufficient number of trained teachers of whom a good proportion are female; teachers should receive good quality pre-service and in-service training with built-in components on gender sensitivity, non-discrimination, and human rights. All teachers should be paid domestically competitive salaries.
- 5. Right to a safe and non-violent environment:**
children should be safe on route to and in school. Clear anti-bullying policies and confidential systems for reporting and addressing any form of abuse or violence should be in place.
- 6. Right to relevant education:**
the curriculum should not discriminate and should be relevant to the social, cultural, environmental, economic and linguistic context of learners.
- 7. Right to know your rights:**
schools should teach human rights education and children's rights in particular. Learning should include age-appropriate and accurate information on sexual and reproductive rights.
- 8. Right to participate:**
girls and boys have the right to participate in decision-making processes in school. Appropriate mechanisms should be in place to enable the full, genuine and active participation of children.
- 9. Right to transparent and accountable schools:**
schools need to have transparent and effective monitoring systems. Both communities and children should be able to participate in accountable governing bodies, management committees and parents' groups.
- 10. Right to quality learning:**
girls and boys have a right to a quality learning environment and to effective teaching processes so that they can develop their personality, talents and physical and mental abilities to their fullest potential.



Though work can focus on any one right, the use of the full set of ten rights is encouraged because they are all inter-connected.

Case Study

Piloting the PRS in The Gambia

by Kadijatou Baldeh,
Education Advocacy Advisor, ActionAid
The Gambia

ActionAid The Gambia involved the Members of Parliament of The Select Committee on Education and Training and the General Secretariat for Islamic and Arabic Education (GSIAE) in the pilot of the PRS. These stakeholders used the PRS framework to collect data to illustrate the extent to which each of the ten rights was achieved in 44 madrassas. The madrassas were chosen because they offer opportunities to expand access to education for the estimated 9% of out-of-school children of school-going age.

Findings revealed that not a single right was being fully actualised/guaranteed. For example:

- Only four out of the 44 madrassas are non-fee paying (right number 1);
- Madrassas do cater to children with physical disabilities (right number 2) but there were no ramps, making it difficult for the physically challenged to move around;
- On the right to quality, trained teachers (right number 4), it was discovered that 70% of the teachers in the madrassas visited were untrained. This is compounded by the fact that access to Gambia College for teacher training is not free and the 3,000 dalasi fee charged per teacher cannot be met by most of the madrassas, especially those run by the communities.

These and other findings are being presented for discussion with civil society and the government and local, district and national action plans are being developed to address the challenges. A 'school charter' of ten rights has also been produced and circulated in the schools to promote wider awareness of quality schooling.



All images ActionAid

A 'school charter' of rights has been produced and circulated around the schools to promote wider awareness of quality schooling.

The final report was tabled before the National Assembly for a debate on quality education in all learning institutions. Copies have also been sent to the ministries of finance, basic education and the GSIAE. The recommendations can be divided into the following broad categories:

- **Administrative** – these can be addressed without any financial resources and need only a change in approach. This is mainly related to the GSIAE and the institutions visited.
- **Infrastructure** – relating to teacher training at the Gambia College and the provision of teaching/learning materials. These were sent to the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education.
- **Budget allocation** – the Ministry of Finance is key in this area, issues may also be taken up during the 2011 budget debate in the National Assembly.

There are plans for a follow up visit in a year or so to review progress in implementing the report's recommendations.

“If we are serious in achieving the MDGs and EFA, the 15% of children enrolled in madrassas MUST receive an education of quality – not reading the Quran alone but adding other marketable skills to earn a living afterwards.”

Hon. Sulayman Joof,
National Assembly member
for Serrekunda West and
Hon. Bory Colley,
member for Foni Jaroll

Case Study Citizens' Education Report: A stride towards PRS in Nepal

by Indra Gurung: Theme Leader, Right to Education, ActionAid Nepal

Ensuring quality education in public schools in Nepal is urgent. Many public schools are empty as the children of even the most marginalised groups are sent to private boarding schools because citizens lack confidence in the quality of education provided by public schools. A lack of proper monitoring and supervision of children, failure to conduct full classes throughout the year, inadequate educational and vocational materials, absence of a child-friendly (especially girl-friendly) environment in schools, inadequate numbers of teachers, lack of accountability among teachers, and the lack of an enabling environment for the children at home are some of the fundamental obstacles that are hindering Nepal in achieving its national goal of Education for All. According to the latest government data, the net enrolment rate is 93.7%, which is well below the targeted rate. There are many irregularities and hidden challenges within schools that are aggravated by a lack of government monitoring mechanisms. Citizens also lack clarity on government policy and provisions.

As part of its response to this situation, ActionAid Nepal piloted the Citizens' Education Report (CER) process as part of its Right to Primary Education programme, funded by Irish Aid. The programme covers 35 schools (including two madrassas) in 18 village development committees in nine districts in the mid and far west of Nepal. Coordinated and administered by ActionAid Nepal's Western Resource Centre, the pilot was conducted in partnership with 20 local civil society organisations. Altogether 70 researchers were involved in the process: 10 were programme officers and focal persons from ActionAid; the remaining 60 were programme coordinators, social mobilisers and *Reflect* practitioners from partner NGOs.

The main goal of the CER process was to build the capacity of local communities and engage them in education policy advocacy and discussions in order to strengthen or build EFA movements at all levels – from local and district to national. The study used participatory tools and processes with *Promoting Rights in Schools* as an overarching study framework. The indicators were developed using the checklist and questionnaires presented in the PRS resource pack. Teachers, students, members of SMCs and PTAs, parents and local community members were all involved in the process.



Parents at a school in Nepal

Positive results

Through this process, ActionAid has produced 35 school-level CERs and nine district-level CERs. A national CER will be completed shortly. Once the national CER is finalised, it will be shared widely, including with the ministries of education, finance, and local development and Department of Education, as well as with networks, coalitions and alliances. We are also encouraging like-minded organisations to use the approach, in order to produce a nationally coordinated piece of research under the umbrella of the national education network.

The main goal of the CER process was to build the capacity of local communities and engage them in education policy advocacy and discussions in order to strengthen or build EFA movements at all levels.

There has not yet been any quantitative evaluation of the PRS initiative in Nepal. However, participants reported a number of qualitative changes following the CER process and school assessment.

These include:

- Improved school governance and accountability – schools have begun to conduct social audit processes; the allocation of scholarships has become more transparent; schools have begun to provide free education as mandated in Government’s policy.
- Increased involvement and capacity building of parents, students and SMCs in regular school monitoring that has helped teachers and students become more accountable and has improved attendance in schools.
- Communities, schools, policy makers and media have acknowledged the CER process for its in-depth analysis and empowering methodology. Following the presentation of the district-level CER report, the district education office amended the data in its own report.
- Improved classroom teaching and learning as well as reduced violence and discrimination against girls in schools are encouraging girls to stay on at school.

The PRS process has proved to be effective in linking school-level issues with policy making at the national level. It has supported citizens to become engaged and realise their role in improving quality education in public schools in Nepal. ActionAid Nepal is therefore scaling up the initiative to other districts and schools across Nepal, including a further 135 schools in the Western Region alone. We are also developing a Nepali-language flyer on the ten rights for wider distribution and promotion. The ultimate goal is to implement the CER process in all schools across the country.

In addition to the pilots in The Gambia and Nepal, regional training workshops have been conducted for ActionAid staff in Africa (Mombasa) and Asia (Hanoi). It is expected that in 2012 the initiative will be rolled out in a number of countries across Africa and Asia.



Children in Nepal during break time

ActionAid



▲ **Discussions with teachers, Hanoi**

▶ **Children participating in discussions in Hanoi**



▼ ▼ **Pupils participating in discussions, Mombasa**



▲ **Role-plays during the Mombasa training**

▼ **Transect walk with parents with teachers**



For more information on the PRS and to access the resource pack and poster go to www.actionaid.org

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The right to education in India

by Debdutt Panda, International Education Team, ActionAid
& Damodaram Kuppaswami, Education Lead, ActionAid India

India made education a fundamental right of every child when The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, which enshrines in the Constitution the provision of free and compulsory education for children between the ages of 6 and 14, became law in April 2010.

The Act was the result of sustained campaigning and lobbying by NGOs, CSOs and teachers' unions across India. ActionAid India played an active role in this process, engaging with civil society coalitions, including the National Coalition for Education, the Campaign against Child Labour, the National Alliance for the Fundamental Right to Education and the All India Primary Teachers' Federation to lobby parliamentarians, mount pressure on the government through the media and hold community level mobilisations around the right to education in many provinces of the country.

Under the Act, every child between the age of 6 and 14 years has the right to full-time free and compulsory education in a neighbourhood school. Non-enrolled children, from 7-9 years, have the right to be admitted in an age-appropriate grade within one year of the commencement of the Act, and children aged 9-14 have the right to attend special programmes that will enable them to attain an appropriate grade within three years.

The Act states that the Government and local authorities are responsible for ensuring that children belonging to disadvantaged groups (for example, children from scheduled castes and tribes, child labourers, migrant children and children with special needs) are not discriminated against or prevented from pursuing and completing primary education. Children with a severe disability, who are unable to attend a neighbourhood school, have the right to be provided education in an appropriate environment.

According to UNICEF, more than 1 million new and untrained teachers will need to be trained within the next five years...

The Act also focuses on the quality of teaching and learning, emphasising the importance of the all round development of the child, with child-centred teaching that should, where possible, be in the child's mother tongue. Teachers should also be fully trained and properly remunerated.

“Education is the key to progress. It empowers the individual. It enables a nation. It is the belief of our government that if we nurture our children and young people with the right education, India's future as a strong and prosperous country is secure.

We are committed to ensuring that all children, irrespective of gender and social category, have access to education. An education that enables them to acquire the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes necessary to become responsible and active citizens of India.”

Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India,
April 1st 2010¹

Challenges ahead

According to UNICEF, just over 8 million children were out of school in India in 2009. Although this represents a significant decline from the 25 million children out of school in 2003, bringing 8 million out-of-school children into classes at the age appropriate level with the

support to stay in school and succeed poses a major challenge.² In addition, despite improvements in the proportion of children from socially disadvantaged groups in school, inequalities remain. Girls are still less likely to enrol in school than boys are, and children from scheduled castes and tribes are less likely to exercise their right to eight years of schooling than children from other backgrounds. According to UNICEF, more than 1 million new and untrained teachers will need to be trained within the next five years and the skills of existing teachers reinforced in order to ensure that all children in India are able to exercise their right to education.

ActionAid response

Whilst cautiously welcoming the Act, ActionAid India considers that it does not go far enough in pursuit of a quality education for all. In response to the Act, ActionAid India states that it will:

- undertake focused action against current practices (public private partnerships, charging of fees in government schools, etc) that violate the rights of children to free and compulsory quality education;
- support the goal of a common school system for all children irrespective of their class, caste, religious or linguistic background and actively campaign for its introduction by creating a groundswell of public pressure;
- demand an increase in education budgets and work with stakeholders to track budgets at all levels (community, state and national) and to undertake community-based planning and social auditing of schools;
- advocate for an education system that meets the learning needs of children with a disability;
- work alongside other activists and experts to promote the right to early childhood care and development;
- lobby for the amendment of the Child Labour Act to ensure that all forms of child labour are prohibited and that education is a reality for all children.

1 From Press Information Bureau, Government of India,
<http://www.pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=60001> accessed on 05.07.11

2 From <http://www.unicef.org/india/education.html> accessed on 05.07.11

For the full text of the Act go to:
<http://www.indg.in/primary-education/policiesandschemes/right-to-education-bill>

Public-private partnerships: promoting quality or entrenching inequality?

by Akanksha A. Marphatia, International Education Team, ActionAid and María Ron-Balsera, Marie Curie Eduwel Early Stage Researcher, Bielefeld University

As the main duty bearers and providers of education, governments are obliged to respect, protect and fulfil the right to education (Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, CESCR GC 13: §48). However, this right is unfulfilled in many countries due to a lack of resources, capacity, reach, and political will. As a result, and perhaps unsurprisingly, the number and type of non-state providers has increased substantially. They range from strictly private initiatives to NGOs, and more recently, public-private partnerships (PPPs) such as ‘community schools’ and ‘low-fee private schools’. In India for example, PPP secondary schools are encouraged. In 2010, nearly 60% of all secondary schools and 20% of elementary schools in India were PPPs or strictly private (World Bank, 2009 citing MHRD 2004-5 and DISE, 2010).

Proponents of PPPs argue “...*the main rationale for developing public-private partnerships (PPPs) in education is to maximize the potential for expanding equitable access to schooling and for improving education outcomes, especially for marginalized groups*” (Patrinos et al., 2009:9). They suggest that the ‘competition’ created by these different providers makes them more cost efficient than government schools (Chubb and Moe 1990; Hanushek et al. 1994). PPPs lower the burden on the state’s limited resources, expand choice (e.g. through voucher schemes), improve the quality of education and enable parents to hold schools accountable (Belfield and Levin, 2002 and Tooley 2001). To facilitate access of the marginalized groups to PPP schools, countries like India have passed legislation obliging private schools to give 25% of school places to randomly selected students from ‘the weaker sections of society’ (See article on the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009, p.8).

Opponents argue that PPPs lead to discrimination, segregation, greater socioeconomic inequality, and a lack of social cohesion. For example, the 25% quota in India for marginalised and excluded groups in PPPs was found to be inaccessible to these groups because of their location, lack of appropriate infrastructure and the cost of schooling (Mehrotra & Pancharukhi, 2007, Härmä, 2010). Budget De and Samson (2009) and Tilak (2010) argue that scarce

resources are being drained from state schools in support of a discriminatory system of private schools. As a result, state schools now face the risk of becoming ‘ghettos’ for poor and marginalised groups. An evaluation by PROBE in 1999 found that PPP schools saved costs by adopting measures such as hiring as many as 80% untrained teachers, which compromised the quality of schooling.

This vibrant debate on the advantages and disadvantages of PPP is underpinned by a fundamental concern around whose legal responsibility it is to provide education in the first place. The increasing commodification of education and of knowledge as a purchasable and saleable service whose quality depends on the fee one can pay (Ahmad in Zaidi 2006) contradicts the rights-based approach which views education as a fundamental right available to all, irrespective of their socio-economic standing. ‘Choice’ in this context is only beneficial to those groups with a higher financial means.

