

## Foreword

### Emerging Landscape of Ideas around GRA: Notes on Going Forward

#### Introduction

This note sets out the emerging landscape of ideas on the Global and Regional Activities (GRA) program led by the Education for All (EFA) Fast Track Initiative's (FTI) Secretariat's Global Good Practice Team (GGP), resulting from the first round of consultations in June of 2011. It summarizes the results of that first round, the state of the discussion, and also provides some background history on the GRA that seems to have been missing from the perceptions of some commentators, and how the activities are integrated with each other and with the other priorities of the FTI Secretariat as endorsed by its Board of Directors.

#### Background of the GRA

The GRA program was approved by the FTI Board of Directors, as a type of successor to the EPDF. The program will function under the unified Education for All Fund. The GRA program will provide support for initiatives and programs that address thematic areas and demonstrate their ability to enhance the capacity of country and international/regional level institutions/organizations to support EFA FTI country partners to meet their education goals.

Global and regional initiatives are intended to address the following development objectives:

- Strengthen capacity of country and regional level entities to develop, implement, and/or monitor sustainable national education sector programs.
- Enhance understanding of key priorities through research and practice and increase the impact of investments in education, drawing on innovations, evidence, and global good practices in these areas.
- Improve knowledge sharing between and among EFA FTI partners through the systematic provision of services and products that enlighten, engage and energize partners to apply new knowledge and evidence-based good practices to resolve education challenges.
- Improve Partnership accountability by strengthening availability and quality of data.
- Strengthen South-South networks and partnerships.

The three thematic areas for the GRA program cycle 1 (2011-2013) are:

- Learning outcomes
- Out of school children
- Education financing

Eligible activities to be funded by the program are:

- Research and dissemination
- Technical workshops
- Development of innovative partnerships and networks
- Technical assistance
- Study tours
- Interventions to inform scale up

### **Summary of Thematic Papers and the Role of EFA FTI Partners**

*Out of School.* This paper concerned itself with gaps in Data, Policy, and Management (or Implementation) in terms of identifying and counting children, assessing the reasons for non-enrolment and non-attendance, addressing out of school issues via improved policy-making and sector planning, and, finally, by developing more effective models of implementation to address issues related to getting children into school and keeping them there. The overall aim is to provide improved tools and guidance as well as documented examples of good practices in all these issues.

*Quality and Learning Outcomes.* This paper noted the need for an entry point into quality, and argued that early literacy (soon followed by mathematics) represents a good entry point for two reasons: a) because it is chronologically and pedagogically fundamental to accessing all other forms of knowledge at later points in the school system, and b) because in improving learning in these areas one can provide entry points or object lessons in how to improve other subjects, later in the system. The paper called for small amounts of knowledge compilation, and larger amounts of knowledge dissemination based on existing knowledge and experimentation.

*Finance.* This paper called for work in a) improved reporting and monitoring of finance flows, including analysis of efficiency and equity issues, b) tools for assessing fiduciary risk in the sector, particularly in view of sector and general budget support and other modalities deemed to be more effective than projects managed by donors and NGOs, c) experiences with types of financing that can more directly stimulate or support results, d) Development of integrated funding approaches for equity in education, and e) innovative financing sources.

The three thematic papers have been revised through a consultative process with FTI partners, seeking to enrich the understanding of the thematic areas and to determine an agreed way for the GRA program to help move the out-of-school, education financing, and quality agendas forward.

The papers provide a framework for activities to be developed with members of the FTI partnership, and do not attempt to catalogue the out-of-school, education financing, and quality issues. Elements of the discussions may remain unaddressed, since these thematic papers are only meant to create an overall framework for action, but this does not mean that any specialized considerations cannot be integrated

in the activity proposals by partners. In fact we hope they will be, as proposals are elaborated in the coming period.

### **FTI and Implementation**

Given the vastness of the issues, and the requirements of specialization, it is clear that the FTI Secretariat cannot “implement” solutions to these issues. There are plenty of partners, including developing country partners, who are already doing a great deal of work in these areas. The FTI Secretariat, through the GRA activities, hopes to create an opportunity for all partners to take systematic re-look at how these issues relate to each other, and expand the dissemination of knowledge and experiences that can further achievement in these areas.

