

## **Global March Against Child Labour**

### **Comments on EFA-FTI GRA Thematic Paper on “Out-of-school Children” and Concrete Action Proposals**

At this stage of consultation, Global March would like to refer to comments already made by key organisations, supporting these and/or offering additional comments where necessary. The main focus of the organisation and its worldwide network of members, including teachers' and civil society organisations and trade unions, is that of the elimination of child labour. In this respect, as a general comment, Global March is concerned at the limited reference to the role of education in the causes and consequences of child labour. There is a well-documented correlation between the incidence of child labour and access to and quality of education. This concern is one shared by a number of international organisations, including the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, EFA-FTI, Education International and Global March who, following several years of discussions and consultations, established the Global Task Force on Child Labour and Education in 2005. This shared global concern is not sufficiently reflected in any of the thematic papers, but particularly on “Out-of-school Children” which should include more specific focus on the issue of child labour. Lack of access to good quality, free state education is not only one of the reasons why many children end up working, but is also the most important and sustainable intervention in reducing the incidence of child labour.

Global March would like to align itself with the comment made by the ILO and UNESCO/UIS in terms of necessary improvements to the quality of data collected on out-of-school children, in particular data that reflects why the hardest-to-reach children are still out of school and unable to benefit from various forms of formal and non-formal education programmes and enhancing data that identifies working children. In this respect, Global March would recommend an activity under the auspices of the Global Task Force on Child Labour and Education through which improved coherence could be introduced between data collection activities of member agencies to ensure mainstreaming of the child labour issue and to identify vital interventions to address the reasons why children work instead of going to school or why they drop out to enter the labour market – issues raised in the ILO response. These children make up the bulk of the hardest-to-reach children – those who remain on the fringes of society – and it is crucial to avoid further duplication of effort and resources and to encourage greater inter-agency collaboration, coherence and communications – fundamental pillars of the Global Task Force.

The ILO makes an important point when it refers to the “measurement and ... characterisation of out-of-school children” as being not only a matter of questionnaire but also of sampling. Given that the distribution of many of these children is in hard-to-reach areas, such as deprived urban or semi-urban areas or remote rural areas, in which a number of its members have local experience and expertise, Global March could envisage leveraging the expertise and experience of key Global Task Force members, such as the ILO and UIS, and carrying out pilot survey exercises in identified geographical locations in FTI countries to complement and further inform the activities of international agencies and governments. This exercise would further contribute to the improvement of the design of survey tools for out-of-school children.

In addition, Global March recommends more detailed understanding on what is already being done to identify out-of-school children, particularly the hardest-to-reach, and to address their specific needs and expectations through either formal or non-formal education services. There has been significant investment over a number of years by a range of service providers funded by different donor agencies, not only through EFA-FTI mechanisms, but others, including UNESCO, ILO-IPEC and UNICEF. The challenge of incoherence between policies and programmes, as mentioned above, is one of the key reasons behind the creation of the Global Task Force on Child Labour and Education, but this is not yet being effectively addressed. Global March would propose that a thorough mapping be conducted in a small number of FTI countries, and possibly in smaller geographical sub-sets, of all

education interventions, not only those of the multilaterals, but also those provided by other actors, for example, national and international civil society organisations, private companies, public-private partnerships, etc. It is timely to assess the impact of these disparate, unconnected activities and to introduce efforts to streamline activities to ensure greater impact, coherence and sustainability. It is not always an issue of greater investment of additional resources but also of ensuring that current and past investments are working more efficiently and effectively. These mapping exercises could be accompanied by joint consultative processes to design more efficient and coherent mechanisms to leverage programme outputs, improve collaboration, coordination and communications and reinforce outcomes and sustainability. Global March would like to propose that among the identified pilot areas are those which are characterised by high incidence of child labour.

Quality of education is a key element of why working children do not go to school or drop-out, particularly among the most marginalised communities, i.e. the hardest-to-reach children. This is reinforced by the comments made by other civil society organisations on “learning outcomes”. As long as parents of poor and marginalised families do not see any significant and immediate benefit of education for their children, in particular in terms of leveraging education outcomes to access decent work, then they are more likely to take their children out of school and push them into the work place. This is a basic survival instinct in poverty-stricken situations. Global March recommends identifying several pilot countries/areas in which detailed attention would be paid to understanding why children do not go to school and/or drop out and where this is because of quality of education. This would assist in remedial efforts to design action to address these reasons. Where these can be identified as issues stemming from challenges in teacher training, it would be important work closely with Education International, another founding member of the Global Task Force, to involve representative teachers’ organisations in improving teacher training programmes or referral services. In addition, Global March fully supports the recommendations of organisations which have focused on the need to focus more centrally on improved learning outcomes in education. This activity should be part of an inter-agency approach, including the Global Task Force.

As a general comment, it is interesting to note the lack of reference to the Global Task Force on Child Labour in Education in the comments on the EFA-FTI GRA thematic paper on “Out-of-school Children” given the principles on which this inter-agency collaboration was founded.

## **Concrete Action**

In concrete terms of comments on suggested actions in section 2.1.4 of the revised concept paper, Global March would like to indicate the following interest:

### **Proposed Activity 1: Data**

- Global March could contribute to the design of data collection tools to ensure a clearer definition of out-of-school children, particularly where this is linked to child labour.
- Global March could contribute to supporting pilot interventions to test the use of improved instruments and contribute to their further refinement based on outcomes,
- Global March could contribute through dissemination of appropriate data collection tools to relevant civil society organisations and building capacity in terms of use and data analysis to ensure the involvement of civil society in this process.

### **Proposed Activity 2: Policy**

- Global March emphasises the importance of the full involvement of civil society/teachers’ organisations in efforts to ensure that EFA-FTI developing country partners are enabled to develop effective policies to bring out-of-school children into school. Therefore, Global March could contribute through capacity-building of civil society actors to ensure their full and meaningful participation in the activities included under this section. This would include

facilitating technical workshops and knowledge dissemination for civil society partners in identified countries.

- Global March, through the Global Task Force on Child Labour and Education, could reinforce policy coherence in the identified 3-5 countries to ensure the capacity of ESP's to address out-of-school issues, particularly where these include the incidence of child labour, document and disseminate good practices and designing and facilitating relevant workshops.

### **Proposed Activity 3: Management**

- Global March could support the identification and sharing of good practices to address management issues in identified FTI countries and to support efforts to address management gaps through partnership activities between government and civil society.
- Global March could facilitate capacity-building workshops for civil society/teacher organisations to participate in this process, particularly in situations where improvements to teacher training is necessary (in collaboration with Education International).
- Global March could support research into knowledge gaps in terms of management issues in selected areas, particularly those where child labour incidence is high, to identify effective responses to why children remain out-of-school and enter the labour market.
- Global March could develop relevant knowledge management products, including capacity-building tools, based on the outcomes of the above activities.

As a general note, Global March would like to emphasise the important contribution the Global Task Force on Child Labour and Education could make to the implementation of the three proposed activities in the area of out-of-school children and recommends that the EFA-FTI Secretariat, as a member of the Task Force, writes to the Task Force Secretariat to propose an internal consultation on joint action under each of the three activities.

*Submitted 6 August 2011*