Given the growing number of PPPs in many countries, an area for advocacy is ensuring the state plays an effective regulatory role over all providers, particularly to monitor that excluded groups are not further marginalized (CESCR GC 13:§46 and §48 and the CRC). From a rights perspective, this means that all providers must adhere to the indivisible principles that education should be: compulsory and available free of cost; accessible to all without discrimination; acceptable in terms

The increasing commodification of education and of knowledge as a purchasable and saleable service whose quality depends on the fee one can pay (Ahmad in Zaidi 2006) contradicts the rights-based approach which views education as a fundamental right available to all...

of good quality of teachers, curriculum and facilities; and adaptable to all contexts to include groups’ diversity (Tomaševski).

However, some consider that over time, neoliberal policies such as reduced state intervention and free market competition have eroded the role of the state, lessening its power and capacity to regulate policies that promote and ensure the fulfilment of citizens’ rights (Ron-Balsera 2011 and Zaidi 2006). The role for civil society is to advocate not only for better state regulation and accountability over PPPs but also for greater social responsibility for education, which remains the primary responsibility of the state. Non-state providers, including NGOs that provide educational services, must ensure they are not replacing the government.

In conclusion, while in some cases PPP providers offer greater access to education, this non-state provision still presents many risks, particularly the lack of sustainability and systematic organisation, and in some instances creates a burden on the poorest and excluded members of the community (Rose 2002; 2007).

This article draws upon a recent book chapter written by the authors; *Do Public Private Partnerships fulfil the Right to Education? An examination of the role of non-state actors in advancing equity, equality and justice.* The Global Governance of Education and Market Multilateralism. Susan Robertson, Karen Mundy and Antoni Verger, Eds. Edward Elgar Publishing.



The right to education in Palestine

How to dream of a shared school when some children throw stones and others answer back with Kalashnikovs?

by Peter Hyll-Larsen and Angela Melchiorre, the Right to Education Project

The education sector in Palestine faces many challenges, which result in persistent violations of the right to education. These violations relate to the availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability of education, and are the result of both neglect and inability on the part of duty-bearers, be they the Israeli occupying power or the Palestinian Ministry of Education. Many of these violations are a direct result of the ongoing occupation and military and settlement activities in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem; others are a result of internal violence between the two ruling parties in Palestine: Hamas and Fatah.

ActionAid and the RTE Project had a unique chance to dive into what is arguably one of the most complicated and protracted political conflicts in the world.



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Being in Palestine and passing through Israel, it is difficult not to take sides because the differences are so stark. The 12-year old child of a settler family has infinitely more possibilities to access and continue quality education than a 12-year old Palestinian refugee on the other side of the barbed wire. They will only meet as gunshots are used to retaliate for throwing stones, and they have no shared school, curricula, language, expectations or economic outlook. Yet they both live in the same land.

In March 2011, ActionAid's Right to Education Project went on a mission to Palestine at the

invitation of UNESCO in Ramallah and funded by the Office of Her Highness, Sheikha Mozah of Qatar. UNESCO was seeking to further its support to education in humanitarian emergencies, through targeted technical assistance on the legal foundations of the right to education.

This kind of work is what the Project and ActionAid have been doing now for several years, albeit at a more global level. With this mission, we had a unique chance to dive into what is arguably one of the most complicated and protracted political conflicts in the world. Being there was fabulous and inspiring but

Education and child marriage: key issues and trajectories

by Ed Atkins and Angela Melchiorre, the Right to Education Project

The interaction between education and child marriage is shaped by a number of factors, attitudes, and values which are closely linked and often difficult to unravel. Research undertaken by the Right to Education Project has identified some salient issues and trajectories in this regard which need to be further exposed in order to untangle conceptual challenges and bring about change on the ground.

There is widespread consensus that child marriage constitutes a significant obstacle, standing between many children and their education. Marriage at too young an age denies children the opportunity to develop their intellectual and social skills, including the ability to express themselves and to blossom in their own sense of autonomy, which are arguably the principal aims of education. Additionally, it can result in exclusion from education, removal from school or limited access to educational opportunities. In these cases, the affected children's prospects of securing a dignified

future are severely threatened. In contrast, if children and young people are ensured educational and vocational opportunities, they will tend to delay marriage, postpone and space childbearing, and develop increasingly fuller participation in the life of the local and wider community.¹

Child marriage affects both girls and boys, but it is particularly acute in the case of girls who make up the vast majority of the 10 million children married every year before the age of 18² and 54% of the 67 million children denied their primary education.³ Whether a girl

Child marriage affects both girls and boys, but it is particularly acute in the case of girls...

is withdrawn from school because she has had her first menstruation, because she runs the risk of being the object of unwanted sexual advances (by peers or teachers), or because her parents have found a good husband and a new household for her, the fact remains that her mental, social and emotional development is impaired and with it her future. The detrimental impact of child marriage on girls' education and development is exacerbated by the fact that girls are often legally permitted to marry at a younger age than boys (figure 1).

Figure 1 Gender discrimination in marriageable age (for girl/for boy)

Europe, North America & Central Asia		Asia-Pacific		Middle East & Northern Africa		Africa		Latin America & the Caribbean	
Albania	16/18	Cambodia	18/20	Algeria	18/21	Angola	15/16	Bolivia	14/16
Austria	16/18	China	20/22	Egypt	16/18	Benin	15/18	Colombia	12/14°
Kyrgyzstan	17/18	DPRK	17/18	Iran	13/15°	Botswana	14/16	Ecuador	12/14
Luxembourg	16/18	Fiji	16/18	Kuwait	15/17	Burkina Faso	15/18*	Guatemala	14/16*
Poland	16/18	India	18/21*	Morocco	15/18	DRC	15/18	Nicaragua	14/15
Rep. Moldova	14/16	Indonesia	16/19			Sao Tome&Pri.	14/16	Panama	14/16
Romania	15/18	Japan	16/18			Senegal	16/?*	Peru	14/16
Turkey	14/15	Myanmar	14/No min.°			South Africa	12/14	St Vinc.&Gr.	15/16
Uzbekistan	16/17	Nepal	16/18					Suriname	13/15*
		Rep. Korea	16/18					Trinidad&Tob.	12/14
		Timor-Leste	15/18					Uruguay	12/14°
		Vanuatu	16/18						
		Vietnam	18/20						

Key:

? = information unclear

* = see country report for details⁴

° = information from dialogue

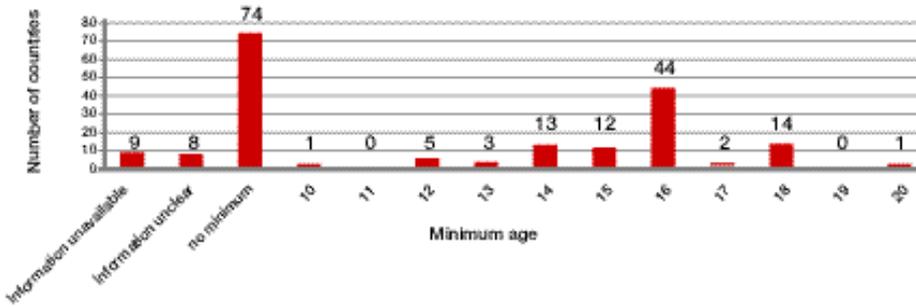
1 UNICEF, *Early Marriage: Child Spouses*, Innocenti Digest No. 7 (Florence: Innocenti Research Centre, 2001), pp.11-12; R. De Silva-de-Alwis, 'Child Marriage and the Law', *Legislative Reform Initiative – Paper Series* (New York: UNICEF, 2008), pp. 20-21; World Health Organisation (WHO), *Safe Motherhood: Health Day 1998: Delay Childbearing* (Geneva: WHO, 1998); International Planned Parenthood Federation, *Ending Child Marriage: A Guide for Global Policy Action* (London: International Planned Parenthood Federation, 2006), p. 14.

2 Estimates from www.theElders.org, accessed on 25 April 2011.

3 These figures are for 2008, from UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2011, p. 1.

4 The relevant extracts from the reports submitted by countries to the Committee on the Rights of the Child are available on the country pages of the Right To Education website (<http://www.right-to-education.org/node/271>)

Figure 2 Minimum ages for marriage



Since 2009, the Right to Education Project has been conducting a comprehensive analysis of reports submitted by states parties to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child during the period 1993–2010 (www.right-to-education.org/node/53). The focus of this research is on the link between the end of compulsory education and the legal minimum ages established in three areas: admission to employment, marriage and criminal responsibility. Several notable differences have emerged which set the minimum age for marriage apart from the other areas studied. The most striking of these is the fact that 74 out of 186 countries reported no clear minimum age for entering into marriage. This suggests that in more than a third of the world’s countries no effective legal guarantees exist to protect children from child marriage (figure 2).

The second key finding of this research is that gender discrimination regarding the minimum legal age for marriage is actually entrenched into the domestic legislation of almost a quarter of the 186 countries studied, as shown in figure 3.1. When considered against the number of states that actually report clear minimum ages for marriage, the proportion of states with discriminatory laws rises to nearly half (figure 3.2). This widespread legalised discrimination does not occur *at all* in the other areas studied, and is in clear contravention of one of the basic principles of international human rights law as it poses a serious obstacle to the attainment of equality between women and men, not least in terms of the impact it has on girls’ education.

In particular, when looking at the link between the minimum age for marriage and the end of compulsory education, it is evident how incoherent minimum ages represent a threat rather than a protection measure. In numerous countries, children are either legally allowed to marry while still at school or not permitted to marry for some years after completing their compulsory education (figure 4). Both scenarios are problematic. In the former, the government is effectively condoning the view that the importance of education is secondary to finding a partner, creating a family or even acquiescing to parental choices for their children’s marital life. The latter runs the dual risk of both failing to respect children’s evolving capacities and of pushing them into illegal marriages. Either way, these children’s education is seriously jeopardised and their best interests disregarded.

That being said, the research also revealed how important it is to better analyse and articulate the impact of education on marriage practices. Simply making schools available and accessible is not sufficient to keep children away from child marriage. Nor does it actually ensure that children receive an education worthy of the name.

UNICEF affirms that “*the interaction between the number of years of a girl’s schooling and the postponement of marriage is firmly established by demographic and*

Figure 3.1 Minimum ages for marriage (all)

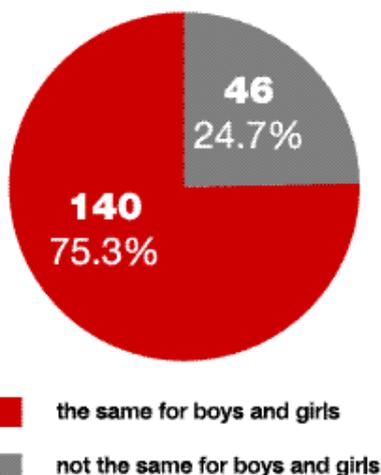
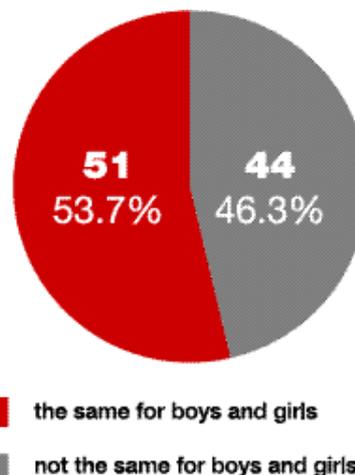


Figure 3.2 Minimum ages for marriage (where there is one*)



* i.e. excluding countries with unclear or no information, or with no minimum age

fertility studies”:⁵ the longer a girl stays in school, the later she will get married and have children. However, this direct relationship is not always as clear or as firm as this assertion leads us to believe. UNICEF itself questions whether it is child marriage that stops girls from going to school or the lack of schooling that facilitates and reinforces traditional practices such as child marriage. A reading of the reports analysed in this research confirms this: where the education system merely reinforces existing gender imbalances or patriarchal power relations and fails to equip pupils with the intellectual and practical ability to secure a stable future for themselves, children and young people – especially girls – can actually be pushed into child marriage for want of a better alternative. This is why compulsory and post-compulsory education of good quality can play a crucial role. Making education acceptable and adaptable to the skills, interests, needs, and prospects of pupils and society is as necessary as making schools available and increasing access. Steps in this direction include: revising curricula to eliminate gender stereotypes; taking measures to ensure safety and



Tom Pietrak/ActionAid

Sahanara (18) was married at the age of 14 through an intermediary known to her uncle

The focus of this research is on the link between the end of compulsory education and the legal minimum ages established in three areas: admission to employment, marriage and criminal responsibility.

Figure 4 Comparison between education (E) and marriage (M) when the latter is different for girls and boys

	Minimum age for the end of compulsory education lower than minimum age for marriage		Minimum age for the end of compulsory education higher than minimum age for marriage		
	E	M	E	M	
Albania	14	16/18	Bolivia	16	14/16
Algeria	16	18/21	Colombia	15	12/14
Angola	12	15/16	Peru	18	14/16
Austria	15	16/18	Rep. Moldova	16/18	14/16
China	15	20/22	Romania	18	15/18
DPRK	16	17/18	South Africa	15	12/14
Egypt	14	16/18	Uruguay	14	12/14
India	14	18/21	Uzbekistan	18	16/17
Iran	11	13/15			
Japan	15	16/18			
Kuwait	14	15/17			
Kyrgyzstan	16	17/18			
Luxembourg	15	15/18			
Morocco	13	15/18			
Poland	15	16/18			
Rep. Korea	15	16/18			
Trinidad & Tob.	12	12/14			
Turkey	14	14/15			
Vietnam	10	18/20			

The research also revealed how important it is to better analyse and articulate the impact of education on marriage practices. Simply making schools available and accessible is not sufficient to keep children away from child marriage. Nor does it actually ensure that children receive an education worthy of the name.

respect of the child’s dignity in and around school; designing more flexible schedules and assessments that do not penalise but rather enhance children’s capacities and protect their best interests.

The Right to Education Project’s research also shows that many other factors combine with gender discrimination and the lack of good quality education to perpetuate child marriage. These include poverty and the struggle for economic survival; the resilience of traditional, cultural and religious practices; and mixed legal systems that frequently fail to impose meaningful sanctions if laws prohibiting child marriage are breached.

This complicated jigsaw requires an equally complex answer. In families where investing in school for a daughter is still seen as a waste

⁵ UNICEF, *supra*, note 1, p.11

of money and time if the girl will in any case only become a wife and mother, it is not so much views on education but rather perceptions of gender roles that need to be challenged and changed. Where child marriage still takes place even if national legislation is in place to prevent it, both the government and civil society organisations should work hard together to facilitate knowledge and understanding of the law and its implementation (including through effective sanctions), to raise awareness about the detrimental impact child marriage has on children's health as well as on their physical and psychosocial development, and to highlight the transformative role of education.