At the same time, whenever, acting in concert with particular partners, the FTI Secretariat itself can give a short-term boost to a particular area that has gone un-attended, we believe someone has to step in and provide that boost. In most cases the FTI Secretariat will stimulate others; in a limited number of cases we will kick-start a relatively specialized or small area, in the hope of turning it over to others as soon as possible.

Thus, most (90% to 95%) of the implementation of this work is expected to take place through transfer agreements from the FTI Secretariat to various Supervising Entities who have the fiduciary controls needed to supervise funding usage. At the same time, actual implementers may be countries, NGOs, the Supervising Entities themselves, etc.

While the FTI Secretariat hopes to stimulate others in certain areas, and also to encourage clear agreements as to what results are expected, similarly FTI does not intend to issue competitive requests for proposals (RFPs), nor does it see itself as a “client” with “suppliers.” If the term “RFP” sent the wrong message, we propose to re-label these as Requests for Results Partnerships (RRPs). Formal relationships with the Supervising Entities will still need to exist, of course.

### **Select Comments from Stakeholder Consultation 1**

During the first phase of the consultation process, two aspects of the whole process have become increasingly clear: a) areas that were missing in the original formulation, which partners have pointed out and b) partners pointing out their history and ongoing willingness to address some of these areas as well as pointing to other experiences. This section summarizes those reactions. Only main lines of discussion, common to several commentators, are summarized here. More specific comments were too numerous to summarize succinctly, but have influenced the overall tenor of the FTI Secretariat response. These have found their way to the concept notes for round 2 of consultations, most often in the language used throughout. We created new activities or sub-activities in cases where there were comments in common to many partners, especially if the comments clearly implied a “proposition” with regard to a concrete activity that could be said to be missing from the GRA.

*Missing areas or general comments* included the following, in no particular order. Some are oriented at substance, others at process. Some of these areas were indeed noted in the Concept Notes, but perhaps in too muted a fashion, so they are re-stated here as comments.

1. Naïveté with regard to the political economy and institutional aspects of change or lack of change (e.g., in why certain OOS issues are not addressed in countries' plans, why learning outcomes are so hard to improve, etc.). As well as reform implementation. This was mentioned by many partners and in regard to a variety of areas. This was perhaps one of the most remarked-upon issues.
2. Lack of tie-in to curricular definition of early literacy in countries, in a practical manner, and with possible "hooks" to assessment and learning materials, in an integrated fashion, in the quality area.
3. Need to further emphasize and support country-based planning processes, and to work within the context of country plans and policy dialogue as much as possible. In all areas.
4. The need for both systemic frameworks for quality and broader sense of quality. Focus of learning outcomes on early literacy is too tight. Mostly in quality area.
5. In quality, the whole issue of attitudes, value and culture as motivators of behavior and determinants of quality, especially when it comes to teacher motivation.
6. Promotion of single approach as a solution to key problems, particularly in early literacy, is not sufficiently cognizant of others' efforts and the variety of approaches others have tried.
7. More emphasis on the local (school or village), especially on the use of data for localized management and accountability, not just policy-setting. Mentioned mostly in the context of OOS. Could tie into concept of political economy, already noted.
8. With regard to some of the concept notes and reviewers who reviewed only one, some of their concerns are actually noted in other concept notes that they may not have reviewed (e.g., the issue of pro-poor financing as a way to deal with OOS or Learning Outcomes is dealt with in the Finances concept note; it was dealt with already, but it has now been made more explicit).
9. Limited recognition of and/or linkage to on-going efforts and initiatives by partners already addressing the identified gaps. Here it is important to note that the GRA does not intend to duplicate but to support the efforts of members of the FTI partnership, while contributing to linking together various efforts for a more comprehensive global approach. The concept notes generally aim to fill gaps in knowledge and practice, but not to be a catalogue of good practices. That will come later, as part of the work itself. For now, however, if a partner feels a set of available knowledge products or practices are so well-evaluated and definitive that further work is not at all necessary, then this would be an important thing to note.

