

**COMMENTS on the FTI GRA: FINANCE**  
**UNICEF, Education Section**  
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1. While the issue of private costs of schooling and household cost-barriers to education is highlighted in the background section of the paper, nothing is proposed in terms of activities. On the other hand, household cost-barriers to education (including school fees and other direct and indirect costs, as well as opportunity costs) continue to constitute a, if not *the*, major barrier to education access, especially within the present context of chronic economic and food crises. There is need to maintain the focus on such barrier and on the continuing creeping of multiple costs and burdens of poor families for the education of their children. This is linked to Activity 4: Development of integrated funding approaches for equity in education.
2. Within Activity 4, UNICEF can contribute to the deliverables through its work on the School Fee Abolition Initiative (SFAI). SFAI was launched jointly by UNICEF and the World Bank in 2005 (and later joined by other partners like UNESCO IIEP) with the objectives of
  - developing an evidence base on lessons learned and for operational strategies to address household cost-barriers to education;
  - providing technical support to countries to integrate effective strategies into education sector plans; and
  - enhancing the global and national policy dialogue on the issue.
3. UNICEF is presently consolidating the work on SFAI and extending the analysis and support to countries to include other more specific dimensions of implementation related to finance and equity in education:
  - (i) the proliferation of the private provision of education and
  - (ii) school grants as an effective implementation mechanism and strategy for equitable resource allocation.
4. A baseline is going to be developed (through a yearly questionnaire to countries) to monitor the status of school fees and school fee abolition policies and to organize more systematic support to countries and ensure evidence-based advocacy and dialogue on the issue of cost-barriers to education.