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Tom Pieraski/ActionAid

This analysis of education and child marriage is part of a larger piece of research conducted by the RTE Project comparing four minimum ages under the Convention on the Rights of the Child: end of compulsory education, employment, marriage and criminal responsibility. Here is a quick preview of the findings for employment and criminal responsibility:

The link between the minimum age for completion of compulsory education and the minimum age of employment

The goals of universal education and the elimination of child labour are inextricably linked. Free and compulsory education of good quality secured until the minimum age for entry to employment is a critical factor in the struggle against the economic exploitation of children, while child labour constitutes a fundamental obstacle to the development and implementation of compulsory education strategies. Minimum age labour laws and compulsory education laws are therefore interdependent: the enforcement of one contributes to the enforcement of the other. Equally, even if one of the two is well legislated, it is necessary to ensure that this strength is not undermined by the weakness of the other. This is why it is crucial to establish a link between school and labour authorities, legislation and practice.

The link between the minimum age for completion of compulsory education and the minimum age for criminal responsibility

In a large number of countries, children are considered mature enough to take responsibility for their actions at or near the age at which they are required to begin their compulsory education. The establishment of a very low minimum age for criminal responsibility could have a detrimental impact on the child and on his or her educational process and development. A successful socialisation and integration of all children into society very much depends on their ability not simply to access education but to enjoy an education that is acceptable, relevant and adaptable, and which responds to their special needs, interests and concerns. This is all the more true for those children who are at the greatest risk of becoming involved in criminal activities. Setting a minimum age for criminal responsibility that clashes with compulsory education sends worrisome signals both about the value of education and about the capacity of society to offer children a proper preparation for adult life and participation in the development of their society.

The Right to Education Project report, *At what age? ... are schoolchildren employed, married and taken to court?*, can be accessed at www.right-to-education.org/node/53.

For further information on the Right to Education Project contact: info@right-to-education.org

The Education for All Fast Track Initiative: expanding civil society influence

by the International Education Team, ActionAid

The Education For All Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) began in 2003 as a partnership to enhance global support for education. EFA-FTI brings together donors and developing countries, multilateral institutions, the private sector and civil society organisations. It currently supports education in 44 developing countries, including 25 in sub-Saharan Africa.

In 2003, the EFA-FTI began providing funding through the Catalytic Fund (CF) in order to bridge the funding gap for countries with too few donors, while aiming to leverage more sustainable support through regular bilateral and multilateral channels. The CF is currently being transitioned into another arrangement. However the multi-donor Education Program Development Fund (EPDF), established in 2004, enables low-income countries to access the FTI and accelerate progress towards universal primary education. The EFA-FTI has also supported civil society. In 2008, funds were given to the GCE to scale up support to national civil society education coalitions in FTI-eligible countries through the Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF). Over a period of two years (2009-2011) EFA-FTI, through its EPDF programme provided US\$17.6 million to the CSEF, which is coordinated by the GCE, ASPBAE, CLADE and ANCEFA.

In the past decade, the EFA-FTI has had numerous leadership changes including revamping of its mission, reach, membership and governance. Several reforms have taken place following an evaluation of the effectiveness of the partnership to harmonise commitments, mobilise resources and distribute funds in a timely manner, and enhance country ownership.¹ These efforts have resulted in positive results. Recently the Executive Board was reconstituted to include representatives from civil society, teachers' unions and the private sector/foundations. Following elections, ActionAid (David Archer / Akanksha A. Marpathia) were

elected to the Board as the Northern/INGO constituency representative.² This new constituency-based Board met for the first time in May 2011 in Kigali, Rwanda.

The Financial Advisory Committee (FAC) of the EFA-FTI oversees the design and implementation of policies for eligibility and prioritization of funding from the EFA Fund. Members review and make recommendations to the Board on allocations to support the implementation of Education Sector Plans and Interim Education Plans in eligible developing country partners.³ A small number of constituency-based members constitute the FAC, which is currently in its interim arrangement awaiting the completion of nominated candidates. Northern and Southern CSOs will share a seat and the teachers' unions and private sector will share another.

Amid concerns about the closeness of the EFA-FTI to its governing partner (the World Bank), and following evaluation findings about constraining financial and contractual obligations which have caused considerable delays in disbursing funds, the EFA-FTI has moved out of the World Bank offices and other donors are encouraged to become the main partner overseeing FTI country-level fund management. For example, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) oversees the relationship in Rwanda. It is hoped that this trend will continue, to ensure independence of the EFA-FTI from any one agency.

Under its current leadership, the EFA-FTI is aiming to better define its areas of focus and is expanding the size of its secretariat in order to

provide greater technical support to countries and strengthen its global and regional activities. There was general agreement on the FTI's focus areas of work: girls' education and fragile states. However concerns were expressed regarding the quality learning initiative, suggesting that a more holistic, comprehensive approach to improving the quality of student learning and teacher training conditions is required. The FTI's current strategy for 'quality improvement' proposes an overly prescriptive approach to literacy (a rapid reading assessment that involves timing how many words can be read in one minute) and intrusive accountability measures. The meeting offered the opportunity to debate these proposals and the FTI secretariat will share revised position papers on these three initiatives.

Towards the end of 2011, the EFA-FTI will hold a 'replenishment' event to secure more and longer-term funding to support its current expansion and future sustainability. In preparation for the event, the EFA-FTI is undertaking a 'rebranding' exercise to find a new, memorable name that more accurately represents its mission.

How you can engage:

Contact your EFA-FTI Constituency Representative on the Board and the GCE to participate in discussions about the policy positions/papers and to find out more information.

If your country is part of the EFA-FTI, contact your education ministry or national education coalition, the EFA-FTI or constituency representative on the Board to find out more and to engage in the Local Education Group, which ensures that funds are committed based on a solid education plan that recognises the role of CSOs and unions.

For more information see:
www.educationfasttrack.org

1 <http://www.educationfasttrack.org/newsroom/focus-on/mid-term-evaluation-of-the-efa-fast-track-initiative/>

2 For a full list of board members
<http://www.educationfasttrack.org/about-fti/organization/fti-board-of-directors/>

3 <http://www.educationfasttrack.org/about-fti/organization/financial-advisory-committee/>

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) is a civil society movement that aims to end the global education crisis, holding governments to account for their promises repeatedly made to provide Education for All. The GCE's mission is to make sure that governments act now to deliver the right of every girl, boy, woman and man to a free quality public education. For more information visit: www.campaignforeducation.org



Challenging those who wish to maintain the status quo and who call for strategies to cope with this world, a growing number of actors have been moved by a sense of indignation, a refusal to take this world for granted and the belief that change is possible.

Global Campaign for Education: towards human dignity and social justice

by Camilla Croso, GCE President

The Global Campaign for Education left Paris strengthened from its 4th General Assembly, which took place between the 21st and 25th of February 2011 and gathered over 200 delegates and observers from all over the world. Through collective debate with its members and in response to the current context, GCE fine tuned its next three-year strategic plan and approved a set of motions which set the stage for its political action in the coming years.

We find ourselves in a global scenario marked by injustice, living through an interrelated set of crises that have affected the entire world, while deep rooted problems persist. The economic, food security and environmental crises that have recently peaked link to entrenched patterns of living and values that surprisingly remain largely unquestioned by parts of our societies. Furthermore, inequitable distribution of wealth and assets, violence, repressive regimes and multiple forms of discrimination continue to undermine and violate the human rights to which we are all entitled. All this points to one core violation: the violation of human dignity.

Amidst this tangle, there has been an inspiring movement of peaceful resistance and change across the globe, breaking the north-south divide, with particular recent highlights including the so-called Arab spring and the various protests in Europe, with a high involvement of youth. Echoing human rights activist Stéphane Hessel's clarion call "*Indignez vous!*", social movements, activists, students and teachers, have coordinated, moved to action and demanded change. As Hessel says, indifference is the worst of attitudes. Challenging those who wish to maintain the status quo and who call for strategies to *cope with* this world, a growing number of actors have been moved by a sense of indignation, a refusal to take this world for granted and the belief that change is possible.

It is within this effervescence that GCE stands, with an unflinching belief in human agency

and collective action towards a world where all can live in dignity, peace and justice, where participatory democracy and active citizenship thrive and where human rights are a way of life, a means and an end. It is with the understanding that human rights are indivisible and interdependent that GCE fights for the fulfillment of the right to education. Education is an enabling right towards the fulfilment of other rights and, as such, the fight for its realisation has to go hand in hand with movements for social, economic and environmental justice, in a scenario of deepened democracy. The alliance of human rights and social movements is thus indispensable.

GCE three-year strategy

The vision and strategies that GCE has set out for the next three years are in tune with this global context. We have placed high on our agenda the promotion of education as a fundamental human right (moving away from reductionist instrumental perspectives of education), the consolidation and strengthening of democracies and social movements and of the Global Campaign for Education itself. In this sense, the GCE intends to weave stronger ties across its network, increasing dialogue and communication with members and fostering collective debate and policy dialogue. It also intends to intensify partnership relations with other networks and social movements, in line with the understanding of human rights as indivisible. It is in this same manner that the GCE wants to carry forward its other strategic

Demanding that States fully finance the right to education implies guaranteeing that there are enough resources for education to be available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable.

objectives: to demand that States fulfill their obligations to fully finance quality education for all, including through international co-operation; and to press for an end to all forms of discrimination, a key obstacle that impedes girls and boys, men and women, from fulfilling their right to education.

Demanding that States fully finance the right to education implies guaranteeing that there are enough resources for education to be available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable. It also requires that States remove obstacles that impede the financing of the right. This means that GCE must tackle macroeconomic issues such as conditionalities, regressive tax systems and macroeconomic policies, as well as growing trends in privatisation.

The deadline of the MDGs and EFA goals, 2015, is just round the corner. It is worth remembering Katarina Tomaševski's observation that *"the exclusion of international human rights law from international education strategies facilitates abuse of power by individual governments and by intergovernmental agencies"* since what has been affirmed as everyone's birthright gets transformed *"into a long-term development goal, which can be broken with impunity"*. As GCE, we want to bring legally-binding human rights frameworks and instruments to the core of our work, recognising that the realisation of human rights is an obligation which must be implemented now.

For further information about GCE contact:
info@campaignforeducation.org

Girls' Education

Girls account for 57% of the 67 million children out-of-school. Once in school, girls are often discriminated against and this can lead to poor retention and under-achievement. ActionAid is working both to increase girls' enrolment in schools and to improve their experience and achievement once they get there.

The TEGINT project seeks to achieve a transformation in the education of girls in Tanzania and Nigeria by addressing underlying gender inequalities and vulnerabilities in school and in the community.

The Stop Violence against Girls in Schools project In Kenya, Ghana and Mozambique, is focused on improving girls participation in school by challenging violence against girls in school and making schools a safer place to be.

**For more information visit:
<http://www.actionaid.org/what-we-do/education>**

Evidence-based advocacy for change: TEGINT research and advocacy workshops

by Louise Wetheridge, TEGINT project coordinator, ActionAid International

Girls have high aspirations for their education; they want to go far, to complete basic education and continue on to university and paid employment. This finding from the baseline study of the TEGINT project is a big challenge in countries where girls' educational achievements overall remain lower than boys'. However, it is a demand that the TEGINT project upholds and aims to facilitate.

During 2007-2009 the TEGINT team conducted extensive baseline research across the 57 schools in northern Tanzania and 72 schools in northern Nigeria in which the project is working. Using quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the study set out to investigate seven areas including girls' views on their schooling, school gender profiles (enrolment, attendance and progression), teachers' conditions, school levies and funding, school management, and gender and generation.

The study was carried out by a partnership of research teams from the Institute of Education, University of London, UK; Bureau for Educational Research and Evaluation, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; Institute for Development Research, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and Usman Dan Fodiyo University, Sokoto, Nigeria; working in collaboration with ActionAid and the project's implementing partners, Maarifa ni Ufunguo in Tanzania and Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP) in Nigeria.

GIRLS' EDUCATION

Key findings from the baseline study

During one-week research and advocacy workshops in early 2011, the project teams in Nigeria and Tanzania, led by the research partners, discussed and synthesised a wealth of data into key baseline findings, upon which we developed a strong consensus. The findings are comprehensively presented in reports published in July 2011.

Some of those findings include:



Kate Holt/Shoot The Earth /ActionAid

Nigeria

- Girls have high aspirations for their education and can identify the obstacles they face and a wide range of solutions, but not in all states or schools.
- A lack of school-level data and limited understanding of its purpose makes it difficult to monitor, assess and act on gender gaps, and the problems of girls' and boys' attendance, progression and attainment.
- Where teachers have higher levels of qualifications, schools do more to support girls' attendance and completion. Better-trained teachers are associated with girls speaking out more about obstacles to completing education and possible solutions.
- Despite legal frameworks, basic education is not free and the levies charged are contributing to girls not attending and progressing in school.
- There are troubling silences and lack of understanding on the part of some teachers, SMCs, village heads and parents concerning the levels of violence girls are exposed to and the effects of poverty on children's schooling. Girls advocate for deepening parental understanding.

Tanzania

- Girls have high aspirations for their education despite concerns with poverty, gender-based violence, the consequences of early pregnancy and marriage and lack of facilities.
- Where teachers have higher levels of qualifications, girls are more able to articulate a wider range of demands for their schooling. Where there are larger numbers of female teachers there is more gender parity in attendance, progression and attainment.
- Government funding for schooling is not sufficient. Many schools where gender parity in attendance, progression and attainment is not a problem are supplementing government funding with very high levies from parents and communities.
- Better levels of gender parity in attendance, progression and attainment are found in schools where SMCs have more women members and are highly proactive.

Nigeria advocacy objectives

1. To increase the number of qualified female teachers by 20% in TEGINT schools by 2012
2. To demand regular government financial support for schools (particularly TEGINT schools) by 2012
3. To abolish all forms of user fees for basic education in three TEGINT states (Niger, Katsina and Nasarawa) by 2012

Tanzania advocacy objectives

1. To demand a review of the teacher deployment policy and ensure that there is at least one female teacher in each TEGINT school by 2013
2. To ensure implementation of national education policy that guarantees funding of at least 10 USD per pupil
3. To secure girls' active participation in SMC meetings by 2013
4. To promote SMC training so that SMC members are able to articulate issues on gender and HIV and AIDS by 2013
5. To enable 70% of girls in TEGINT schools to claim their rights to and in education by 2015

Establishing evidence-based advocacy

Girls' consistently high aspirations for their education emphasise the urgency of translating research findings into targeted action that will better enable girls to attain their goals. In response, TEGINT teams continued in their workshops to plan national campaign and advocacy activities that respond to the findings of the baseline study.