### **Partner Interest**

Partner interests have been expressed in various aspects of the GRA agenda, based on the various partners' work histories and comparative advantage. These are presented in tabular format. In further rounds of discussion we hope to further refine and, at the same time, make this knowledge more explicit. The table is presented in alphabetical order. Some agency commentators made extremely diverse, in depth, and very engaged comments. However, they did not always express ways in which

they themselves could proactively engage in a follow-up. We have read the intensity and engagement of comments as suggesting some institutional interest in follow-up (e.g., in being a Supervising Entity in at least some aspects of their comments) but that is, in some cases, only an assumption on our part. In other cases, partners were quite “propositional” and therefore their interest was more likely to be digestible and presentable in tabular form. In general, our summaries below are very telegraphic statements of groups’ interests, as we cannot reproduce the richness of everyone’s comments in a table. All comments are posted on the webpage as noted, and, also, each thematic paper now reflects commentators points more completely, particularly when commentators were “propositional.”

Countries	<p><i>General note: there was not as much commenting from countries as from agencies (at most 5% of comments came from countries). This is something that will hopefully be dealt with in the second round. One understands that countries’ officials are under time pressure with urgent tasks, but an effort will be made to seek further involvement.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In Ghana, the School Performance appraisal Meeting (SPAM) is a multi-stakeholder forum used to promote the use of data for managing enrolment and attendance. Moreover, the Ministry of Education has developed a draft complementary basic education policy (emphasizing State-Civil Society joint implementation) to address OOS children. However, implementation faces budget and cost-efficiency challenges.</li> <li>2. Honduras will be experimenting with results-based financing as part of its own policies and would welcome support and collaboration with FTI-S.</li> <li>3. Mozambique suggests the possibility of making better use of both exams and assessment systems and appreciates help in this area. Calls for common benchmarks in public exams. In general the use of public exams for quality assurance, not just filtering, is under-explored. Also express interest in measurement of more basic skills and in mother tongue and in effective remediation approaches (already included in the note on Learning Outcomes) for children falling behind and under difficult conditions.</li> </ol>
IBE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interest in helping with curricular agenda as it pertains to early literacy, and tie-in between curricular agenda and assessment and learning materials. Can bring in important academic actors.</li> </ol>
IIEP	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interest in finance agenda, capacity-building around finance</li> <li>2. Also possible role convening work on written assessment in early grades, networking PASEC, SACMEQ, LLECE, other efforts.</li> </ol>
ILO	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interest in helping with linkages between child labor knowledge base and education (OOS) through ILO IPEC program/better connection between analysis of child labor data and education planning.</li> </ol>
UIS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing measurement agenda key to all reporting.</li> <li>2. Work on data issues particularly as they pertain to OOS. Particular attention to issues of absenteeism, in-and-out-of-school phenomena.</li> <li>3. Work on oral assessment based on existing technical experience. (Convening experts to set standards, compare experiences, etc.)</li> </ol>
UNESCO	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mutual mandate-setting through common commitment, and agreement generation amongst technical leaders and countries around EFA goal 6, as a starting point.</li> <li>2. Quality frameworks and agreements to try, use, document.</li> <li>3. Institutionalizing support to quality enhancement via local knowledge</li> </ol>

