

COMMENTS on the FTI GRA: OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN
UNICEF, Education Section
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1. As in the first version of the OOSC GRA paper, this second paper highlights three gap areas in the way the problem of OOSC is addressed in countries: data, policy and management. It proposes three activity areas to fill these gaps: (i) an improved instrument that tracks OOSC, identifies their characteristics and the reasons why they are out of school; (ii) a systematic assessment of existing policies with a view to improve educational planning related to OOSC, and (iii) management strategies to ensure implementation of policies.
2. UNICEF welcomes an approach that addresses the problem of OOSC from a data, policy and implementation perspective. However, as we already noted in the first set of comments we provided, we have a concern that these three activity areas are each dealt with in a **standalone** way. We think that if the GRA is to fulfill its objective of ensuring that OOSC access school and remain there, the data, management and implementation gaps need to be addressed in an **integrated** way at the country level.
3. The **UNICEF/UIS Out-of-School Children Initiative** (OOSCI) is precisely proposing a holistic methodology at the country level to address the problem of OOSC from a data, policy, strategy, and planning perspective. The GRA paper reduces OOSCI to a data initiative. However, as we noted earlier, this is not accurate. The UNICEF/UIS OOSCI is now working with 25 countries to
 - improve statistical information and analysis on OOSC,
 - scrutinize factors of exclusion from schooling,
 - develop effective policies related to enhanced participation, and
 - guide and mobilize concrete education sector reforms in this regard.
4. The OOSCI furthermore proposes an innovative **Framework for analyzing and acting on the problem of OOSC**. A Conceptual and Methodological Framework (CMF) has been developed with the participating countries to guide the work at the country level. It supports a more systematic linkage between three main components: (i) PROFILES of excluded children capturing the complexity of the problem of OOSC in terms of numbers, categories and multiple disparities (OOSCI is also collaborating with Understanding Children's Work/UCW to synchronize data on child labor with that on OOSC); (ii) BARRIERS AND BOTTLENECKS to clarify the dynamic and causal processes related to the diverse OOSC profiles; and (iii) POLICIES AND STRATEGIES to address the barriers and bottlenecks within education and beyond (looking at social protection systems). UNICEF is now planning to refine the CMF further into a "**Guide**" for addressing the problem of OOSC based on the experience of countries. This relates very concretely to the proposed "improved instrument [in this paper] that tracks OOSC, identifies their characteristics and the reasons why they are out of school" (though the OOSCI Guide will add the element of policy and implementation to such instrument).
5. The work of OOSCI is not limited to research and analysis. The analytical framework described above is **embedded in efforts of reform, coordination and capacity**

development related to the collection and management of education statistics and to policy analysis and strategy development. In the spirit of the FTI Partnership, OOSCI aims at bringing dispersed efforts together, at ensuring country-led participatory approaches, at encouraging learning and sharing and at mobilizing resources for equity in access. Country teams, led by government partners, have been constituted to undertake the work and are constituted of diverse stakeholders (agencies and organizations working in education), including research institutions and experts. Wherever relevant, the work has been integrated in the tasks of local education groups and education sector planning and review processes and has been building on or integrating related efforts.

6. As noted in our first set of comments, **within the framework of the FTI GRA and the proposed program on out-of-school children, UNICEF suggests**
 - (i) to build on the efforts of OOSCI, strengthen the ongoing work in the 25 countries and support the roll-out to more. In response to increasing demand from countries, UNICEF is now developing a strategy in collaboration with its Regional Offices to roll out OOSCI in more countries. This will need to be done in close collaboration with the FTI in order to ensure systematic embedding of the approach into country planning, reform and implementation processes.
 - (ii) UNICEF furthermore plans to collaborate with the FTI and other partners in the development of the Guide on OOSC in order to ensure the input of a solid expertise. UNICEF plans to develop a strategy with the FTI for a more systematic use of the Guide in country planning processes and Joint Sector Reviews.