Of particular note was the lack of qualified female teachers, including in TEGINT schools. This is a common problem that results in girls having few role models or confidantes, girls' clubs lacking matrons, and girls experiencing a lack of support and sensitivity for their rights in education. In addition, government funding for education tends to be insufficient and schools' response can be to charge fees and levies to pupils and parents, which discriminate against the poorest. The amount charged varies, but those schools that receive the least government funding tend to charge the most in levies (Tanzania baseline). Lastly, school management committees, where they exist, tend to be male-dominated and under-trained. Girls' views have been barely heard and rarely answered.

In reply to these issues, advocacy objectives were collaboratively specified (see previous page), focusing on urgent findings for which the teams also recognised some existing national traction.

To achieve these objectives, Maarifa and CAPP are implementing a programme of activities throughout 2011-2012, each with detailed time scales, partners and targets. These include policy analysis, stakeholder consultations and alliance-building, training workshops, facilitated visits by government education officials to TEGINT schools, awareness raising through radio jingles, mass letter writing, and peaceful demonstrations. Girls are encouraged to participate in all activities, to raise their voices, share their experiences and demand their rights to a quality education that enables them to achieve their goals, whatever they may be.

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Katier Holt/Shot The Earth /ActionAid

Girls are encouraged to participate in all activities, to raise their voices, share their experiences and demand their rights to a quality education that enables them to achieve their goals, whatever they may be.

The 'Transforming Education for Girls (TEGINT) Project' is run by Maarifa ni Ufunguo in Tanzania and Community Action for Popular Participation in Nigeria, supported by ActionAid and funded by Comic Relief and the Tubney Charitable Trust.

For more information about TEGINT contact louise.wetheridge@actionaid.org

Send my Sister to School – profiling girls' education through TEGINT

by Louise Wetheridge, TEGINT project coordinator, ActionAid International

Maua and Kaltume are two of a number of girls profiled in insightful new films for use in UK schools that have been produced under the 'Transforming Education for Girls in Nigeria and Tanzania' (TEGINT) project. Over 4,000 UK schools have participated in the 2011 Global Campaign for Education 'Send my Sister to School' campaign, using and learning from the materials describing TEGINT schools, communities and girls, like Kaltume and Maua. The materials have inspired young education campaigners globally.

The films include the 'Class of 2015', in which we hear Kaltume and her peers' stories of school. The Class of 2015 follows the successes and struggles of the pupils of Class II in a primary school in Kaduna state, northern Nigeria, all of whom should complete primary school in 2015. Kaduna state has relatively good education indicators, but child marriage and sending boys to school in preference to girls are common. The pupils' progress will be charted alongside Millennium Development Goals 2 & 3 to (2) achieve universal primary education by 2015 and (3) eliminate gender disparity. This first film shows the school environment and teaching staff, parents and community members, and focuses on the personal experiences and aspirations of girls in and out of school.

'Journey back to Tanzania', in which we hear about Maua's experiences of schooling, is a film that returns to a community in Monduli district of northern Tanzania where TEGINT is working. Monduli is a predominantly Maasai ethnic area, where only 35% of adult women

are literate and girls' enrolment in school is historically low. The film speaks to girls about their progress in education, their enjoyments and challenges. The film is complemented by personal video diaries, produced monthly by seven girls in the area, documenting their daily life, family and education. These video diaries have supported the local partner, Maarifa ni Ufunguo, in its efforts to advocate for girls' right to quality basic education.



Kate Holt/Shoot The Earth /ActionAid

Maua

Maua is happy to be in school. She has a school uniform and attends the girls' club at school where she and her friends learn about HIV and AIDS and girls' rights, perform plays and songs. Maua is eleven years old and lives in northern Tanzania.



Kate Holt/Shoot The Earth /ActionAid

Maua and her mother

Kaltume has never been to school. She works so that her family has enough money to survive, but her younger brother attends school. Kaltume is nine years old and lives in northern Nigeria.



Kate Holt/Shoot The Earth /ActionAid

Kaltume and her brother

For more information on Send my Sister to School visit the website at : https://www.actionaid.org.uk/101701/send_my_friend_2011_send_my_sister_to_school.html

For more information on TEGINT contact: louise.wetheridge@actionaid.org

To watch the films go to: <http://www.sendmyfriend.org/teach/spotlight-on-africa>

Baseline to action – partners working together

by Sharon Elliott, SVAGS project manager, ActionAid International

In Kenya, Ghana and Mozambique, ActionAid is coordinating the Stop Violence Against Girls in School project. Now in its third year, the Big Lottery UK funded programme has developed innovative approaches to improving girls' participation in school by analysing and challenging the restrictions that violence in school and in the community places on girls' access to safe, quality education.

The project works with local partners and combines research, advocacy and community action to ensure the issue of violence against girls is addressed at all levels. The research, as well as delivering a wealth of data and understanding, shapes the work in the communities and gives credibility to the national and international advocacy messages.

In 'Baseline to Action' workshops held in all three countries, national research teams presented the findings of the baseline research, a year-long study which aimed to detail:

- the constraints and opportunities to combat gender violence provided by legal frameworks;
- the patterns of violence experienced by girls in school, at home and in the community and its link to the political, social and economic contexts;
- the gendered patterns of enrolment, completion and achievement in the project schools;
- the mechanisms for girls to contest violence, to express their opinions and to influence decisions about matters that concern them.

"MY SHORT SKIRT"

It is not an invitation
It is not a provocation
It is not an indication that
I sell my body

My Short Skirt
It is not asking you to tear it
Nor that you pull it down

My Short Skirt
It is not a social or legal reason
to rape me
Neither does it have anything
to do with you

My Short Skirt
It is mine
Mine
Mine and it has only
to do with me.

*By Madalena, age 12.
A member of Manhiça girls club,
part of the SVAGS project in
Mozambique*

Original Portuguese version of poem:

"A MINHA SAIA CURTA"

*Não é um convite
Não é uma provocação
Não é uma indicação de que
eu me prostituo*

*Minha Saia Curta
Não está a pedir que a rasgues
Nem que a puxes para baixo*

*Minha Saia Curta
Não é uma social ou legal para
me violares
Nem tem nada a ver contigo*

*Minha Saia Curta
É minha
Minha
Minha e tem a ver comigo.*

In the workshops, the programme staff, advocacy and community partners worked together to analyse the findings, clarify or challenge assumptions and to review and prioritise the conclusions and recommendations. While the partners have worked jointly on the project from the outset, these activities placed the baseline research at the heart of the project. The activities to analyse and refine the recommendations led to the development of advocacy messages that were all the more powerful for being clearly supported by empirical data.

The baseline research validated many of the experiences of the community members, but also challenged some long-held beliefs. As the partners worked together to analyse the findings they were able to articulate reasons for these assumptions and to redefine the project activities in light of their new understanding.

Investing in a research component that is designed in collaboration with all the stakeholders and is consistent throughout the life of the project (baseline, mid-term, case studies, end-line) ensures the integrity of SVAGS. It provides a grounded understanding of the structural challenges which community or advocacy work alone would not be able to achieve. By providing regular forums for partners to work together, with the research at the core, the activities and messages that are developed respond directly to the situation and are owned by the implementers who understand explicitly what needs to be done and how to do it.

For more information on the SVAGS project contact: stopviolence@actionaid.org



Reflect and adult learning

Reflect is an innovative approach to adult learning and social change, which fuses the theories of Paulo Freire with the methodologies of participatory rural appraisal. It was developed in the 1990s through pilot projects in Bangladesh, Uganda and El Salvador and is now used by over 500 organisations in over 70 countries worldwide.

Reflect has been successful in linking the literacy acquisition process with individual and community empowerment – strengthening the capacity of millions of people, particularly women, to secure their basic rights. For more information visit the *Reflect* website.

Contacts and information:

Reflect website
(www.reflect-action.org)

Basecamp networking and file sharing site for practitioners (invitation only, contact emma.pearce@actionaid.org)

Facebook page
(www.facebook.com/ReflectAction)

Valuing women's work using *Reflect*

by Rachel Moussié, Women's Rights Advisor – Economic Policy, ActionAid International

Women work all the time. They are the first to wake up when the rest of the family is sleeping and are the last ones to fall asleep at night. Women are traditionally the ones responsible for caring for children, the elderly and the ill. They prepare meals, collect firewood and fetch water to meet their families' needs. These care activities take time and energy even though they are not paid and are done in the home. They add to the many paid activities that women may also be involved in such as petty trading, factory work, or farming.

However, national statistics like GDP (Gross Domestic Product) do not include women's tremendous contribution in caring for their families as part of a country's economic output. Unpaid care work remains invisible even though these activities are critical for human development and social cohesion – they also provide many poor households with basic goods and services they cannot afford to pay for, such as childcare. Unpaid care work may be done out of love for your family, but the lack of public services like water and sanitation,

early childhood education centres, healthcare centres and social protection schemes make unpaid care work difficult. Moreover, around the world unpaid care work is seen as women's work and men are rarely involved in this kind of work.

As a result, women are not able to enjoy many of their human rights. Girls are taken out of school to help with household chores. Women engage in full-time paid work at great physical costs to themselves – not only are their working conditions often dismal, but their workload immense when combined with their activities in the home. Women's sole responsibility for unpaid care work compromises their opportunities to engage in social and political activities such as unions or political groups. Equally important is that women cannot enjoy their right to leisure!

Women's heavy workload and the injustice that results are often discussed in *Reflect* circles. In Nepal, gender workload calendars are used to show the difference between women and men's work. From these visual comparisons, it is evident that women have to do much more work in a day than men, but discussion of the issue does not necessarily lead to a drastic change in women's workload, though some men may be more willing to take up a few unpaid care activities such as collecting water.



Leya Cheyde working at her turkey rearing house in Uganda

James Akana/ActionAid

Men might see it as a threat to their authority if they were expected to collect firewood or cook dinner.

Challenging the norms

Why is it that action to redress women’s unequal workloads is so challenging when the reflection and discussion comes so easily? Part of the answer may be that shifting some of women’s unpaid care work to other family members, especially men, is a process that forces us to revisit ingrained gender norms. Men might see it as a threat to their authority if they were expected to collect firewood or cook dinner. Women may also not want to see some of their unpaid care work taken away from them. For instance, some women may take pleasure in cooking meals or caring for their children. Gender norms are complex and deeply embedded, but they are not fixed. *Reflect* circles and community discussions are spaces where these norms can be negotiated and redefined.

A second part of the answer may be that even if some of this work is shared more equally with men, households living in poverty would still find it difficult to care for their loved ones due to a lack of resources and access to government services. We must also ask what the state can do. For instance, providing water and sanitation services nearby would reduce the time women and girls spend collecting water. Accessible and affordable primary healthcare clinics would support families in caring for the ill, especially in communities with a high HIV and AIDS prevalence rate. Early childhood education centres and crèches in workplaces would allow women with young children to engage in paid work or enjoy some leisure time.

Too often, the demand for these public services is not based on the tremendous benefit they can have for women who would otherwise have to provide these services for

Example: Grid Time Diary

TIME	Paid GDP Work	Unpaid GDP Work	Care of children	Housework
07:00h – 08:00h			X	X
08:00h – 09:00h		X	X	
09:00h – 10:00h	X		X	

their families. It’s time to shift how we frame our demands!

Working with *Reflect*

At ActionAid, the women’s rights team in collaboration with the education team is piloting a new programme on unpaid care work. Based on the *Reflect* approach, it uses a simple time diary tool to document what women do over a period of 24 hours. A rough template of the time diary tool has been developed, but will be adapted and revised by each *Reflect* circle. The time diary tool will be filled out eight times over the course of the *Reflect* circle to allow women to build up their literacy and numeracy skills and for constant reflection and analysis throughout the programme period.

The individual time diaries will be analysed in the *Reflect* circles so that women can draw out similarities and differences while identifying possible solutions. Some of these solutions will be about addressing gender norms that see unpaid care work as only women’s work. In addition, the *Reflect* facilitators will push participants to think critically about how women’s heavy workload infringes on their rights and the responsibility of the state to act. The programme will be piloted in two rural and peri-urban communities each in Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda and Nepal in 2011.

The *Reflect* circles involved are women-only groups led by women *Reflect* facilitators, so that participants can build up their own confidence and organise as women to claim their rights. The *Reflect* circles will engage the community through regular community discussions where time diaries can

be completed with women and men to draw out comparisons and *Reflect* participants can share their collective analysis. Women will then be encouraged and supported to take their demands to local governments, calling for recognition of their unpaid care work and support from the state in basic service provision. The specific demands will of course vary from community to community.

Over the programme period, the ActionAid team will also be working with national women’s rights and economic justice groups to make women’s unpaid care work more visible to policymakers. The aim is for the national coalitions and the different *Reflect* circles to take their demands to the national level.

As our thinking on women’s unpaid care work develops, we are forced to also see the challenges many of us as well as our colleagues face as we try to juggle work and family responsibilities. The process of reflecting on our own unpaid care work is important as we move forward. This is no different for women *Reflect* facilitators who themselves also engage in both paid and unpaid activities.¹ How then do our organisations contribute to women’s already heavy workload and how can we change how we work to leave time for those unpaid care activities that are essential to building communities and maintaining social ties?

For further information on this project contact:
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¹ Notes from Louise Knight, *Reflect Trainer of Trainers in Southern Africa*

The financing literacy project: key findings and reflections on Adult Literacy Benchmark 12

by Mary Cobbett, Financing literacy researcher, ActionAid International

The financing literacy project started in June 2010; five years after the International Benchmarks on Adult Literacy were published by the Global Campaign for Education. Benchmark 12 stated that: *'Governments should dedicate at least 3% of their national education sector budgets to adult literacy programmes. Where governments deliver on this, international donors should fill any remaining resource gaps'*. The financing literacy project set out to collect data on exactly what governments are spending.

When Benchmark 12 was agreed, there was awareness that adult literacy was drastically underfunded and marginalised within education ministries around the world. One reason for the neglect of adult literacy is the belief that the best, and most cost-effective, long-term strategy to achieve literacy is to focus on primary education, which will lead to future generations of adults growing up literate. This reasoning is problematic for several reasons: it paints an overly optimistic picture of the potential of universal primary education in many countries, it ignores the role of adult literacy in children's education and it means denying millions of adults their right to literacy.

