The Final Countdown

Achieving quality primary education for all by 2015: What more should the UK government do?

A briefing paper by the Global Campaign for Education UK

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATION

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Introduction

Although progress has been made towards ensuring the right of every child to quality public primary education, there are still 72 million primary age children out of school. While enrolment has grown rapidly in both South and West Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, one in nine of the world's children are still missing out on a basic education.[1]

The UK Government has played a vital part in securing the global commitment to dramatically expand educational opportunities for primary-aged children. Its international policy leadership and dialogue, funding commitments and other support to developing countries has helped to secure significant improvements in educational provision in general and in primary school enrolment rates in particular.

But a number of key challenges remain for the UK Department for International Development (DFID) if they are to be effective in playing their part in ensuring the target of universal primary completion by 2015, as expressed in Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2, and reaching gender parity in primary and secondary education, as expressed in MDG 3, are to be met. At the midway point to the MDGs there are less than 2 years left to get all primary-aged children enrolled in school if they are to complete a course of free, good quality primary education by 2015.

2008 is therefore a crucial year for DFID to take decisive action.

This briefing evaluates DFID's promises and approach to meeting the education MDGs to date and recommends five actions DFID should take to better realise its commitment to achieving universal primary education by 2015. These are:

- Triple aid disbursement to education in the next two years in order to meet funding commitments
- Ensure greater stability in aid flows to education
- Increase investment in those countries furthest from achieving the education MDGs
- Ensure that the development and annual review of national education policy effectively addresses issues of quality, equity and inclusion
- Engage more with the macro-economic context in partner countries to ensure that the delivery of quality education is not impeded by macro-economic constraints

This briefing will also provide some strategies for achieving these recommendations.

1 UNESCO (2007) Education for All by 2015. Will we make it? EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008, Paris: UNESCO (2005 figures).

DFID's Commitments and Approach to Quality Primary Education for All

DFID's main focus for education is the achievement of primary completion by 2015 for all children, which it promotes through:

- international and country-based policy dialogue;
- financial and other support for international institutions;
- and bilateral support to education programmes in over 30 developing countries.[2]

Of these countries, 25[3] are identified as focus countries through its current Public Service Agreement (PSA) with the UK Treasury.[4] These PSA countries indicate where DFID focuses its activities and support, and specify the results anticipated from partnerships with governments and other donors. Regarding the education MDGs, the PSA sets out target increases in the primary net enrolment rate (NER), which have been calculated to be consistent with achieving UPE in 2015. The gender equality target in the same PSA agreement is calculated to achieve the goal of gender equity by 2015 – ten years later than the 2005 date set for achievement of this MDG target.

DFID intends to target additional aid to sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia, with particular attention to the countries with the largest numbers of out of school children, including India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Ethiopia.

> "More than half of the world's out-of-school children are girls, and seven out of ten live in sub-Saharan Africa or South and West Asia. These regions are given priority by DFID." (DFID Factsheet on Education, November 2007, page 2)

As well as committing to funding for education, DFID also recognises and is committed to ensuring quality education for all children, including those that have been labelled "hardest-to-reach."

> "Certain groups of children are more likely to be excluded from school on the basis of caste, ethnicity, religion or disability. Disabled children, disabled girls in particular, constitute a significant group that is denied access to education. The challenge is to support governments to provide quality education for excluded groups." (DFID Factsheet on Education, November 2007, page 2)

DFID recognises that many of the remaining children out of school are those who are hardest to reach: predominantly poor and rural children, a majority of whom are girls, with disproportionate numbers residing in remote or conflict-affected locations, or those who are excluded because they are disabled, orphaned or members of a marginalised group. DFID has also been particularly concerned with the costs of schooling for many families, and has promoted both the abolition of user fees and the use of incentives. Most recently this has included cash transfers to encourage and sustain enrolment.[5]

> "The goal of achieving 'education for all' cannot be reached without improving the quality of education. How well pupils are taught and how much they learn can have a crucial impact on the frequency and duration of school attendance." (DFID Factsheet on Education, November 2007, page 2)

As enrolments have accelerated in some countries, DFID and other donors have increasingly focused on issues of education quality and learning outcomes. In particular DFID has demonstrated a growing

2 DFID (2007) Factsheet on Education, London: DFID. 3 These countries are: Africa: Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe. Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan and Vietnam. 4 Current PSAs run from 2005-2008. 5 DFID (2007) op. cit. and DFID (2001) Children out of School, London: DFID.

concern with teacher supply and motivation issues, as well as wider education management issues that will need to be addressed to improve quality and reduce drop out and repetition rates.[6]

> "Teachers in developing countries often work in tremendously difficult conditions, teaching huge classes with few materials for low wages. Based on the UN recommended standard of one trained teacher for every 40 school-aged children, there is currently a global shortage of nearly two million teachers..." (DFID/HMT, Keeping Our Promises: Delivering Education For All, 2006, page 8)

DFID is now becoming more responsive to the experience of partner countries which shows that significant progress on universal primary education both creates demand for, and is dependent on, improved transition rates to secondary education. Many national governments insist that investment in post-primary education is essential to better livelihoods, economic growth and thus poverty reduction.[7]

DFID has also exerted substantial international pressure in relation to the value of long-term education sector planning and the need for more and better long-term, predictable aid. Its own funding commitments comprise £8.5 billion for education between 2006 and 2015, comprising increases in both bilateral support for partner countries and contributions to international agencies, including the Fast Track Initiative (FTI), UNICEF and the World Bank. It is not yet clear, however, how much will be allocated through each channel.[8]

The Global Campaign for Education in the UK recognises DFID for commitments to:

- universal primary completion;
- supporting low-income countries;
- supporting countries with the largest number of children out of school;
- improving quality, equity and inclusion;
- long-term education sector planning and financing;
- accelerating country government and international action;
- disbursing £8.5 billion for education between 2006 and 2015.

Since 2006 the UK Government has become an international advocate for basic education and has publicly declared its admirable intention to dramatically upscale its aid and make it long-term up to 2015. However, we believe that DFID could – and should – still do more to achieve universal primary education by 2015. This paper sets out clearly GCE UK's expectations of the UK government as it now moves into the implementation phase of these commitments. On the basis of this, GCE UK looks forward to continued close dialogue with DFID to ensure accountability for prior pledges to achieve the education MDGs.

The rest of this briefing analyses DFID's performance against its commitments and makes five key recommendations for how it could be more effective in ensuring all primary-aged children complete a course of free, good quality primary education by 2015.

