

## EFA FTI Global and Regional Activities

### Thematic Area: Out of School Children

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#### **1. Support community participation and civil society engagement**

The paper highlights three “gaps” restricting the way countries and donors can address the situation of out of school children and proposes activities the FTI GRAP can support to address those. We appreciate the quality of the analysis and the contribution of the paper to address this situation. However, even if these gaps are filled, there is no guarantee that children will go and stay in school, for the reason that appropriate mechanisms at the local level are not in place. For one, there is a lack of mechanisms to involve communities in the issue of their kids not going to school.

Secondly, civil society actors out of the capital have usually little means to participate in the diagnosis and resolution of the issue and engage with the government at the district, provincial and national level. We hence propose to support community participation and civil society engagement within the proposed activities. We also suggest to address this issue in the diagnosis part of the paper.

#### **2. Add a qualitative research component to the methodology of data collection**

The proposed quantitative approach needs to be complemented by a qualitative research component in order to better understand and make sense of the collected data. Survey data alone does not allow us to do that. We need not only to better capture the out of school population numbers and individual characteristics, but as importantly, to understand who are these children and why they are not in school. Perhaps the FTI could build on on-going initiatives such as UNICEF’s Global Out of School Initiative and ensure that this complementary component is integrated.

#### **3. Limit and focus the program of activities**

The proposed program of activities could be more focused, taking in consideration the financial resources available as well as the role of the FTI GRAP as an added value to existing mechanisms.

We also suggest to concentrate on the proposed activities 1(data) and 2 ( policy) and to keep the implementation and management activities to a later stage when the results of the two first set of activities are known, so that we can better focus them on real needs and opportunities.

#### **4. Complement proposed activity 1 ( Data)**

As a follow-up of the above considerations, integrate a qualitative research component in the approach and methodology.

#### **5. Complement proposed activity 2 ( Policy)**

A first suggestion is to consider using collected data as a way to engage children, youth, their parents and the members of their communities in the policy dialogue around the causes of children failing to enter, attend or complete school, and the identification of measures to address the issue of out of school children.

Another suggestion would be to research ways in which we can support civil society actors (specifically those in remote areas) in participating in the policy dialogue, promoting pro-poor measures, and supporting community participation in addressing the issue of out of school children.

#### **6. Specific comments about the paper**

- We suggest reinforcing the critical importance of the context when we discuss the issue of out of school children. The analysis and means of resolution will be quite different when referring to the context of cities or marginalized rural areas, or the context of fragile and conflict-affected states.
- Likewise, when addressing the issue of out of school children, it would be important to distinguish between problems of access, survival, or quality of education ( including the presence of teachers). Are we referring to children who do not have access to school, or who cannot survive in school because of poverty, or because of lack of prerequisites for learning, or are we referring to children who do not attend school because of the poor relevance and quality of education?
- Language: In reading the paper, we sometimes get the impression that the FTI is an implementing agency, rather than promoting a participation approach with its stakeholders. It would also be a good thing to avoid alarming language such as in the introduction.