However, while the neglect of literacy was well established, there was a lack of information about how much governments were actually spending. This lack of data meant that tracking progress was

difficult and there was uncertainty about whether the 3% target proposed in the International Benchmarks on Adult Literacy was appropriate. Therefore, the financing literacy project was started to collect and collate data on government spending on literacy and adult education internationally. Additionally, the project has conducted case study research on a range of countries that have increased their investment in adult literacy. This has enabled the project to look at both the quantity and quality of literacy financing.

The aims of this article are twofold: firstly, it will provide a brief overview of some of the key trends identified from the data and secondly, in the light of the findings, it will reflect on the usefulness of Benchmark 12 and offer some broader thoughts about the recording, analysing and tracking of data on literacy financing.

Key findings

Data on government spending on adult literacy and adult education was found for around forty countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America. A summary table is provided overleaf. The full collection of data can be found at: <http://www.reflect-action.org/financingliteracy> and this probably constitutes the largest existing collection of data on literacy financing. Data was collected from CONFINTEA reports, Education Sector Plans and other government and civil society sources. More data was found than expected. Where data could not be found this was often an indicator that little investment was being made in literacy – and sometimes this was officially acknowledged. For example, the education plan for Belize states that: 'a primary goal for the ALE sector would be to have a specific budgetary allocation from the government'. This highlights the role that international targets could play in assisting national advocacy efforts.

- No country has reached the 3% benchmark, although two countries have come close. South Africa reportedly spent 2.78% of the education budget on adult literacy in 2008 and Brazil 2.76% in 2006.
- Countries including Chad, Thailand, Burkina Faso and Brazil have increased the percentage of the education budget allocated to adult literacy or adult education.
- A larger number of countries have decreased their allocations



Adult literacy in Uganda

ActionAid

Government spending on adult education and adult literacy as a percentage of the education budget

Country	Year	% of education budget spent on adult education	% of education budget spent on adult literacy
Africa			
Cape Verde	2005	8.71%	
Chad	2001		1.58%
Equatorial Guinea	2008	19.50%	0.65%
Eritrea	1997		
Gambia	2008	0.30%	
Ghana*	2015	1.30%	
Guinea	1990-2000	0.02%	
Kenya	1998-2008	Less than 1%	
Malawi	2007-2008		0.15%
Mali	2008	1.40%	
Mauritania	2005		0.36%
Mozambique*	2010	0.70%	
Namibia*	2007/2008	3.08%	
Nigeria	2008	1.41%	
Rwanda	2008		0.50%
Senegal	2008		0.70%
Sierra Leone*	2007	0.10%	
South Africa	2009		2.07%
Zambia	2010		0.01%
Asia			
Cambodia	2008	2%	
China	2006	1.86%	
India	2008		0.02%
Lao	2006-07	1%	
Nepal	2005/6	1.13%	
Pakistan	2009-2010		0.37%
Papua New Guinea	2005	4.60%	
Thailand	2007	1.73%	
Vietnam	2005	2.83%	
Latin America			
Bolivia	Annually	3.22%	
Brazil	2008		0.82%
Columbia	2008		0.26%
Costa Rica	Annually	0.02%	
Dominican Republic	2008	2.72%	
Guatemala	Annually		Less than 1%
Jamaica	2007	0.78%	
Peru*	2011	7.27%	
St Lucia	2007/8	14%	

■ Where there are spaces, no figures are available ■ Countries with a * next to the name show planned spending from Education Sector Plans
 ■ The full collection of figures is available at: <http://www.reflect-action.org/financingliteracy>

to adult education and adult literacy as a percentage of the education budget and these include Pakistan, Malawi, Mauritania, Nigeria, China and the Gambia.

- For some of these countries (e.g. Nigeria and China) real spending on adult education has actually increased while the proportion spent has decreased. For others (such as Pakistan and Malawi) there have been real decreases in

spending on adult education. However, even where spending has increased in real terms, decreasing percentages still indicate that adult education is being deprioritised relative to other sectors and is therefore not receiving the benefits of increasing overall funds to education.

- Some countries (such as Vietnam and Ghana) have increased real spending on adult

literacy or education in line with increased overall allocations to education, but have kept the percentage spent at a fixed allocation (1.3% on adult education in Ghana and 2.83% on adult education in Vietnam).

- In some cases, decreases in spending have been explicitly linked to pressure to divert resources away from adult education to the primary sector.

Reflections

- **3% as an appropriate target:** It is recognised that there are problems with deciding on a global target for spending when the needs in different countries are so different. This said, the research indicates that a target is indeed useful as it provides a reference point for national level advocacy. 3% seems to be an appropriate target as it is large enough to make an impact if reached, yet feasible in size. Other targets on adult literacy show consensus on the appropriateness of the 3% target. For example, the outcome document for the Asia-Pacific CONFINTEA VI preparatory conference states in its recommendations that *'Allocations to adult learning and education should be at least 6% of the education budget'* and the Latin American document recommends that *'3% of education budgets should be spent on Youth and Adult Education'*. The Bonn Declaration on financing adult education states that governments should: *'Allocate a minimum of 6% of GNP to education within which a minimum of 6% is for adult education, reserving half of this for adult literacy programmes where required'*. The African CONFINTEA VI document stops short of setting a target but does state that: *'the current attempts to establish minimum funding benchmarks as a percentage of national education budgets should be intensified'*. This shows broad agreement that a global target on literacy financing is appropriate.
- **Pegging literacy spending to sustain financing:** In addition to low spending, fluctuating and inconsistent spending pose serious threats to the likelihood of long-term literacy programmes being implemented. In fact, as we have seen in Latin America with the dubious declaration of 'illiteracy free zones', short-term high spending

can be a way for states to excuse themselves from the responsibility of spending on literacy in the future. Therefore, advocating for pegged spending in order to sustain financing is also important.

- **The EFA-FTI and adult literacy:** The Education for All Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) was set up to mobilise and coordinate donor resources for education. It has in fact focused almost exclusively on financing primary school education, making a mockery out of the title 'Education for All'. The EFA-FTI website states: 'Any low-income country which can demonstrate serious commitment to achieving Universal Primary Enrolment can receive support from FTI'. Given this focus, developing country governments are unlikely to include adult literacy in education sector plans submitted to the FTI for endorsement. There are signs of change and the FTI has now endorsed a small number of education sector plans with adult literacy components. However, the FTI should widen its focus to explicitly include adult literacy, thereby encouraging more governments to include literacy in plans they submit.
- **International aid and state responsibility:** International aid to adult literacy should be encouraged but it should not absolve states of responsibility.

Burkina Faso was one of the first countries to have an Education Sector Plan with a significant adult literacy component endorsed by the Fast Track Initiative. Additionally, the Fund for Literacy and Non Formal Education (FONAENF) was set up to mobilise and collect funds from different sources. These two factors have been successful in increasing overall funds available for literacy in Burkina Faso – FONAENF total funds increased from FCFA 1,396,067,980 to 6,740,430,479 in 2007. Accompanying this has been a large increase in the number of learners enrolled on literacy programmes. However, it is not clear whether spending on literacy emanating from the state has actually increased during this period – even though FONAENF funds are often reported as if they constitute state spending. It is important that international aid be used to fill gaps that cannot be covered by states, and not to absolve states of responsibility.

The financing literacy project was started to collect and collate data on government spending on literacy and adult education internationally. Additionally, the project has conducted case study research on a range of countries that have increased their investment in adult literacy. This has enabled the project to look at both the quantity and quality of literacy financing.

- **Quantity versus quality in literacy financing, the need for more detailed figures:** Even more difficult than finding figures on the financing of literacy is finding figures that break down what literacy funds are actually spent on. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to examine the *quality* of literacy financing. Overall figures on the financing of literacy tell us very little about the amount that is spent on paying and training facilitators, factors that, as the Benchmarks recognise, are integral to high quality programmes. The relative amount that is spent on these

aspects does not *necessarily* correlate to overall high and low spending. Therefore, advocacy efforts aimed at encouraging governments to publish figures detailing what they spend literacy funds on, as well as how much is spent, are important.

- **Getting a reasonable percentage of the education budget allocated to adult literacy is only the first step:** accountability mechanisms also need to be in place to ensure that allocated budgets are actually released. The research found that allocations for Adult Education are sometimes not fully released, with the implication that they are optional extras which can be diverted to the school system if necessary (Aitchison and Alidou, 2009). For example, in Mali NFE was allocated between 0.6-2.9% of the education sector budget in the years 2004-2008, but only 1.4% of the allocated budget was distributed (African Platform for Adult Education, 2008). In Brazil and Peru too recorded figures for actual expenditure on adult education are frequently lower than figures for allocated expenditure. In other countries, informal conversations with those involved in the literacy sector cast doubt on the likelihood that recorded figures were actually spent in their countries. Therefore, budget tracking is a key area of focus for advocacy efforts around the financing of literacy.

The tables on the financing of adult literacy are a work in progress. If you have more accurate or up-to-date figures for your country please get in touch with us so that we can amend the tables accordingly. Likewise, we would love to hear from you if you have an interesting case study or have carried out research or advocacy on the financing of literacy in your country or region.

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Counting Seeds for Change, a framework for participatory evaluation – two years on

by Kas M. J. Cascant i Sempere (Spain) & Zakir Hossain Sarker (Bangladesh)

With contributions from: Altino Gaita, Isilda Colofua, Sidsel Koordt et al (Angola), Ann Stickle, Janet Monaghan et al (Cambodia), Millicent Akoto (Ghana), Mamadou Kaly Drame (Guinée-Conakry), Akhil Chandra, Sunita Shahi & Arif Rasheed (India), Mamadou T. Diarra, Moussa Aliou Maiga, Sue Upton et al (Mali), Nar Limbu & Roshan Dhakal (Nepal), Emma Pearce (UK), Gugu Memela, Yoemna Saint et al (South Africa), Hillary Musarurwa (Zimbabwe)

Counting Seeds for Change, the *Reflect* Evaluation Framework (REF), was developed in response to the need for a coherent framework to evaluate and compare *Reflect* initiatives around the world, while taking into account the very different situations in which such initiatives take place. It brings together tools used for the participatory evaluation of *Reflect* by practitioners worldwide. In 2008 and 2009 the South African *Reflect* Network (SARN) facilitated the creation of the REF using a participatory process involving *Reflect* practitioners from more than 40 countries. The REF was published in mid 2009 and is now available in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. It has been widely distributed to *Reflect* practitioners internationally, with regional training, translations and adaptations made. Pilots took place in Bangladesh and Mali in 2010 and a number of organisations in other countries have already reported working successfully with it. Here is an update two years after publication.

Training on the REF

Regional workshops

Asia Regional REF in Bangladesh, March 2010, 5 days, 27 participants, 7 countries

West Africa Regional REF in Mali, April 2010, 5 days, 22 participants, 8 countries

Southern Africa Regional REF in Zimbabwe, October 2010, 7.5 days, 29 participants, 7 countries

Country workshops

Guinea Conakry (April 09), India (June 10), Mali (Nov 10), Angola (Nov 10, Feb 11, April 11 & May 11), Bangladesh (April 11), Mozambique (Nov 10 & June 11), Nepal (April 11), Sierra Leone (May 11), Guinea Conakry / Mali (June 11), South Africa (Aug 11), Zimbabwe (End 2011), Malawi (2012).

Have you carried out training on the REF in your country or are you planning to do so? Let us know.

Regional Workshops

Regional workshops on the REF were held in Bangladesh (Asia), Mali (West Africa) and Zimbabwe (Southern Africa) involving participants from across the three regions.

Bangladesh workshop

In March 2010, the *Reflect* Asia Network arranged a five-day regional workshop in Dhaka. Some 27 participants from seven countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Vietnam) joined the workshop, including *Reflect* circle facilitators,

trainers and managers and ActionAid Impact Assessment & Shared Learning officers. Participants shared their experiences of participatory evaluation, experimented with new tools from the REF and carried out their own evaluation of the workshop itself. Training of facilitator workshops were also run at local level in Bangladesh. Practitioners were supported with field visits and REF committees were set up at community, organisational and national level.

Mali workshop

In April 2010, Pamoja West Africa, in collaboration with the Malian organisation Jeunesse et Développement (J&D), organised the West African regional workshop in Yanfolila. The five-day workshop brought together 22 participants from eight countries (Benin, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Liberia, Mali and Togo). Participants were selected from members of national Pamojas who had experimented with tools from the Framework in their home countries. The workshop provided a platform for sharing these experiences and suggestions for amending and enriching the REF. The group visited *Reflect* circles and found out how a number of the tools had been used in the baseline analysis of J&D's Yanfolila Development Programme.



Bangladesh REF training

ActionAid

The tools demonstrated in the *Reflect* circles were the *Project Fish* (tool 40) in Morifina and the *Literacy scale* (tool 18) in Balanfina:

- In Morifina, the facilitator chose to analyse the setting up of the *Reflect* circle using the project fish. A big fish was drawn to symbolise the *Reflect* circle and little fishes were added showing the elements needed to make it work successfully.
- In Balanfina, the facilitator explained the Literacy scale using a picture of a paraffin lamp, comparing the different levels of paraffin with levels of literacy. For reading evaluation, participants took it in turns to read a text to the rest of the group. After each reading the facilitator, the reader and the rest of the group agreed the level attained. For writing evaluation, the facilitator asked each participant to write the first two sentences of the text in their exercise books. After correcting the writing as a group, each woman identified her level, in agreement with the rest of the group.

Zimbabwe workshop

In October 2010, the PENYA Trust, in collaboration with dvv international and the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa, organised the Southern Africa regional workshop in Mutare. The training took place over 7.5 days with a total of 29 participants from seven countries (Angola, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe).

Participatory Evaluation

- Involves circle members
- Involves various stakeholders and perspectives (internal and external vision)
- Special focus on circle-led M&E
- Uses self-evaluation
- Uses peer-learning
- Uses visuals / PRA
- Is contextualised

Source: Zimbabwe REF workshop



Zimbabwe: regional workshop

Piloting the REF:

Bangladesh, India and Mali

The REF was developed as a flexible tool to be adapted to local context. However, piloting was indispensable to ensure that it met its objectives as closely as possible. Starting in January 2010 and with funding from OSI, the REF was piloted by J&D in Mali and by ActionAid and partners in Bangladesh and India, with further experimentation by practitioners in other countries across Africa and Asia. As well as gathering important information about the use of *Reflect*, the training workshops and pilots served to review the REF, with practitioners proposing new tools and identifying potential problems.