6 Bennell, P. and Akyeampong, K. (2007) Teacher motivation in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, Researching the Issues No 71, London: DFID. **7** DFID (2006) Briefing: The Importance of Secondary, Vocational and Higher Education to Development (DFID Practice Paper), London: DFID. **8** Study commissioned by GCE UK: Foster, M. (2008) Achieving Quality Education For All By 2015: What More Could the UK Government Do?

DFID's Performance Towards Achieving UPE

1. Long-term education sector planning and financing

DFID must:

- triple aid disbursements to education in the next two years in order to meet funding commitments;
- ensure greater stability in aid flows to education.

Tripling education aid disbursements

It is estimated that up to US$10 billion additional aid is needed annually to achieve the education-related MDGs. Although aid to education increased from 2002-6, there was a dip in 2005, and in 2006 only $5bn was committed to basic education – half of what is needed to achieve UPE. In addition, a particularly substantial gap remains in disbursements.

Within this global context, the UK has both given and promised substantial policy and funding support for primary education, including the commitment made in 2006 to spend £8.5 billion on education (at all levels) over the next 10 years. In order to meet this goal, DFID has announced that it will increase spending to education to over £1 billion per year from 2010. DFID is therefore committed to providing more than 10% of the external aid required for education per year, more than its pro-rata share. In addition, more than 90% of DFID's support goes to the 25 PSA countries, in line with its commitments, with some 60% through budget support.[13]

Encouragingly, as Table 1 illustrates, DFID's bilateral spending on education has doubled since 2002/3 to £372m in 2006/7. However it is also clear that actual expenditure by DFID on education in 2006/7 only reached 83% of the '£450mn budget' for 2006/7 indicated by the Prime Minister when announcing the increased support to education.[15]

Currently the actual education share of total ODA (excluding debt relief) is 7.6%. However, for the expenditure to have reached the budgeted £450m in 2006/07 it would have needed to have been 9.1% of total ODA (excluding debt relief).[16] Given the expected increase in the UK aid budget over

Table 1: DFID Education Spending £millions[14]

	General Poverty Reduction Budget Support	Sector Poverty Reduction Budget Support	Other Financial Aid	Technical Cooperation	Other Bilateral Aid	Total Gross Public Expenditure
2002/03	45.8	12.0	62.0	39.0	24.2	183.1
2003/04	66.3	-	80.0	48.4	29.5	224.3
2004/05	83.6	2.1	122.7	45.6	33.3	287.2
2005/06	91.6	9.1	149.5	32.8	34.0	317.1
2006/07	81.9	27.9	120.6	38.7	103.9	371.9

13 Foster, M. (2008) op. cit. 14 Source: DFID SID, 2007. This is the only sectoral breakdown published by DFID. It includes support to the FTI, categorised within bilateral aid as 'other financial aid'. 15 Foster, M. (2008) op. cit. 16 Total UK ODA (excluding debt relief) was £4.92bn in 2006/07.

the coming years[17] if DFID makes linear progress towards reaching the 0.7% of GDP target in 2013, DFID can deliver the target of spending an average of £1bn per annum on education from 2010/11-2015/16 if it spends 9.2% of the total aid programme on education. Therefore to reach current spending commitments to education and those in the future, the education share of the total ODA needs to be a consistent 9.2% of ODA (excluding debt relief) between NOW and 2015. Therefore a significant increase in the education share of ODA from the actual 7.6% to 9.2% is needed and a significant acceleration in actual spending is required. However if this does not happen and the education share remains at 7.6%, spending in the last five years to 2015 will be £4.1bn in total, an average of £800mn per annum, and 20% short of the target. Rapid acceleration in disbursements is particularly necessary given that the goal DFID is actually committed to is that of universal primary completion, rather than just enrolment, by 2015.

If the UK government had responded to demands from GCE and others to increase overall ODA to 0.7% of GDP by 2010, with a primary focus on poverty reduction, the resources available for education would have been increased yet further and efforts to realise the education MDGs accelerated.

"With a 2015 target date for achieving the goals, very little time for action is left. A majority of countries have a six-year primary school cycle. To achieve universal primary education (UPE) in these countries by 2015, all children of the age to complete primary school that year will have to be enrolled by 2009, less than two years away." (DFID Factsheet on Education, November 2007, page 2)

As well as prioritising education in its own bilateral programmes and Country Assistance Plans, strategies to increase spending should include recurrent and substantial commitments to the FTI Catalytic Fund, as well as entering into silent partnerships to support non-PSA countries. One possible way to do this is through supporting country plans approved through FTI processes. The Catalytic Fund (CF) is facing a dramatic shortfall in funds as from the middle of 2008, and the current projected UK contribution of $16 million for this year is considerably short of its 'fair share' of the total CF financing requirement which would be closer to $100m per annum.

Based on spending £1 billion a year by 2010 from the present base of about £372 million, in order to meet its funding commitments, DFID must effectively triple aid disbursements to education within the next two years.

In order to do this, DFID must:

- increase the share of actual ODA (excluding debt relief) to education to 9.2%.
- Review the education plans as reflected in country assistance strategies, and check whether the UK aid programme is on track to deliver the £8.5bn commitment.
- Develop, and make public, the strategy that shows how it will achieve this ambitious expansion in spending.

Supporting long term sector planning – Improving the predictability of aid

As well as leading the international community on funding commitments to education, DFID has played a significant role in the development of

17 DFID has committed to increase the UK aid budget from 0.51% of GDP in 2006/7 to 0.7% of GDP in 2013. Assuming that real GNP grows by 2.5% per year, this would imply UK ODA increasing at constant 2006/07 princes from £6.8bn in 2006/07 to about £11bn in 2013/14. This is also assuming that debt relief will drop out of the picture by 2010.

long-term planning and financing for education. It has argued that the required scaling up in external aid requires recipient country governments to make more ambitious and longer-term plans, extending them to 10 years and showing how universal primary education can be achieved.

