

## Irish + Nordic Constituency Comments GRA Program

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We appreciate the consultative process of the EFA FTI Global and Regional Activity Program and we're giving chance to give input on the Thematic Papers. In this first round of consultation we would recommend that all three papers would benefit from a coherent structure and format even if the scope of the theme varies in nature.

Based on the information of the discussions in Kigale, there is also a need to reflect if the thematic papers reflect the partnership spirit and how EFA-FTI Secretariat could strengthen the collaboration with other expert agencies, rather than the GGP team at the EFA-FTI Secretariat evolves to an agency of its own.

Reading the paper and The GRA presentation it is still not clear how the proposed activities should be implemented and by whom and whom shall commission the activity. An educational fund for piloting, studies and capacity development should be small scale. There is a need to have information on its financial frame in order to understand how much its constitute of the overall EFA FTI financial framework in order to make analyses of the relevance of the activities.

### **Education Financing**

- i) The introduction to the theme is too general and over simplistic. It should be noted and respected that the differences between countries domestic resources matters a great deal. It is a considerable difference if a country has a PPP below 1000 USD per capita compare to countries above 3000, moving closer to a lower middle income country. Some countries have better ability than others to attract external funding, resulting in great deviations of ODA/capita to education. The paper points out that there is no linear correlation between increased pupil expenditure and increased learning achievement however there has to be underscored the poorest of the poor countries has resulted in the worse indicators of education (EDI). Presently the paper is neglect that education financing does not operate in isolation but is complex and relates to other gaps on data, policy and capacity. Foremost domestic and external financing is at the center of political economy and political dynamics.
- ii) A possibility for a revision of the paper would be to elaborate little bit more on the background and gaps and make the activities less explicit. The paper has identified 6 issues of financing in education, very important issues when discussing financing of the sector. However, a string of focus on government's ability and willingness revenue collection is

missing. Another aspect which is missing is the dynamics of loans and the impact of HIPIC conditionalities.

- iii) Proposed activities are relevant in scope but a revised version should maybe leave out what is common approach to all activities and be more specific on the deliveries. It is obvious that some of the suggested activities such as using PETS, PEFA et al is to some extent redundant since this is already happening in many not to say most countries. It is difficult to understand how this instrument should try to be innovative or building capacity.

### **Out of school children**

The demand-perspective is largely overlooked in the analysis of reasons why children do not attend school. Among ways of addressing poverty factors, cash-transfers are mentioned – but it is not analyzed explicitly as a means of addressing and increasing the demand for education. The document could link increased quality of education, opportunities for further studies after primary/basic education as well as job opportunities after finished education to an analysis of the demand side of the equation, balancing push and pull-factors for achieving education for all and reducing the number of out-of-school children.

- i) When focusing solely on collection of specific education data, one does not factor in the fact that basic data (that is not necessarily seen as education system data) needed such as birth registration is incomplete in many countries. Children with disabilities often lack birth certificates, which has a significant impact on their educational opportunities as well as on the available data information on the ratio of children with disabilities out of school.
- ii) Policies are often targeted at different groups from the out of school population, basing the analysis on factors affecting different group individually. In real life, different grounds for discrimination overlap as identity markers overlap. A girl from a middle-class family in Dar es Salaam will have vastly different educational opportunities than a girl from a rural area in Ethiopia with a disability. Gender overlaps with other factors. Therefore, the policy section should clarify that a multi-layered analysis able to detect these variations in barriers to learning and educational opportunities is needed in policy responses to the out of school problem.
- iii) To us it seems as if the proposed Policy Activity is, or should be, redundant. It should be part of regular development cooperation dialogue and assistance to make sure that education sector plans are assessed for their capacity to address and prioritize key out of school issues. Therefore, this activity is not needed as an add-on as part of the GRA. Policy is, furthermore, rarely the main problem. Plenty of policy recommendations exist from a large variety of sources. Implementation is weak, due to lack of data and weak capacity as well as weak

demand for educational services from poor and marginalized groups. We propose that this activity is scrapped, and that the out-of-school program focuses on just two activities (data and management). Instead there are scope to see the equity aspect of financing as a more effective tool for this particular purpose.