New evaluation tools have been shared during training and exchanges. These include: the Classification matrix (Togo), the Community map (Guinea-Bissau), the Iceberg (UK), the Evaluation line (Bangladesh workshop), the Evaluating the evaluation tools matrix (Zimbabwe workshop), the clouds of non-written materials created by circles [complementing the clouds of written materials, tool 70] (Angola), the Adilson-Casimiro diagram to evaluate the community magazine Ndandu (Angola) and the Handprints of objectives (South Africa).

Country updates

The REF has been used and adapted for different objectives. In Angola, it has been used to develop a facilitators' guide. In South Africa it has been used to plan and monitor the facilitators' learning units. In Mali and Bangladesh it has been used to monitor and evaluate *Reflect* programmes. Cambodia and India have used it to carry out visual and participatory final evaluations.

Angola: M&E at the heart of *Reflect*

The Angolan Association of Adult Education (AAEA) found that M&E reports from facilitators tended to lack concrete analysis, containing vague comments such as 'going well'. In November 2010, a new M&E facilitator guide was created with a selection of six tools taken from the REF: *the Farmer* (tool 01), *the Motivation tree* (tool 47), *the Literacy scale* (tool 18), *Seeds for change* (tool 23), *the Most Significant Change* (MSC, tool 28), *the Attendance list* (tool 56) and *the Circle profile* (tool 51). The choice of tools was based on what the facilitators found useful and easy to work with, on donor requirements and on the views of the technical team and external consultants. The facilitators had already used some of the tools before: the new challenge was for *all* the circles to do it together.

The M&E guide has not only improved the quality of feedback but also puts M&E at the heart of



Angola: participants from the Porto Ambiom circle use the soup game to evaluate literacy skills

Reflect. The evaluation is an integral part of the learning and action cycle of the circles and is visual, shared, discussed, written, participatory and active – just like *Reflect*. Another positive development is the M&E feedback loop. M&E starts in the *Reflect* circle and networks, then local coordinators, technical team and donors. However the organisation also ensures that M&E information comes back to the circles. This is done through support visits and through the community radio and the community bulletin *Ndandu*. AAEA now plans to produce an M&E guide for the technical team covering analysis of the literacy environment and the role of facilitators & trainers, including self-evaluation and peer-review.

“A lot is said in general, but [Seeds for Change] allows us to go into detail. We need to prove what we do. Do literacy skills prompt change or do they not? ... This is a very important moment in the life of AAEA. We are introducing lots of tools. They show that Aplica [Reflect] is different, that it has its own way of analysing its work. The same for other countries. I am proud to be part of this family”.

Vitor, AAEA president, Angola

Bangladesh: Using the REF for ongoing M&E

Pilots of the REF were carried out in two areas, Sirajgonj and Jaipurhat, involving 900 *Reflect* participants from 36 circles. At circle level, the participants used a variety of evaluation tools, including the *Reflect flower* (tool 3), *the Literacy scale* (tool 18), *the Numeracy scale* (tool 19), *Crossing the river* (tool 24), *the MSC* (tool 28) and *the Sustainability matrix* (tool 42) to monitor and evaluate their *Reflect* programme. The participants found the tools easy to use, interesting and participatory. They also critiqued the REF, pointing out how tools could be improved.

Reflect participants and facilitators welcomed the REF since it introduced a structured and participatory approach to monitoring and evaluating *Reflect* programmes. They plan to expand the use of the Framework in future. In fact ActionAid Bangladesh has already rolled it out in all of its Local Rights Programmes through its central M&E unit and involving 30 M&E officers at partner level. Other *Reflect*-implementing organisations in Bangladesh, including ASHRAI, CARE Bangladesh, CODEC and VARD, are also interested in using the Framework.

Tools from the REF – the Most Significant Change (MSC, Tool 28)

The MSC is not just about conventional storytelling. It demands that the story be told in an organised way focusing on *what, who, when* and *where*. It is particularly successful when used in conjunction with the *Growing seeds for change tool* (tool 23), which helps participants to analyse what made change happen (for example, literacy, communication or group solidarity).

This tool was used very successfully in Bangladesh where facilitators collected a number of success stories using the tool. ActionAid Bangladesh hopes to publish these stories to share with stakeholders at home and abroad.

Cambodia: Using the REF in a final project evaluation

ADRA Cambodia used the REF to evaluate the major outputs of its Literacy for Women’s Health and Empowerment project. Just over 200 women from *Reflect* circles and literacy groups in 16 villages in Pursat Province were involved in the evaluation. Fieldwork took place in February 2010, seven months after the end of the project. There were two evaluation teams – each responsible for one district including *Reflect* and literacy groups.

The evaluation used nine practical tools from Counting Seeds for Change: *the Oral scale bottles* (tool 20), *the Action plan tree* (tool 21), *Growing seeds for change* (tool 23), *the MSC* (tool 28), *the Comparing attitudes & practices matrix* (tool 30), *Literacy habits game* (tool 36), *Project fish* (tool 40), *Motivation tree* (tool 47) and *the Maturity diagram* (tool 55). The tools provided qualitative data using open-ended questions in a ‘focus group’ approach, and quantitative information through voting and self-assessment activities. According to the evaluation report: *“The informal feel of the evaluation, with a general ‘focus group’ approach and ‘semi-structured’ interviews, provided a positive indication of the women’s growth in literacy and empowerment. There was much enthusiasm and participation in the evaluation activities and many women were proactive in sharing stories of their increased literacy, knowledge, skills and practical application around the topics of health, supporting their family, a lifestyle of wellness and attitude towards HIV and AIDS... The evaluation tools were obviously key in ‘emancipating’ the women – these came from the Counting Seeds – providing constant engagement and easy and enjoyable to implement!”*

Did you know that the evaluation tools used in Cambodia came from as far afield as: Angola (motivation tree), Burkina Faso (maturity diagram), Lesotho (literacy habits game), South Africa (growing seeds) and the UK (the bottles)?

India: Using the REF for participatory evaluation in Dalit and tribal communities

Two practitioners from India attended the REF training in Bangladesh and an India M&E training workshop was then held in June at Lucknow. *Reflect* facilitators and coordinators from four states, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Madhya Pradesh, actively participated, developing their own *Reflect* M&E Framework based

on the tools in the REF. During the workshop 10 of the REF tools were discussed and practised using a participatory approach, so that by the end of the training programme participants were confident to practise the tools in their respective contexts. They also prepared an evaluation plan and timeframe.

The India *Reflect* Unit then supervised the piloting of the Framework by two ActionAid partner organisations: Parmarth in Uttar Pradesh and Prayas in Uttarakhand. Data was collected using five REF tools: *the MSC* (tool 28), *the Literacy scale* (tool 18), *the Numeracy scale* (tool 19), *the Sustainability matrix* (tool 42) and *the Crossing the river bridge* (tool 24). A total of 30 *Reflect* circles were involved, with 552 women participants from Dalit and tribal communities. The evaluations found that although the women and girls benefitted directly from the *Reflect* programme, indirectly the whole community benefitted in one way or other. The tools provided the organisations with genuine participant feedback, helping them to accurately document their successes and challenges.

“The M&E tools developed with the participation of grassroots level Reflect practitioners and the subsequent training gives ownership feeling to the village people and they feel good to express their achievements in an interesting participatory manner through verbal as well as practical way of detailing out their success stories. It could not be possible without the help, support and pain taken by the Reflect facilitators and other responsible persons engaged in Reflect. The international community also deserves accolades in this regard to help out the Reflect practitioners to document their works in such an interesting and in consonance with the Reflect graphical approach to empowerment”.

Concluding remarks from the India REF report

Mali: Using the REF to collect baseline data

Funded by the Methodist Relief & Development Fund, J&D’s Yanfolila Community Development Programme started in 2007. It aims to improve living conditions in communities in the communes of Wassoulou Ballé and Gouanan in Yanfolila by helping them to reduce their levels of vulnerability and by offering civic education and support for local governance.

In order to strengthen the work of the women’s groups on health and savings and credit and give them more control over their situation, J&D supported the women to set up a mutual health insurance scheme. J&D used the REF to collect baseline data, to allow them to understand the existing situation and later to monitor and evaluate the programme in 25 villages in Wassoulou Ballé. A workshop was held with local facilitators to train them in the use of *Reflect* and the REF. Facilitators used the following REF tools to carry out the baseline study: *Checklist for baseline data study* (tool 12), *Literacy scale* (tool 18), *Numeracy scale* (tool 19), *SWOT analysis* (tool 38), *Project fish* (tool 40), *I joined Reflect because...* (tool 48) *Attendance list* (tool 56) and the *Checklist for the observation of a circle meeting* (tool 66).

Overall, those involved in the Yanfolila project felt that the REF was well put together and the

content extremely rich. They felt that the tools were varied and worked well together. They also said that the tools had been very popular with the women involved, who had been able to see how much they had achieved through their activities. They recommended that practitioners focus on those that used images, as the majority of participants did not have high levels of literacy.

Nepal: Sharing learning

Reflect practitioners from Nepal who attended the Bangladesh training shared their learning with fellow practitioners in the Forum for Popular Education and the national *Reflect* network in Nepal. They have also used a number of the tools in their work in Nepal, including:

- *The Reflect flower* (tool 3) to explore the principles of *Reflect*;
- *The MSC* (tool 28) to share each others experience and learning;
- *The Motivation tree* (tool 47) to map out participants’ plans and expectations.

Tools from the REF – ***Crossing the river* (tool 24)**

The Family Literacy Programme (FLP) from KwaZulu-Natal used the *Crossing the river* tool in a facilitators’ team week in February 2011. Participants used the tool to analyse literacy practices in the home before and after FLP came into their lives. FLP was seen as the bridge to change. According to trainer Jill



Mali: Ganama Coura village

Frow, the facilitators enjoyed drawing colourful pictures and shared a great deal of information. For instance, facilitator Zenzile Shelembe said: “*The time I didn’t know about FLP in my home I didn’t even read a book and I didn’t help my children in [their] homework; [the] only thing I knew was to work in my garden and clean my house and visit my friends... But when FLP came into my home I [am] always helping my children in homework, reading the books together and also playing with them*”.



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Zimbabwe: crossing the river tool to evaluate action plans and social change

Tools from the REF – **PRA clouds (tool 62)**

The Adult Learning Centre SHARE (Western Cape) used some of the REF tools in its ToF in October 2010. THE PRA clouds tool was used to analyse the variety of PRA tools used by facilitators in their circles. According to trainer Sonia Hindley, the most popular PRA tool (or biggest cloud) used by facilitators was the Tree and the least known, the River. It was found that only tools taught at training were being used (tree, river, matrix, map, posters), the tools facilitators were comfortable with. However, during the ToF the facilitators were already beginning to incorporate new tools such as the *Reflect* flower and *Reflect* fish in their planned learning units.

Ten challenges and suggestions for the next edition of *Counting Seeds*

1. Include the **NEW TOOLS** gathered during training and exchanges.
2. More **VISUALS** need to be collected from countries (or tools adapted visually), so that circles with low levels of literacy can use them. Many of the REF tools are too wordy.
3. The evaluation of **NUMERACY** needs special attention. Practitioners felt that the steps of progression in numeracy were not as clear as those for literacy and found the Numeracy scale (tool 19) difficult to use.
4. A chapter should be included on **GENDER** and the evaluation of women’s empowerment.
5. It is important to evaluate both **RESULTS** (changes, achievements...) and **PROCESSES** (power relations...). While there are already tools for both in the REF, more emphasis could be put on the distinction, perhaps with a symbol against each tool.
6. The REF is not just about qualitative evaluation. Special attention should be given to the fact that participatory and visual approaches can be very effective in collecting **QUANTITATIVE DATA**. Participatory tools that can be used to collect numerical data that can later be aggregated include: *Maturity diagrams* (tool 55), *Attendance list* (tool 56), *Circle calendars* (tool 57) and *The basket of numbers* (tool 80). More conventional data collection tools are also present in the REF, such as the *Annual data collection form* (tool 13) and the *Census of circles* (tool 52). These quantitative tools could perhaps be marked with a special symbol.
7. Most of the REF tools can be **AGGREGATED** in order to show impact across a large number of circles. This was the case with the *Literacy mountain* (tool 18) in India. Another example is the *MSC* (tool 28) in Angola, where practitioners are planning to collect one story per circle and then organise them according to topic. The REF proves that M&E efforts can be participatory and systematic.
8. Special attention should be paid to **EVALUATION FOR LITERACY, LEARNING AND EMPOWERMENT** so that the experience of evaluation is transformative for participants. For example, *when participants take the register* (tool 56) themselves, they practice their writing and reading skills, evaluate their own attendance and group energy, and also learn a valuable tool.
9. It is important to think about the **REF STRATEGY** as we move forward. Where do we want to see the REF in the long-term? Questions might include:
 1. What relationship do we want between *participatory evaluation* and non-participatory evaluation? Should the first complement or substitute the second?
 2. What strategies can we follow to make external evaluations more participatory and complement them with internal, ongoing, community M&E?
 3. How can we work with donors and governments to encourage them to embrace innovation and be flexible in the way organisations prove their contributions to social change?
10. The current edition of *Counting Seeds for Change* is effectively a toolbox or resource book. Future editions should include an **OUTLINE FRAMEWORK**, although this should be adaptable according to context.



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Angola: the soup game

Looking ahead

Although the REF has now been piloted with positive results in Mali and Bangladesh, and training and implementation has taken place in a number of countries across Africa and Asia, we feel that we are just at the beginning of an exciting journey. Participants will continue to improve and adapt the tools and new ideas are constantly emerging.

We have yet to see a project use the REF from the stage of baseline study through to final evaluation. We hope that the REF will enrich the whole project cycle. We also hope that external evaluators will find in the REF a useful resource to make their evaluation consultancies more participatory. Finally, we hope that participatory M&E becomes an integrated part of the *Reflect* cycle.

It is important that we continue to monitor the use of the REF and to support practitioners in its use, encouraging them to share their tools, experiences, challenges and ideas with colleagues internationally. We hope in the near future to carry out an online debate similar to that which was used to develop the REF, in order to assess its use and map a way forward.

Reflect UK – language and literacy for social change
Using visual imagery and participatory methods to write a campaigning article for publication

by Becky Winstanley, Reflect UK

In this project the *Reflect* UK team worked with the campaign group, Justice 4 Domestic workers, linked with Unite the Union. Justice 4 Domestic Workers is run by and for migrant workers. Most of the campaign members are domestic workers forced to work abroad, without ever seeing their families, because of extreme poverty in their home countries. They have an active campaign to improve conditions in this country including visa rights, employment rights and exposing abuse from employers.