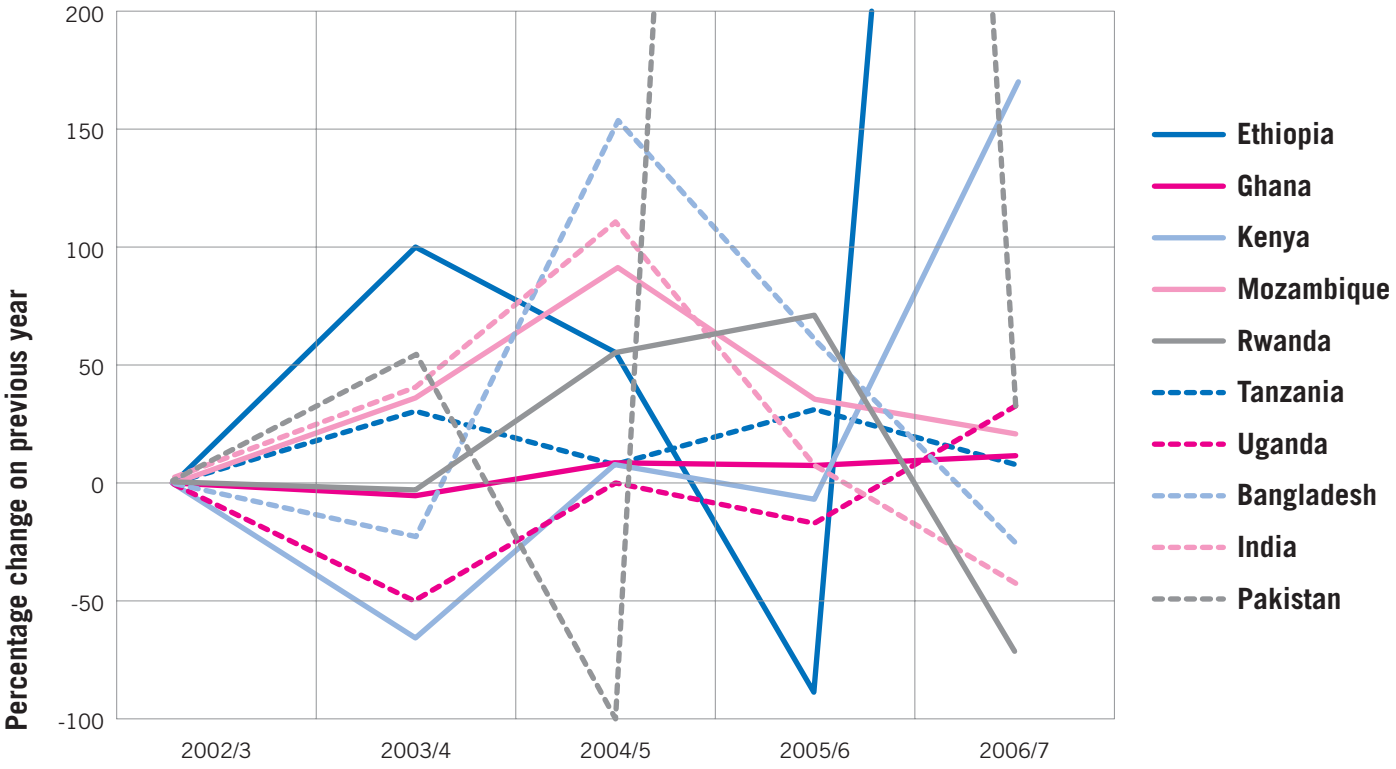
According to DFID, external aid for such plans should be long-term and predictable, integrated into national plans and budgets, to support salaries and other recurrent costs, and targeted towards those countries furthest from achieving universal primary education. These countries are mainly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, particularly those that are under-aided, typically large population countries and fragile states.[18]

Many of DFID's partner countries now have such plans and DFID has made ten-year announcements, comprising £650 million in total, for education in Mozambique, Ghana, Ethiopia and Tanzania.[19]

"For developing countries, just as important as the extra finance, is the need for certainty about future flows of money. Only with this certainty can a comprehensive strategy be implemented. [D]onor countries must…agree to provide the money to support countries' education plans over a ten year period". (DFID/HMT, Keeping Our Promises: Delivering Education For All, 2006, pages 13-14)

"No prudent government will invest in training additional teachers unless there's assurance of long-term financing to meet salaries". (DFID/HMT, Keeping Our Promises: Delivering Education For All, 2006, page 13)

UK education aid percentage changes



18 DFID/HMT (2006) op. cit. 19 DFID (2007) op. cit.

Though agreed 10-year plans with partner countries should in theory provide a reasonably assured 'floor' level of support from DFID, and specific commitments to education should be less prone to interruption than general budget support, the past record of DFID in providing reliable support is poor, as Graph 1 shows.[20] There are major year on year swings in bilateral aid to education in some countries, and little sign to date of the rapid but steady growth which is needed. Of the 25 PSA countries, only seven have disbursements for education which are stable or showing consistent growth. Countries with particular patterns of instability include Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and Pakistan.[21]

In some countries aid has been interrupted due to political or governance concerns, as happened in Ethiopia in 2005/06 where the reaction to civil disturbances provoked a savage cut, though it was restored in the following year. Pakistan has also suffered from this political conditionality with aid fluctuating in recent years between £12mn and negligible levels.[22] Long-term framework agreements are therefore not unconditional. However, given the importance of education in building longer term governance and stability within countries, DFID should work to mitigate against disruptions to education sector aid. DFID can do this by considering the use of increased sector budget support in situations where there is a risk of political volatility or where the Government may not otherwise give sufficient priority to implementing the education plan. In particular, this would help to detach aid to education from the political volatility which has undermined predictability, thus ensuring that aid to education continues to flow to recipient countries, even if there is a wider political crisis. However, this only works for donor support if there is some understanding regarding the level of finance that Government will provide from national revenues.[23] Dialogue between governments and donor groups under FTI principles, which promote 20% allocation of government budgets to education as the desirable norm, may provide a useful framework for developing such understanding.

If DFID is to make good on its commitment to long-term and predictable aid, allowing national governments to fund both the upfront and recurrent costs necessary to implement comprehensive education sector plans, it must ensure far greater stability in future aid flows to education.

In order to do this, DFID must:

- Continue to use budget support as the main modality for aid delivery but consider increased use of sector budget support in situations where there is a risk that the Government may not otherwise give sufficient priority to implementing the education plan or there is a risk of political instability.

Without action on both accelerating disbursements and increasing predictability, DFID will be inhibited in taking an active role in long-term education sector planning and financing, and risks not only failing to meet its own financial commitments but also seriously undermining the realisation of the international education goals.

20 See also table in Annex 1. **21** Foster, M. (2008) op. cit. **22** Ibid. **23** Ibid.

2. Getting enough aid to the right countries: DFID's role

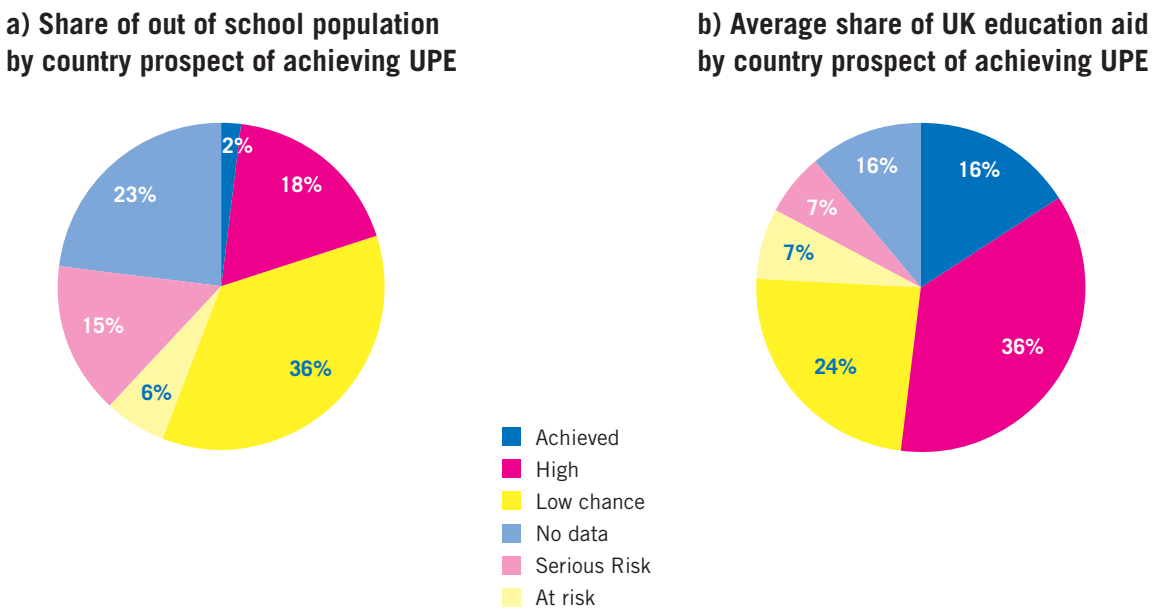
DFID must:

- increase investment in those countries furthest from achieving the education MDGs.

Eight countries[24] are seriously at risk of not achieving universal primary enrolment by 2015, and a further 33[25] are also considered 'at risk' as they are either moving away from the goal or making progress too slowly. However, many more countries are considered as having a low chance of achieving the MDG of all children completing a primary education by 2015. As would be expected, and as Figure 1(a) illustrates, the majority of the out of school populations are in countries classified as having a low chance, at risk, or at serious risk of achieving UPE, as well as being in countries with no data.[26] Only 20% of out of school children are in countries which are classed as having already achieved UPE or have a high chance of achieving it.

DFID's aid policy is to focus aid on low-income countries, including large population countries and fragile states at risk of not achieving the MDGs. Yet, as Figure 1(b) illustrates, over 50% of the UK's education aid is going to countries that have already achieved UPE or have a high chance of achieving it, whilst less than half is going to those countries least likely to achieve UPE.

Figure 1: Share of out of school populations and share of UK education aid by prospect of achieving UPE



24 Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Maldives, Namibia, Nigeria, Oman, Rwanda, United Arab Emirates (Source: GMR 2008).
25 Albania, Anguilla, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Botswana, Cape Verde, Cayman Islands, Croatia, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Grenada, Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lithuania, Macao (China), Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mongolia, Palestinian Autonomous Territories, Republic of Moldova, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Swaziland, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Vietnam, Zimbabwe (Source: GMR 2008). 26 Categories match those used in the GMR 2008 to classify countries according to how far they were from universal primary enrolment in 2005.

DFID is therefore failing to target its aid to the countries most in need, despite its commitments to do so. In particular the fit of UK bilateral support for large population countries and fragile states is currently still weak. Globally, conflict-affected fragile states receive less ODA than their entitlement according to population, poverty and other indicators. Aid flows to these countries are also more volatile. Yet they contain approximately half of the world's out of school population. It has been estimated that DFID's basic education aid for an out of school primary-age child in a conflict-affected fragile state is one seventh of that available for similar children in other low-income countries. Humanitarian aid, including that from DFID, has also neglected education.[27]

> "Education remains a basic human right, whatever the circumstances, even during a conflict." (DFID/HMT, Keeping Our Promises: Delivering Education For All, 2006, page 12)

Recently, DFID has given some bilateral support to countries emerging from conflict, such as Sierra Leone, and has pledged greater support for education in conflict-affected countries and fragile states.[28] It is working with other donors, the FTI and UNICEF to ensure that such countries are more of a policy priority and that more funding is made available to develop their education sectors. The exclusion from education of children living in countries affected by conflict is now recognised internationally as a critical issue. It has been estimated that such countries will need over half of the additional US$10 billion aid required to achieve primary education for all.[29]

A more detailed analysis of the global and UK aid to education and comparing it to the distribution of the total primary school age population, and the distribution of children not currently enrolled, reveals the countries in which the UK should be increasing their aid efforts.[30] Table 2 illustrates that the UK needs to increase its aid and/or lobby others to do more in fragile states and conflict-affected countries, including those with high populations, and low-income countries such as Yemen, Mozambique and Kenya. Where the UK is not involved it needs to lobby others to do more to ensure that the group of francophone African countries are able to achieve UPE.

Plan UK/Mark Reid

27 Save the Children UK (2006) Briefing: DFID: Aid, Education and Conflict-affected Countries. 28 DFID (2007) op. cit. 29 Save the Children UK (2006) op. cit. 30 See Annex 2 for the table and more detailed notes. Note the analysis only considers whether the share of UK and global aid seems broadly appropriate based on the factors considered. It does not address the equally important question of whether the global total level of aid is sufficient. An appropriate share of an insufficient global level of aid will of course still be insufficient for achieving the education MDGs.

Table 2: Countries where the UK needs to do more to achieve UPE

	Countries	Rationale
A. Countries where UK and others should try to do more	Afghanistan, Burundi, DRC, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen.[31] Collectively these countries account for more than a quarter of out of school children. Of these, all but one of them receives a lower share in global aid to education than their share in the developing country school age population.	Collectively these countries account for more than a quarter of out of school children. Of these, all but one of them receives a lower share in global aid to education than their share in the developing country school age population.
B. Countries where UK is involved, and could lobby others to do more	Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nepal, Rwanda and Sierra Leone.	These six low-income countries are all expected to miss the MDG target.[32] The share of UK education aid is in each case more than double the country share in the developing country school age population. However, global aid is less than or roughly equal to the global share in the primary school population in Ethiopia, Kenya, Nepal and Sierra Leone, reflecting a global failure to focus resources on low-income countries in danger of missing the target. In several of these countries, DFID has taken a lead role and, in the case of Rwanda, has been instrumental in attracting additional donors to education.
C. Countries where UK is not involved (non-PSA), but could lobby others to do more or develop silent partnerships	Angola, Cameroon, Chad, Cote D'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal.	This group of mostly francophone African countries are generally far from reaching the target and the global effort needs to be increased. They are relatively small, accounting for less than 3% of the primary school age population, but they account for more than 8% of out of school children. In some cases, total aid to education is relatively high, but with very little of it identified as going to basic education. Although DFID should not necessarily become directly involved in this group of non-PSA countries as a bilateral donor, it could exert greater pressure on multilateral channels, such as the FTI, to provide technical and financial support to countries to prepare and implement credible plans for achieving UPE and seek to fund these via silent partnerships or the FTI Catalytic Fund.