The *Reflect* UK team spent a couple of days working with the campaign group with particular focus on development of language and literacy skills for empowerment and as key tools for their campaigning work. We used aspects of participatory and critical pedagogical methods to explore issues of importance to the group and facilitate language and literacy development.

We worked with *Reflect* visual graphics to produce two complex

visual texts. One was a river documenting the experiences that the migrant domestic workers had had since leaving their home countries and the other was a tree documenting the issue of not having a visa. The visuals were built up by drawing symbols, small pictures or key words to represent events or concepts. In the river for example, for example, participants drew a crocodile eating a man to represent corruption in home



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Tree: Causes and impacts of not having a visa

countries. The finished visual texts were powerful pieces of literacy in their own right and contained a whole range of complex ideas, descriptions and experiences. The participants became the co-authors of these texts. As the visual imagery can only be read by the co-authors of the text we decided to transcribe the visual into a written piece for publication in a magazine.



River: Life journey

Participatory planning for writing
Students decide their own success criteria for writing an article: an empowering and effective process

As a first stage to the writing task, we worked with the group to establish a plan for what was needed for a written article for publication. Participants worked in two groups discussing the question, ‘What makes a good article?’ We encouraged them to think of English and their own language. They wrote their ideas on petals and then we created a collective flower, which documented ideas on aspects of a good article.

They had many very good ideas about newspaper and magazine articles; even though most, if not all, had never written one before and all felt that it was a task beyond their capabilities.

This participatory planning enabled us to tap into and use participants’ existing knowledge when writing. This is exciting because it validates their own experiences and it is also very effective as it provides clarity for students regarding the purpose of language and literacy tasks. It is exciting because the students come up with many rich and interesting ideas that the facilitator would perhaps not consider.

Working with students in this way to identify important aspects of

a text also allows the facilitator to delegate responsibility for planning. This allows for a broader perspective on valuable areas for literacy development and allows participants more control and ownership over what is, after all, their writing. All the ideas put forward were interesting aspects of literacy to assess and develop and were as important to work on as



▲ **Flower: What makes a good article?**

▶ **The group**



anything documented in the various curricula used by language and literacy teachers. This relates to one of the core *Reflect* values, which sees the teacher as student and the student as teacher.

Using the article to develop literacy skills

After drafting the article, we spent some looking at the grammar and vocabulary and talked about any changes we needed. Participants were really keen to make their own changes and think about improvements to the piece. One group worked on a few tense errors and one group worked on making simple sentences into compound and complex sentences. One group had written their ideas in bullet type form, which was actually quite powerful but they decided to change this into full sentences anyway. This was a mixed literacy group and there were a couple of beginner readers and writers. Because we were using

the visuals, these participants were able to contribute their ideas, which were scribed by the more confident writers. Once the paragraphs had been written, the beginner readers found that they were able to read it and this was hugely satisfying for the group. There were all sorts of literacy activities going on the same time, bound together by the strong collective focus on the text. The finished article, a combination of the texts from both visuals, was an impressive piece of literature, which could either be published as it was or further worked on.

At the end of the two-day workshop the participants had

achieved much. There was the growing sense that larger literacy tasks, such as writing for publication, were not actually out of their reach, especially if this work was done collaboratively. They produced two striking visual texts and a written document of their experiences, both of which could be adapted and used in many aspects of their campaigning work. In the campaign group there were beginner readers and writers who, through the collaborative process, saw their ideas and experiences become written text and were able to read back these experiences in a previously unknown script. Like all empowering education work, all these things opened doors to new possibilities, both individual and collective.

For further information on *Reflect* UK contact: reflect.esol@actionaid.org.

Journey of a Migrant Domestic Worker

Article by participants in the *Reflect UK*
Justice 4 Domestic Workers workshop

Why we decided to leave our country

The government didn't help us to provide proper education, health, housing and proper work to the poor community. That's why we decided to leave our country to work abroad to earn enough money to feed our family and to give good education and proper health to our families. It was hard to leave our families but we didn't have another choice. It was a big sacrifice to leave our families behind.

Life and experiences in Middle East

We went to Saudi Arabia for work, but we found the situation very hard. We didn't have enough rest and sleep, working for long hours with little salary. They refused to increase the salary after working for many years and some of them treated us inhumanly. Our life was like a bird in the cage.

In the UK we earn to support our families. We can have good clothes and food and we can give good education for our children. We can lead a better life. We can save money for our future. However, in the UK we have got many problems about our passport and visa, which we must renew. Our employers don't pay tax and national insurance. They don't give us pay slips and they pay less salary.

Some of us have employment problems after running away from previous employers. We don't have passports. We have problems in communication because we don't understand English and cannot speak English very well. Some of us are employed but our employers don't give us bank holidays and some of us are live-in workers and we don't have food allowance. We have problems getting a visa. No money for the visa or other expenses.

It is now so difficult to find a job. We don't know who to ask for help to earn financially and for moral support to express our rights. The employers don't want to declare the right salary because they don't want to pay more tax and National Insurance. We got health problems because of long hours of work.

What happens to us if we have no visa

We will be in trouble because we will be undocumented. Our employers will abuse us if we don't have a visa. UKBA can arrest us and we will face deportation. It will be difficult to find a job because employers are afraid to hire undocumented workers, as they will also be in trouble. We cannot support our families. We will lose everything (no food, no shelter). It is difficult to go directly to the GP or in hospital because we are afraid. We cannot access education in any colleges or universities.

We need to campaign. MPs listen to our voice. We need our rights. We need to express our feelings. Some employers don't care. We feel afraid to talk to them. We need holiday pay. We need to respect each other. We need our minimum wage.



Justice for Domestic Workers was established on March 15, 2009. It is an organisation of Migrant Domestic Workers who work in private houses in the UK.

We are mainly women, though we do have men who are members. We come from the countries of Asia and Africa including India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Nigeria and others. Some of us had to escape from abusive employers, it was our only means of surviving.

Finding one another and sharing our experiences is a great refuge. Together, we unite to campaign for our freedom, rights and justice.

For more information:
<http://www.kalayaan.org.uk/>
or email:
justice4_dw@yahoo.co.uk



Reflect update – West Africa

by Sue Upton, Pamoja West Africa Coordinator

Pamoja West Africa brings together 12 national networks of *Reflect* practitioners and supporters from Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone countries in the sub-region and is part of Pamoja, the Africa *Reflect* Network.

In 2010 *Reflect* networking continued to grow in the sub region with the creation of Pamoja Liberia, Principle activities included a sub-regional workshop on the *Reflect* Evaluation Framework in Mali, NFE policy analyses in five English speaking countries (see box), training in budget tracking and analysis for French speaking countries, and the largest ever Pamoja West Africa annual meeting in the Gambia in November, where 12 countries and several partners were represented. At this meeting, the outline of a strategic plan for 2011-2015 was developed and a review of the year's activities took place. The Advisory Board met twice during the year and started to work out how to operate from four different countries using three international languages. A new board was elected at the annual meeting and Azuka Menkiti of Pamoja Nigeria took over the role

of President from Mahamane Boury of Pamoja Mali. Two more *Reflect* ToTs took place in Morocco supported by dvv international. There is a steady growth of interest in the approach across the country and in-country and sub-regional networking is contributing to shared learning.

2011 has brought some serious funding challenges, with the imminent loss of major funding from ICCO and funds in general becoming harder to access, but in spite of this, *Reflect* networking, capacity building and advocacy are alive and well in member countries. Unintentionally, there has been a focus on the English speaking countries with a budget tracking and analysis workshop in Nigeria, support for an ActionAid ToT for Education leads in Liberia and for a *Reflect* Evaluation Framework workshop in Sierra Leone during the first five months of the year.

Networking in Sierra Leone

An exciting opportunity to build Pamoja Sierra Leone and widen knowledge of the *Reflect* Evaluation Framework was provided by the Finnish Refugee Council (FRC) in May 2011. FRC has been supporting national partner NGOs using *Reflect* as an approach to social transformation, empowerment and literacy in post conflict Sierra Leone since 2003. A five-day workshop to explore the evaluation framework was organised in Largo, a community near Bo in the East of the country. It was jointly facilitated by FRC, Pamoja Sierra Leone and Pamoja West Africa and attended by FRC NGO partners, representatives of Pamoja Liberia and the National Adult Education Association of Liberia (NAEAL) and of Pamoja Guinea. The NFE Director from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports also came along, initially for two days but she was so engrossed that she actually stayed for five. She had also attended the final Policy Analysis meeting in Accra and was able to give us an update on progress towards establishing an NFE policy in Sierra Leone and discuss opportunities for using *Reflect* in government projects. Field visits to five communities enabled workshop participants to put some of the framework tools into practice. The FRC country representative also explained the role he was hoping that Pamoja Sierra Leone would play in sustaining and supporting its member organisations implementing *Reflect* once FRC withdraws from that role. This is a key FRC sustainability strategy and includes funding for Pamoja Sierra Leone over 3 years, thus enabling it to become well established with a broad based membership.



Azuka!



Accra policy analysis



Sierra Leone workshop

For more information see www.pamoja-west-africa.org

NFE Policy Analyses in Ghana, the Gambia, Nigeria, Liberia and Sierra Leone

The analyses of PRSPS and NFE policy involved representatives of government, education specialists and civil society in the five countries, complementing the previous work done in French speaking West African countries in 2008 and in Southern Africa in 2009.

The analyses highlighted significant challenges related to poverty, illiteracy and youth development. Funding for NFE in all five countries was found to be extremely limited in relation to the number of non-literate adults and young people (60 million in Nigeria alone) and the large numbers of young people who have not benefitted from the formal education system. While a number of Ministries implement various literacy initiatives for adults and young people it is rare to find collaboration between them, resulting in duplication of tasks and waste of resources. In some countries, the understanding of literacy as the acquisition of relevant and adapted skills to directly improve quality of life based on social, economic and political participation has yet to be widely accepted.

Even though education is identified as a right in a number of international conventions and national constitutions and literacy is acknowledged to be crucial to the achievement of democracy and many other development goals, it remains under valued and under

funded in the five countries concerned, as indicated by the three principal findings:

- An absence of a policy document/an Act guiding youth and adult education in all but one country;
- Lack of collaboration and coordination among ministries, departments, and state agencies other organizations pursuing adult literacy programmes; and
- Low budgetary allocation to finance the operations and activities of the non-formal education sector in all countries.

However, it was encouraging to note the development of civil society networks committed to advocating for change, new links between government, civil society and education specialists and the existence of effective approaches to literacy, social change and adult learning such as *Reflect*.

Full reports can be downloaded from: <http://www.pamoja-west-africa.org/English/WAPAP.html>

In **The Gambia**, ActionAid carried out *Reflect* facilitator training for women in mothers' clubs (MC). The aim was to support the women in livelihood schemes and to empower them to have a greater say in the education of their daughters, strengthening their voices in education decision-making at all levels. The mothers volunteer in schools where there are few or no female teachers, especially in rural

areas. The chair of the mother's club sits on the school management committee. Their presence has already served as a deterrent against violence towards girls and teenage marriage – one of the biggest causes of girls dropping out of school.

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Reflect update – Southern Africa

Angola

The Angolan Association for Adult Education (AAEA) is planning to further expand its adult literacy activities using *Reflect* (known locally as *Aplica*) in rural areas of Angola. AAEA will work to strengthen its existing programmes and will train new facilitators in order to reach more communities. According to AAEA, 5,000 people benefitted from its literacy programmes in 2010, with 49 *Reflect* circles in Luanda, 21 in Funda, 5 in Bengo, and 177 in Kwanza-Sul province. AAEA currently receives funding from dvv, Ibis, ICCO and the EU but Victor Barbosa, president of the AAEA, has called on the Angolan government to increase its support to civil society organizations in efforts towards achieving the MDG and EFA goals.

Mozambique

Dvv international Mozambique ran a *Reflect* ToT in June 2011 for representatives of civil society organizations from across the country. As well as providing the participants with a strong understanding of the approach (including *Reflect* principles and tools, literacy and numeracy, and monitoring and evaluation), the course strengthened links between the organizations involved, paving the way for future collaboration.

Zambia

In Zambia, the Development Organisation for People's Empowerment hosted a *Reflect* ToT in July 2011, facilitated by ActionAid.

Reflect update – Latin America

Elna Abad Bereche from the Lima *Reflect* Network in Peru participated in an international meeting, *Alternative and Special Education: Building the other Education for transformation and inclusion*, hosted by the Ministry of Education in La Paz, Bolivia in October 2010. Elna was part of a panel discussion on literacy and post literacy. She made a presentation on *Reflect* and, in the short time available, encouraged the audience to share their experiences with each other, briefly breaking with the dominant dynamic of speeches and presentations. Audience members were interested by the ideas of

Audience members were interested by the ideas of power analysis, literacy learning without a primer, and the use of the mother tongue for literacy learning. The majority of literacy programmes in Bolivia have been in Spanish, despite the fact that many of the learners have Quechua or Aymara as their first language.

power analysis, literacy learning without a primer, and the use of the mother tongue for literacy learning. The majority of literacy programmes in Bolivia have been in Spanish, despite the fact that many of the learners have Quechua or Aymara as their first language. It became clear that *Reflect* has a lot to offer in the construction of an alternative education for transformation and inclusion in Bolivia.

Reflect update – Asia

An Asia Region *Reflect* Training of Trainers workshop was held in Kathmandu, Nepal from April 25th – May 4th, 2011 with participants drawn from seven countries across South East Asia and South Asia. The aim of the TOT was to enhance the capacity of ActionAid staff and partners to implement *Reflect*, and to improve the reach and quality of implementation of the *Reflect* approach throughout the region. Afterwards the participants conducted national training workshops to develop the capacity of a wider group of practitioners and arranged short orientation workshops to inform other staff about the approach. They are working together to strengthen the *Reflect* Asia Network for shared learning across the region.

In recent elections in Bangladesh, 20 *Reflect* graduates, including 15 women, were elected to the Union Parishad (the lower tier of local government). These include *Reflect* participants, members of the Lokokendra community groups and *Reflect* facilitators. According to Zakir Hossain Sarker, Manager of

the *Reflect* Development Unit, “*We believe that the journey has just started and we need to work more for the political empowerment of poor and marginalized people.*”

In China, ActionAid China supported the Gansu Institute of Education and Research to produce a new literacy book, “*New Villagers, New Village, New Life*”, based on *Reflect*. The book was developed using a participatory approach involving villagers, local teachers, specialists from the institute, and ActionAid staff. Villagers from Zhangjiachuan County were invited to share their experiences, providing vivid case studies linked to each of the topics covered in the book. Local facilitators took part in a training of trainers workshop and the book was piloted in local villages. Some 300 villagers from four counties took part in the pilot and gave largely positive feedback.

In Cambodia, ADRA Cambodia’s *A New Day for Kids Reflect* programme focused on early childhood care and development was selected as a noteworthy practice by the Asia-Pacific

Regional Network for Early Childhood.¹ This has enabled the organisation to access funding to expand *Reflect* into new areas in Cambodia.

The Government of Nepal has selected *Reflect* as one of the tools for social mobilization in the Ministry of Local Development’s new Local Governance and Community Development Programme. The approach will be used across all 3,915 village development committees in the 75 districts of Nepal. *Reflect* trainers, Nar Limbu, Kopila Dangol and Dil Bahadur Nepali, who participated in the recent Asia region ToT, have already begun training local social mobilizers in the approach. Also in Nepal, eight *Reflect* practitioners, all from marginalized communities, have become Members of Parliament in the Constitutional Assembly of Nepal. Nepal is in the process of drafting a new Constitution through the Constitutional Assembly.

¹ For further information see http://www.arnec.net/ntuc/slot/2323/connection/ARNEC%20Connections%202011-SpecialEdition_bw_small.pdf

ActionAid is a global federation working to end poverty and injustice with thousands of communities and millions of people across the planet.

Our vision is: a world without poverty and injustice in which every person enjoys their right to a life of dignity.

Our mission is: to work with poor and excluded people to eradicate poverty and injustice.

Introduction

ActionAid started life in the UK in 1972 as a charity sponsoring children in India and Kenya. It has evolved dramatically, moving to a rights-based approach in the late 1990s, shifting its head of office to Johannesburg in 2003 and moving governance power to the South using a federal structure and international assembly. A key turning point was the development of 'Fighting Poverty Together', the organisation's ambitious strategy for 1998-2004. The follow up to this, 'Rights to End Poverty' (2005-2010) continued this process of transformation. ActionAid committed to learning from these through 2010 in order to produce a new international strategy in 2011 for the period 2012-2017.

Previous strategies were developed through a relatively closed process, with a handful of people mandated to draft a document and collate feedback. For this new strategy ActionAid was committed to a much more ambitious process, involving as many of the 2,700 staff as possible, fully involving the new governance structures and reaching out to partner organisations, supporters and the communities where ActionAid works. The strategy was particularly important as a new Chief Executive, Joanna Kerr, started in July 2010; the first external recruitment to this post for 18 years.

ActionAid's new international strategy 2012-2017

by David Archer, ActionAid International

Over the past year, David Archer has facilitated a process across ActionAid to systematically review the organisation's work worldwide against the previous strategy and to develop a new organisation-wide strategy for 2012-2017. Here he outlines the process involved and the outcomes for education work in ActionAid.

Looking back – the Taking Stock Review

The first step was to look backwards – to review what progress ActionAid had made against its previous strategy, Rights to End Poverty. A team of seven independent consultants, specialists in different areas, visited six ActionAid countries, reviewed huge numbers of documents and interviewed countless people internally and externally. As well as looking at the work of ActionAid in Africa, Asia and Latin America, the team reviewed women's rights, grassroots programmes, social movements, fundraising and communications, finance, HR/OD and governance. There were also reviews of external and internal data relevant to ActionAid's work, a self review by every country, theme and function; a campaign and policy review; a staff climate survey (completed by 70% of staff) and an external stakeholder survey (completed by 400 people). This all came on top of many country and thematic reviews conducted over the previous year. The resulting reports were circulated across ActionAid with feedback shared before a final version of the 'Taking Stock Review' was presented to the international Board in December 2010.

Looking forward

One of the main ways for staff across ActionAid to get involved in shaping the future strategy was through forming self-organised groups to put forward one-page propositions. These propositions could be about mission-related priorities for the future or about how ActionAid should be organised. By November 2010, over 80 group propositions had been submitted. These were reviewed and feedback given, for example where it

was felt that propositions were not clear or where links could be made across groups. Mission related groups were formed on diverse issues such as: urban poverty, children and youth as agents of change, climate justice, social protection, tax justice, knowledge for transformation, food, hunger and livelihoods, education for active citizenship, conflict, corporate campaigning, land, natural resources and livelihoods, persons with disabilities, Dalit and indigenous people's rights and dignity. Meanwhile, organisation-related groups came together on issues such as reforming the M&E system, re-conceiving child sponsorship, multilingualism in ActionAid, work-life balance, matrix management, growth or consolidation, integrating participatory methodologies, reimagining accountability, capacity development, trade unionism in ActionAid, ActionAid's digital future and the federal model. In addition to the group propositions, 50 individual propositions were submitted.

Involving partners and communities:

Future Strategy Days

Involving staff in the review and strategy development process was an important start but there was a strong feeling that partner organisations and people struggling with poverty and injustice in the communities where ActionAid works should also be involved. In order to facilitate this, two 'Future Strategy Days' were organised with partner organisations. On these days, every ActionAid office in every country was encouraged to organise special events to seek inputs to the new strategy. Participatory sessions enabled people to give feedback on the priorities in the present strategy and to comment on what they saw



Woman sorting chillies

as essential to continue or necessary to change. Visualisation tools helped people prioritise their feedback – and each country was asked to produce a single two-page summary of the key insights across locations.

**Coming together:
an international conference**

Drawing on all these resources, ActionAid convened 120 people from 45 countries for a week in January 2011 in South Africa to help to shape the future strategy for the organisation. This was the first time

that many of the participants had met each other. One third came from the new governance structures of ActionAid (the international Board and Assembly) who had had little previous interaction with most of the management or staff (who were represented by all International Directors, Country Directors and the international heads of themes and functions). There were many potential tensions and some widely divergent views about the future role of ActionAid, its identity, political economy, structure, governance and

The outcome was a remarkably high level of convergence around the future direction

political positioning.

The five-day conference changed location every day, starting in a hotel and then taking over Constitution Hill, the Origins Centre, the Apartheid Museum and finally Soccer City – with participants only finding out the venue for the day when they got on a bus in the morning. The methodologies used were very distinctive – from an intense ‘market day’ when open air platforms were given to people for three or four minutes to make their case – to the use of four creatively presented ‘scenarios’ of ActionAid in 2020. The outcome was a remarkably high level of convergence around the future direction, captured on the last day in a ‘composite scenario’ which had been written overnight based on feedback over the first four days.

Drafting

Immediately after the International Conference, the strategy drafting team, made up of staff from across the organisation, retreated to produce a first draft of the strategy. This draft was circulated at the end of January and discussed by staff, management and Boards in every country. It was also taken to the World Social Forum for discussion with social movements – and circulated to many partner organisations. Feedback from this one-month consultation was compiled in a 200-page reference book for the drafting team to review in their next meeting, held in Bhopal, India in March 2011. This led to a second draft that was again circulated widely for comments – culminating in a third draft, produced in London in April 2011. This third draft was discussed with international Directors and the Board leading to a final version that was submitted for approval to the International Assembly in Tanzania in July 2011.

Alison Gregory/Saiegaj/ActionAid

So what does the strategy say?

Below is an extract from the summary introduction to the strategy:

ActionAid is a global federation working to end poverty and injustice with thousands of communities and millions of people across the planet.

*Building on our learning and achievements over the past 40 years this International Strategy seeks to **deepen ActionAid's impact in a fast-changing world**. In recent years we enriched our practice of a human rights-based approach to development with women's rights as a priority across all our work. We've taken sides with some of the poorest communities around the world, defending their right to food, securing access to basic services and helping to stop corporate abuse. We've built the economic literacy of thousands of excluded people so they can track budgets that affect them and hold governments to account. With social movements, partners and our supporters, we were at the forefront of securing education rights for millions of poor children. We also showed the interconnected, unified approach needed to address both HIV and AIDS and violence against women. Our human rights-based response to the 2005 tsunami was applauded by an independent review panel. Our HungerFree campaign led to policy changes that benefited women farmers, helping them respond to the world food crisis. And as part of our own transformation we moved our International Secretariat to South Africa and developed a truly unique international and democratic federation – shifting more power to low-income countries and deepening our relevance.*

In this strategy we make it clear how we believe change happens and what our role and approach will be in bringing about this change.

*Our previous strategy, Rights to End Poverty set a strong direction and helped us progress towards achieving our mission. However change is still needed. This Strategy therefore represents a **balancing of consolidation with innovation** as we pursue alternatives for a poverty-free planet. In this strategy we make it clear how we believe change happens and what our role and approach will be in bringing about this change. We commit ourselves to five core mission objectives and 10 'key change promises' against which we will hold ourselves to account:*

1. securing women's land rights
2. promoting sustainable agriculture
3. holding governments to account on public services
4. achieving redistributive resourcing of development
5. transforming education for girls and boys
6. harnessing youth leadership to end poverty and injustice
7. building people's resilience to conflict and disaster
8. responding to disasters through rights
9. increasing women's and girls' control over their bodies
10. generating women-centred economic alternatives.

In the coming years we will also transform our leadership, improve our systems, diversify our income and harness the remarkable people-power of our staff, our committed Boards and Assemblies, our volunteers and supporters, so that together we can:

- *Move on from just fighting against poverty to working for long lasting solutions to poverty, advancing alternatives together with our partners and allies.*
- *Build deeper connections: linking people and movements across the planet and across issues; connecting our work locally, nationally and globally; and linking our programme, policy, campaigning and fundraising.*
- *Strengthen our human rights-based approaches with a greater focus on changing attitudes and behaviours, using mass communications and campaigning from the local to the global level.*
- *Show the impact of our work more explicitly on the lives of women, men, youth and children living in poverty, holding ourselves collectively accountable to delivering on our key change promises.*

What does the strategy say on education?

One of the five objectives has a strong focus on education. This is what it says:

OBJECTIVE 3:

Improve the quality of public education for all children and support youth to become drivers of change towards a poverty-free planet

Half the world's people are under 25. In low-income countries over one billion are between 10 and 19. Despite this expanding demographic group, the rights, voice and agency of children and young people are consistently denied. Further attention to their education, livelihoods and voice will help to ensure that their dreams for better futures are more likely to succeed.

While the past two decades have seen a sharp rise in primary school enrolment for girls and boys across the planet, the quality of that education is often unacceptable. Widespread lack of resources for public schools in poor communities has led to overcrowded classrooms with under-trained teachers using outdated curricula and teaching processes. These conditions are accelerating the growth of private schooling, undermining one of the core responsibilities of any State: to provide good public education. And tens of millions are still excluded from formal education altogether, for example children of pastoralists or migrant workers, children with disabilities and those affected by HIV or conflict. As a result the education system is entrenching the inequalities in society, discriminating against girls and closing children's minds.

Building on our decades of achievements and our strong partnerships, we will work with children, parents and teachers in the poorest communities to make sure that government schools are accessible to all and respect the rights of girls and boys, open minds, and nurture values of equality and justice. We will link this work to local, national and international movements to reform policies and practices so that we can realise the potential of education to promote a more equal and sustainable world.

In the communities where we work we will engage with young people living in poverty and their organisations, helping them to drive change, supporting their local activism on rights and their poverty-focused campaigning. Inspired by new youth-driven and digital ways of organising, we will also support youth-to-youth mobilising and campaigning from the local to the global level on agendas that both help them to improve their own opportunities or livelihoods and help to end poverty and injustice.

Advancing alternatives : In our pursuit of truly transformative education, we will work with our allies including unions to develop alternative models of teacher training and practice, and curriculum development, so that education contributes to wider social, economic and ecological justice. We will also explicitly seek alternative approaches and ideas from young people who want to be part of finding new and sustainable solutions.

Promise 5: By 2017 we will have ensured that girls and boys equally enjoy a quality public education that respects their rights in 5,000 communities where we work, leveraging system-wide education reforms designed to improve equal opportunities for all.

Promise 6: By 2017 we will have mobilised over five million youth to take sustained action towards building a poverty-free planet.

Building on our decades of achievements and our strong partnerships, we will work with children, parents and teachers in the poorest communities to make sure that government schools are accessible to all and respect the rights of girls and boys, open minds, and nurture values of equality and justice.

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Profile: Education Activist

Interview with Camilla Croso

What inspired you to focus on education?

My utmost belief in the human being and an unfaltering drive for justice. Working towards increased critical thinking, dialogue, debate, the capacity to make distinctions, memory, heritage, curiosity, search and research, questioning, agency, co-responsibility, inter-dependency, are all related to these two basic premises.

Who is the person you admire most and why?

I most admire social movements and networks. The landless movements across the world, feminist movements, those that advance fights against discrimination, those that advance peace and peaceful resolution of conflict. I admire collective protests and marches that reclaim the public space and remind us that public debate is a cornerstone of democracy. I admire the many anonymous people that advance justice on a daily basis.

What book (film/music) would you recommend?

Books: *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* by Haruki Murakami and *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy. *Music:* the infinity of MPB (Música Popular Brasileira or Popular Brazilian Music) and the Mexican Lila Downs.

What are your hopes for the future?

I hope for the public space to be reclaimed and for the public good and wellbeing to be placed at the centre of national and international agendas. I hope for increased citizenship, where injustices unsettle us and move us to action. I hope for strengthened democracies and Politics (with a capital 'P') where thought, debate and action prevail and where violence loses ground. I hope for an increased awareness that the current development model is unsustainable, leads to increased inequalities and depends on the exploitation of human beings and nature.

Where are you from?

I was born in Brazil, having lived almost all my life in São Paulo. My mother and father came to Brazil from Italy in the 1950s.

What was your first job?

When I was sixteen, I started working as a volunteer in adult literacy in the outskirts of São Paulo. At twenty-two, I worked for four years at the Latin American office of the Kellogg Foundation. This was where I decided to dedicate myself fully to education.

What is your current role?

I am general coordinator of the Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education and President of the Global Campaign for Education. I am also mother of three children, all boys, aged 2, 8 and 10. Combating gender stereotypes is very much part of my daily challenges...

What is the greatest achievement of the GCE?

Creating a concrete platform for debate and collective action in the realisation of the right to education across all continents of the world.

What is the biggest challenge facing GCE?

I would underline two: placing in the public agenda the understanding of education as a fundamental human right; and advancing our political agenda, agreed in our World Assembly, in constant consultation with all our members.

As its new president, what plans do you have to make GCE more effective?

I am believer in collectives. Collective debate, decision-making and action seem to me invariably more consistent and creative. Finding ways to deepen this culture within the GCE will make it even more vibrant. Fostering increased collaboration and dialogue among all members and carrying out advocacy strategies that count on collective debate and action are important challenges ahead of us.