32 Three of them are, however, in the group making rapid progress, and are projected by GMR to reach UPE by 2025.

It is clear that, in order to best promote the achievement of UPE, DFID must increase investment in those countries furthest from achieving the education MDGs.

To do this, DFID should:

- Provide more aid to Afghanistan, Burundi, DRC, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen.
- Support education in conflict-affected countries and fragile states as a priority – in particular to secure increased aid commitments from other donors and ensure that the FTI develops a more flexible approach to funding in these contexts.
- Ensure that effective multilateral instruments are put in place to address the needs of other countries at risk of not reaching the UPE target, including Francophone African countries.
- Include education within the first phase of all DFID-funded humanitarian responses – all responses should aim to meet the INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction.

Handicap International/L.Dulliver

3. Improving quality, equity and inclusion

DFID must:

- Ensure that the development and annual review of national education policy effectively addresses issues of quality, equity and inclusion;
- Engage more with the macro-economic context in partner countries to ensure that the delivery of quality education is not impeded by macro-economic constraints.

Ensuring quality and inclusion issues are addressed in education policy

Despite overall increases in school participation some groups of children continue to be left behind and learning outcomes are generally weak.

Whilst the gap between male and female enrolment has halved at the global level and growth in girls' enrolment in South and West Asia has increased nearly twice as fast as that for boys, the gender parity target of 2005 has been missed. There are still 18 million primary-age girls not in school in sub-Saharan Africa. That's 43% of the global total of out of school girls of primary age. Less than half of the PSA countries are expected to get close to gender parity even at this stage in 2008. DFID partner countries with disproportionately very low enrolment by girls include Afghanistan, Nepal, Pakistan, DRC, Nigeria and Sudan. Despite this, and DFID's strong commitment to promoting gender equity in education, the gender parity targets DFID sets seem to be very unambitious, aiming for gender parity by 2015 – ten years later than the target originally set in the MDGs.

It has also been estimated that one third of the primary-age children still out of school are disabled.[33] In addition, the World Bank has estimated that half of those out of school are children from linguistic minorities or who do not speak the same language as that used in their school.[34] Others are prevented from going to school

– or face discrimination within schools – because of their gender, class, caste, religion, refugee status, because of HIV and AIDS, because they are affected by emergencies or because they belong to nomadic, indigenous or other marginalised communities. Child labour is known to be a key factor in keeping children out of school: worldwide, 165 million children aged 5-14 yrs are involved in child labour.[35] DFID has been influential in relation to the reduction of the household costs of education, particularly for poor families, through the promotion of the abolition of school fees. It has now committed to promoting the use of targeted financial and other incentives to encourage enrolment of marginalized groups, particularly by girls from poorer families.[36]

"DFID's support for girls' education through Ministries of Education will be complemented where appropriate with support to governments' long-term social protection strategies targeting the most excluded and marginal groups." (DFID Girl's Education Factsheet, January 2007, page 5)

International, regional and national assessments all indicate weak learning outcomes, particularly for pupils from poorer and other disadvantaged groups, in most developing countries.[37] Late school entry, grade repetition, irregular attendance, insufficient instructional hours, large classes, lack of instructional materials and poor school buildings and facilities continue to affect both completion of a full primary cycle and levels of learning achievement.[38] Globally, completion rates are lower than survival rates to the last grade – a gap of more than 20 percentage points in 7 countries with data.[39] Table 3 shows the difference in survival and completion rates for 7 countries with a DFID PSA.

Table 3: Internal efficiency: primary education dropouts and completion[40]

	Survival rate to last grade of primary education (%), Total 2004	Primary cohort completion rate (%), Total 2004
Bangladesh	65.1[y]	54.7[y]
Ghana	60.0[x]	49.4[x]
Kenya	83.6**	71.2**
Lesotho	60.9	56.4
Nepal	78.5[b]	38.6**
Pakistan	69.7	48.3
Rwanda	30.9[y]	13.4[y]

35 Global March for Child Labour, kNOw child labour, www.globalmarch.org/resourcecentre/chi 36 For example, in Ethiopia and Bangladesh. 37 UNESCO (2007) op. cit. (2005 figures). 38 UNESCO (2007) ibid. (2005 figures). 39 Burundi, Brunei Darussalam, Grenada, Nepal, Niger, Pakistan, Senegal (Source: GMR 2008). 40 Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics; ** UIS Estimation, b Data are for school year ending in 2006; x Data are for the school year ending in 2002; y Data are for the school year ending in 2003.

Yet much is known about how to enhance quality for better participation and learning, including how such issues might be addressed at school and system levels, and how parents and communities can also contribute, through parent-teacher associations, school management committees and community action, to school enrolment and retention, buildings maintenance and monitoring of school performance and finances. DFID has promoted such strategies, both internationally and with its partner countries, though not always in a systematic enough way.[41]

Quality improvement requires particular international and country-based action in relation to teachers. More than 18 million extra trained teachers will be needed worldwide over the next decade to provide every child with a quality primary education.[42] There is also a crisis of teacher motivation in both Africa and Asia. The impact of low salaries in many countries is exacerbated by poor living conditions, particularly in rural areas, by lack of ongoing professional support and training and by insufficient or inappropriate management of deployment and career progression. In a number of countries, and despite the development of prevention, treatment and workforce policies, the impact of HIV and AIDS also remains significant.[43] The under-representation of female and disabled teachers and those from other marginalised groups, is in many countries a contributory factor towards continued exclusion of girls and children from marginalized groups. It also contributes to the discrimination they face in the classroom that limits their chances of completion.[44]

DFID is committed "to support governments to provide quality education for excluded groups."[45] One of the chief ways in which it aims to meet this commitment, particularly where financial support is given via the budget, is through policy dialogue at national level. However, the increase DFID has received in programme resources has not been accompanied by an equivalent increase in professional resources with which to manage them, and DFID staff budgets are under some pressure. This, along with the move towards more budget support, means that DFID advisers and programme staff are increasingly being required by DFID to have a more generic set of professional development competencies, blended with some sector specialism.[46] The tendency seems to be to regard a professional education adviser as something of a luxury in a country where DFID does not have a specific education programme. Other advisers may try to cover the education sector policy dialogue, but may lack the background to contribute on technical issues, and will tend to give low priority to issues that may not be seen to be part of their core work. This tendency is reinforced to the extent that the national education ministry sees general budget support resources as coming from the Ministry of Finance, and has little incentive to listen to a donor that does not appear from their perspective to be contributing additional resources.[47]

This move by DFID away from professional education advisers at country level can mean that it fails in its commitment to support governments to provide quality education for excluded groups. In Tanzania, for example, where DFID provides 80% of their aid as general budget support, DFID have no professional education advisers and have focussed their own attention on ensuring that the planning and budget process works effectively, and that decisions on education policy can be informed by an annual review in which the development partners are consulted. This high level approach would be fine if the annual review were of sufficient analytical depth to identify the critical issues, and was linked

41 e.g. Ward, M., Penny, A. and Read T. (2006) Education Reform in Uganda, 1997-2004, Reflections on Policy, Partnership, Strategy and Implementation, Researching the Issues No 60, London: DFID. **42** UNESCO (2007) op. cit. (2005 figures). **43** Bennell, P. and Akyeampong, K. (2007) op. cit. **44** Global Campaign for Education (2006) Teachers For All: what governments and donors should do, Johannesburg: GCE. **45** DFID (2007) op. cit. **46** DFID (2007) ibid. **47** Foster, M. (2008) op. cit.

to an effective operational plan and sufficient implementation capacity for addressing them. However, the reviews have tended to be dominated by process issues, and have not been effective in addressing issues of quality and inclusion. Though DFID have directly financed a study on inclusion issues, and is providing support to CSO advocacy groups in holding Government to account, neither is likely to achieve much without support as the Government lacks technical skills itself.[48]

The Tanzania case contrasts with the experience in Uganda, where general budget support was accompanied by detailed professional dialogue between the Ministry and donor partners, including DFID. This proved both necessary and constructive in enabling the Ministry to design and implement challenging reforms in classroom construction, textbook procurement, and direct support to schools and teacher inspection.[49]

As such, in order to better promote achievement of the education MDGs, DFID must ensure that development and annual reviews of education policy at national level are effective in addressing issues of quality and inclusion.

To do this, DFID should:

- Review existing and forthcoming education sector plans and implementation frameworks from partner governments to ensure that they:
  - Address teacher supply, training, deployment, incentives and management issues, including the need to recruit and retain female and disabled teachers and those from marginalised groups to act as role models for excluded children;
  - Prioritise pre- and in-service teacher training in learner-centred, participatory teaching which responds to the needs of each child;
  - Ensure plans have been produced through consultation with marginalised groups;
  - Require schools, language of instruction and learning materials to be accessible for all children, including disabled children and linguistic minorities.
- Where it may not choose to directly engage in education sector policy dialogue, planning, implementation and review, in PSA countries DFID must ensure that systems and capacity to do so are in place, including both capacity in Government, and capacity for external monitoring and challenge (principally through CSOs) – If civil society is to play an external challenge role, DFID must invest in building their capacity and facilitate the opening of policy space for them to participate. DFID has made some positive contributions to building CSO capacity to engage in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development, as envisaged in Dakar, such as its support for the Commonwealth Education Fund. However more support is urgently required if civil society engagement in education planning and implementation is to be taken to scale. This could be given through supporting civil society education funds.[50]
- Champion inclusive, equitable education in policy dialogue at international levels and within financing partnerships – For example, with other donor agencies, the FTI, IFIs and multilaterals. In particular, contribute to the development of frameworks and norms in FTI processes to guide donors and national governments to develop strategies for inclusivity, equity and quality.

48 Foster, M. (2008) ibid. **49** Foster, M. (2008) ibid. **50** See CEF briefing paper 'National Civil Society Education Funds' (2007).
51 2008/9-2010/11.

- Set a more ambitious target to aim for gender parity in all PSA countries by 2011 – A more ambitious PSA target should be framed for the next PSA,[51] aiming for gender parity in all PSA countries that have not yet achieved it by 2011 at the latest (the end of the next PSA period).[52]
- Continue to build commitment amongst partner governments and donors for demand-side strategies, such as the abolition of school fees and cash transfers, which facilitate girls' and marginalised groups' access to good quality education and advocate revision of external financing estimates taking into account realistic costings of such strategies – This should be underpinned by analysis of the impact of such strategies on marginalised groups' access to education.

Engaging with the macro-economic context

The global gap in teacher numbers has been reinforced by the unpredictability of aid and the reluctance of some donors to support salary and other recurrent expenditure. Some governments have responded to the need for teachers by employing contract teachers who do not have the training or salaries of teachers employed as civil servants. Inflexible approaches by the IMF to public sector wage bills mean that many governments are blocked from recruiting and training desperately needed teachers.[53]

> "International institutions – such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund – will need to ensure that their policies support this effort [of developing countries to achieve the education MDGs] and give sufficient priority to the importance of ongoing expenditure on key public services". (DFID/HMT, Keeping Our Promises: Delivering Education For All, 2006, page 14)

DFID has indicated that macro-economic policies set by international institutions must support national governments to develop and implement long-term education plans. It has also played a positive role in some countries to challenge macro-economic constraints. In Mozambique in 2006, for example, DFID worked with other donors to support the Ministry of Education to challenge the Ministry of Finance and the IMF about the need to recruit more teachers. However, DFID must engage more with the macro-economic context in partner countries to ensure that the delivery of quality education is not impeded by macro-economic constraints.

DFID should do this by:

- Ensuring, through policy dialogue at national and international levels, that macro-economic policies facilitate rather than obstruct the achievement of education goals in all PSA countries – DFID must ensure that IFI conditions do not block the recruitment of urgently needed professional teachers.

Plan UK

52 Foster, M. (2008) op. cit. 53 ActionAid (2005) Contradicting Commitments, London: ActionAid, ActionAid (2006) Cancelling the Caps, London: ActionAid, ActionAid (2007) Confronting the Contradictions, London: ActionAid.

Summary of Recommendations

1. Triple aid disbursements to education in the next two years in order to meet funding commitments. To do this DFID must:

- Increase the share of actual ODA (excluding debt relief) to education to 9.2%;
- Review the education plans as reflected in country assistance strategies, and check whether the UK aid programme is on track to deliver the £8.5bn commitment;
- Develop, and make public, the strategy that shows how it will achieve this ambitious expansion in spending.

2. Ensure greater stability in aid flows to education. To do this DFID must:

- Continue to use budget support as the main modality for aid delivery but consider increased use of sector budget support in situations where there is a risk that the Government may not otherwise give sufficient priority to implementing the education plan or there is a risk of political instability.

3. Increase investment in those countries furthest from achieving the education MDGs. To do this DFID must:

- Provide more aid to Afghanistan, Burundi, DRC, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen;
- Support education in conflict-affected countries and fragile states as a priority;
- Ensure that effective multilateral instruments are put in place to address the needs of other countries at risk of not reaching the UPE target, including Francophone African countries;
- Include education within the first phase of all DFID-funded humanitarian responses.

4. Ensure that the development and annual review of national education policy effectively addresses issues of quality, equity and inclusion. To do this DFID must:

- Review existing and forthcoming education sector plans and implementation frameworks from partner governments to ensure that they:
  - address teacher supply, training, deployment, incentives and management issues, including the need to recruit and retain female and disabled teachers and those from marginalised groups to act as role models for excluded children;
  - prioritise pre- and in-service teacher training in learner-centred, participatory teaching which responds to the needs of each child;
  - have been produced through consultation with marginalised groups;
  - require schools, language of instruction and learning materials to be accessible for all children, including disabled children and linguistic minorities;

- Where it may not choose to directly engage in education sector policy dialogue, planning, implementation and review, in PSA countries DFID must ensure that systems and capacity to do so are in place, including both capacity in Government, and capacity for external monitoring and challenge (principally through CSOs);
- Champion inclusive, equitable education in policy dialogue at international levels and within financing partnerships;
- Set a more ambitious target to aim for gender parity in all PSA countries by 2011;
- Continue to build commitment amongst partner governments and donors for demand-side strategies, such as the abolition of school fees and cash transfers, which facilitate girls' and marginalised groups' access to good quality education and advocate revision of external financing estimates taking into account realistic costings of such strategies.

5. Engage more with the macro-economic context in partner countries to ensure that the delivery of quality education is not impeded by macro-economic constraints. To do this DFID must:

- Ensure, through policy dialogue at national and international levels, that macro-economic policies facilitate rather than obstruct the achievement of education goals in all PSA countries;

Christian Aid/Adrian Arbib

Annex 1 – DFID Bilateral Aid to Education in PSA Countries By Year £000s[54]

	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	Comment
Bangladesh	9057	7006	17656	27894	20626	Rapid growth then 24% cut
Cambodia	182	91	58	16	0	Decline
China	4966	5886	10950	4090	9222	Erratic
DRC	–	5501	6329	4446	3585	Declining
Ethiopia	5195	10440	16206	1936	20181	Severe cut in 2005/6
Ghana	18311	17433	18789	20075	22215	Stable growth
India	30158	41979	88391	97100	54902	Erratic
Indonesia	623	586	544	497	340	Steady decline
Kenya	15404	5504	5847	5478	14781	Unstable
Malawi	2410	4190	4943	6423	6314	Steady growth
Mozambique	4533	6164	11757	15780	19017	Fast and reliable growth
Nepal	358	490	2637	5643	3630	Erratic
Nigeria	461	1438	4087	9937	7354	Slightly erratic growth
Pakistan	7525	11566	349	5508	7335	Unstable
RSA	7892	11549	8267	5449	5304	Declining
Rwanda6	6766	6449	9890	16822	4767	Unstable
Sierra Leone	2149	2270	2680	3268	2724	Stable
Sudan	1777	2117	87	448	856	Erratic
Tanzania	11478	15008	16197	21227	22836	Stable growth
Uganda	19090	9533	9523	7807	10341	Reversing steep decline
Vietnam	1266	8346	7370	14327	15702	Rapid growth
Zambia	3565	7147	8911	12983	12226	Stable growth

54 Source: data provided by DFID.

Sight Savers/Fabiene Fossez

Annex 2 – Allocation of UK and Global Aid to Education

	PPP GNI[55] p.c. 2006	Primary school age pop 2004	Out of school pop	Ave UK aid to education 2004/5-2006/7	Global aid to education 2004-06	Prospects of achieving UPE	Comment
		% Share	% Share	% Share	% Share	GMR 2008 categories	
A. Countries where UK and others should try to do more							
Afghanistan	Low-income	0.9	1.7	0.0	1.8	No data	Share in global aid is low given the tax constraint. Increase and lobby.
Burundi	710	0.2	0.7	0.2	0.2	2 - Low chance	Increase (poor, lower aid share than share in OOS).
DRC	720	1.7	7.3	1.4	0.6	No data	Increase & lobby (poverty, low share in global aid).
Nigeria	1,050	3.8	9.6	2.1	0.5	4 - serious risk	Low shares in UK and global aid. Increase and lobby.
Pakistan	2,500	3.5	9.2	1.3	1.5	2 - Low chance	Low shares in UK and global aid. Increase and lobby.
Somalia	Low-income	0.3	1.8	0.3	0.2	No data	If politics permits, do more to offset low global share, and lobby others.
Sudan	2,160	1.0	3.1	0.1	0.5	No data	If politics permits, do more to offset low global & UK share, and lobby others.
Yemen	920	0.6	1.3	0.6	0.6	2 - Low chance	Increase and lobby (poverty, missing target).
B. Countries where UK is involved, could lobby others to do more							
Ethiopia	1,190	1.5	3.9	3.8	1.4	2 - Low (2015), 1 - High(2025)	UK effort reasonable share, but low share in global education aid.
Kenya	1,300	1.0	1.6	2.6	0.7	2 - Low (2015), 1 - High(2025)	UK effort reasonable, share in global aid looks low, only 39% for basic.
Mozambique	1,220	0.7	1.3	4.6	1.3	2 - Low (2015), 1 - High(2025)	High UK share, lobby others given poverty, missing target.

55 Gross national income per head, based on purchasing power parity. Source: World Bank World Development Indicators database, 17th September 2007.

	PPP GNI p.c. 2006	Primary school age pop 2004	Out of school pop	Ave UK aid to education 2004/5-2006/7	Global aid to education 2004-06	Prospects of achieving UPE	Comment
		% Share	% Share	% Share	% Share	GMR 2008 categories	
Nepal	1,630	0.6	1.0	1.2	0.6	No data	Global aid to education is low given poverty, OOS, post-war needs.
Rwanda	1,270	0.3	0.5	3.1	0.5	4 - serious risk	High UK share, lobby others given poverty, missing target.
Sierra Leone	850	0.1	–	0.9	0.1	No data	High poverty levels and war legacy argue for higher global effort.
C. Countries where UK not involved (Non-PSA, could lobby others or develop silent partnerships							
Angola	2,360	0.3	1.5	0.0	0.5	No data	Only 35% of education aid goes to basic, huge problems, many OOS.
Cameroon	2,370	0.5	0.0	0.0	2.1	No data	Lobby to increase the 3% share of basic education in education aid
Chad	1,230	0.3	0.9	0.0	0.3	2 - Low chance	Raise global share and 24% share of basic education in education aid.
Cote D'Ivoire	1,550	0.5	1.8	0.0	0.7	4 - serious risk	If politics permit, lobby to raise both the global total and the low 11% share to basic education.
Mali	1,130	0.4	1.6	0.0	1.3	2 - Low chance	Global effort not unreasonable and 55% goes to basic, but Mali is poor, missing the target, and with large numbers OOS.
Niger	830	0.4	2.0	0.0	0.4	2 - Low chance	Very poor, low global education aid, less than half to basic, missing the target with large numbers OOS.
Senegal	1,970	0.3	0.8	0.0	1.8	2 - Low chance	Global education aid is OK but only 7% goes to basic.

Annex 2 – Allocation of UK and Global Aid to Education (continued)

	PPP GNI p.c. 2006	Primary school age pop 2004	Out of school pop	Ave UK aid to education 2004/5-2006/7	Global aid to education 2004-06	Prospects of achieving UPE	Comment
		% Share	% Share	% Share		GMR 2008 categories	
D. Countries with reasonable global and UK share							
Bangladesh	2,340	2.9	0.6	6.6	2.1	Achieved	Maintain to address quality problems.
Burkina	1,330	0.4	1.7	0.0	1.0	2 - Low chance	1% share in global aid with 55% to basic education.
Cambodia	2,920	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.6	Achieved	Said to have achieved UPE, may need to maintain aid for quality maintenance.
Ghana	2,640	0.6	1.4	6.1	0.8	2 - Low chance	Global effort reasonable, high UK share reflects lead role.
Guinea	2,410	0.3	0.7	0.0	0.6	2 - Low chance	Might argue for increasing the 42% share to basic education.
Haiti	1,490	0.2	1.0	0.0	0.5	No data	Need unclear, but basic gets only 24% of education aid.
Iraq	Lower middle income	0.8	0.8	0.0	1.6	3 - At risk	OK, though only 17% of education aid goes to basic.
Mad	960	0.5	0.3	0.0	0.9	1 - High	Maintain aid given poverty & poor quality of education,
Malawi	720	0.4	0.2	1.8	0.5	1 - High	Poor, but has good chance to reach UPE despite low global education aid and only 35% to basic; increase if politics permits.
Myanmar	Low-income	0.9	0.7	0.0	0.2	1 - High	Maintain aid given poverty & poor quality of education.
Tanzania	740	1.3	0.2	6.0	1.3	Achieved	Unclear if target will be met, quality issues remain.
Uganda	1,490	1.1	0.0	2.7	1.2	No data	Only 8% of education aid goes to basic, rising wealth but at risk of not meeting target in poor and remote areas.

	PPP GNI p.c. 2006	Primary school age pop 2004	Out of school pop	Ave UK aid to education 2004/5-2006/7	Global aid to education 2004-06	Prospects of achieving UPE	Comment
		% Share	% Share	% Share	% Share	GMR 2008 categories	
Vietnam	3,300	1.5	1.5	3.7	2.1	3 - At risk	Weak case for increased aid (rising GNI, value added?).
E. Countries where UK and global aid to education is high with weak case for increased aid							
India	3,800	20.8	9.3	23.9	4.6	1 - High	Weak case for increased aid (rising GNI, value added?).
Indonesia	3,950	4.4	0.6	0.1	2.5	Achieved	Highish.
Zambia	1,000	0.4	0.3	3.4	1.2	1 - High	Weak case for increased aid (rising GNI).
F. Countries with OOS children but weak case for increased aid							
Brazil	8,800	2.4	0.7	0.0	1.1	1 - High	Weak case for increased aid (rising GNI).
China	7,740	17.7	–	2.4	9.1	No data	Weak case for increased aid (rising GNI).
Colombia	7,620	0.8	0.7	0.0	0.8	1 - High	Weak case for increased aid (rising GNI).
Iran	8,490	1.2	0.4	0.0	1.1	1 - High	Weak case for increased aid (rising GNI).
Morocco	5,000	0.7	0.8	0.0	6.2	1 - High	Weak case for increased aid (rising GNI).
Philippines	5,980	2.1	0.9	0.0	0.8	1 - High	No aid case (high GNI).
Saudi	16,620	0.6	1.2	0.0	0.1	2 - Low chance	Weak case for increased aid (rising GNI).
RSA	11,710	1.3	0.8	1.9	1.3	3 - At risk 2015 1 - High 2025	Weak case for increased aid (rising GNI).
Thailand	9,140	1.1	0.6	0.0	0.8	No data	Weak case for increased aid (rising GNI).
Turkey	9,060	1.5	1.3	0.0	3.1	3 - At risk	–
Total of above	–	85.2	68.2	–	–	–	–
Developing World Total	–	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–	

Sources: World Bank WDI database for GNI figures; GMR for education data; OECD/DAC CRS database for global education aid; DFID for data on UK aid to education; UNICEF MICS (forthcoming).

Notes on table

We excluded countries with small primary school populations, and those that have already achieved UPE or have a high chance of achieving it, and that are either able to maintain progress from their own resources (relatively high per capita income), or are both small and relatively well aided.

The judgements are based on the assumption that countries should generally receive a higher share in global education aid than their share in the developing country population of primary school age children if they are low-income and not on course to achieve UPE by 2015. If their actual share in global aid does not reflect this, then DFID should allocate an increased share of bilateral aid to education if the country concerned is a PSA country. If not, DFID needs to ensure that action is taken through multilateral channels to increase their share. We also comment where necessary on the need to raise the share of basic education as well as the total level of education aid. Conversely, countries that are middle or higher income or that have already achieved or are on track to achieve the MDG should, other things being equal, receive a lower share in global aid to education. With a growing total level of aid, this need not imply a reduction in absolute aid levels, only that they are low priority for increased aid. In the extreme cases of heavily aided middle income countries, however, there may be a case for re-allocating existing aid.

Final note

This report has looked just at primary education. Later this year GCE UK will be commissioning a further report looking at the role of DFID in relation to the full EFA agenda (including early childhood education and adult literacy). It is already clear that in these areas DFID has been doing relatively little, despite the growing evidence of inter-dependency in the EFA goals. It will be hard for governments to get the hardest to reach groups into primary school without addressing these other goals. For girls to enrol in school, stay in school and achieve in school, a literate home environment and particularly a literate mother, can make all the difference. Early childhood education can be essential for the most marginalised groups if children are to stand a fair chance when they enter primary school.

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