	<p>providers (universities and think tanks within countries).</p> <p>4. UNESCO with UIS expressed its interest to carry out the development of a methodology to improve national reporting systems on financial flows.</p>
UNICEF	<p>1. Interest in various aspects of data, policy, and management of OOS agenda, including measurement of causes, management of enrollment, experiences and dissemination of practical approaches to OOS. Ongoing history of OOS work with UIS. Experience in household surveys that can identify causes.</p> <p>2. Interests and comments expressed in mother tongue, multi-grade teaching, production of texts in mother tongue, PPPs in textbooks, and a great variety of topics that would need to be provided in integral form. This suggests roles in piloting of integrated approaches or very country-based partnerships.</p>
Various bilateral agencies	<p>1. Interest in FTI Secretariat’s technical recommendations on key issues such as norms around learning outcomes (e.g., DfID, USAID).</p> <p>2. Interested in commenting on and supporting FTI via their own work in countries, convening regional efforts (e.g., AFD around PASEC and learning outcomes, as PASEC one of few experiences in early learning assessment in writing).</p> <p>3. GIZ has expressed particular interest in collaborating on dissemination and knowledge-sharing of particular products, particularly in quality area. Experience of former InWent is mentioned. GIZ expressed interest in collaboration specifically in mother tongue, ECD, and some other specific areas which would be quite country specific (see UNICEF comments).</p> <p>4. JICA has worked on learner-centered approaches in Math and Science which could be further supported/networked with others. MOFA in Japan will make available lists of good practices based on recent MDG meeting in Japan.</p> <p>5. DfID has noted an interest in focused approaches in early learning including assessment of early skills.</p> <p>6. USAID is already modeling many of the Learning Outcomes approaches noted here, often in rigorously evaluated contexts, and their experiences will inform work going forward. FTI will support these processes particularly if/as USAID links with other donors with a very close interest such as DfID.</p> <p>7. AFD provided extremely extensive and engaged commentary but it was unclear whether there was a desire to possibly serve as an SE or some sort of coordinating agency except in the area of PASEC which was clear. Their commentaries have otherwise been introduced into the discussion in the concept notes. (As noted above this was also the case with other agencies: extensive and interesting commentary but not clear interest in an SE role.) Further discussions will be warranted as the process unfolds.</p> <p>8. Similarly AUSAID and CIDA seem to have particular interest in various areas and submitted many comments but it is unclear how they themselves are proceeding in ways that can link with some of these initiatives or possible role as SE partners.</p>
Various civil society organizations	<p>1. CGE has signaled willingness to work on political economic and accountability issues with respect to access, learning outcomes, and finance. May need a Supervising Entity.</p> <p>2. The Brookings Institution has issued a Global Compact on Learning which itself encompasses key FTI partners (DfID, CIDA, USAID, elements of civil society constituencies, for instance), and which addresses itself at the</p>

	<p>Learning Outcomes / Quality agenda including but not limited to early literacy.</p> <p>a. In collaboration with others, possible work on finance agenda including National Education Accounts.</p> <p>3. Various NGOs such as Save-the-Children with its Literacy Boost approach, Pratham in India, IEP in Mali (and others), have already been demonstrating approaches that tie in to the efforts noted in the Learning Outcomes concept note.</p>
World Bank	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ongoing work on impact evaluation of various kinds of interventions.</li> <li>2. Ongoing work on quality and benchmarking frameworks (e.g., SABER, work on teachers, assessment, etc.).</li> <li>3. Work on improved financial analysis and reporting (e.g., ongoing work on Country Status Reports).</li> <li>4. The role of health factors in both OOS and Learning Outcomes.</li> </ol>

### **Way Forward**

In the second consultation, starting mid-July 2011, we propose to further refine interest of groups. It is important to note that the activity descriptions up to now do not attempt to match the richness of the comments received. They simply attempt to create a telegraphic placeholder for the areas commentators said were missing, as a basis for an overall portrait. Details and nuance can be put back in as we progress towards defining these activities more specifically, to generate RRP as the basis for agreements on the results expected.

Instructions for Second GRA Consultation:

1. Review the revised thematic papers according to your expertise.
2. Provide concrete comments/suggestions/edits on the activities, and not on the background/text. We are very interested in concrete aspects of partnership. Because we are not aiming to implement much of this, the key is to assess partner interest in concrete, implementable activities that your organization would like to be involved with. Please let us know if you are interested in implementing some of these activities.

**Please send all comments by August 8th.**

Once we receive your feedback, we will finalize all papers and post the 3<sup>rd</sup> drafts on our webpage. Then, we will prepare the Requests for Results Partnerships (RRPs) (note we have changed the language from away from “RFPs”) and send them by mid September to those institutions which expressed their interest. These RRP will be posted on our webpage so that other potential Supervising Entities will be able to make proposals.

We thank you again for your participation and look forward to your inputs to this important program.

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## **Global and Regional Activities Program**

### **Thematic Area: Out of School Children**

VERSION 2

JULY 2011

#### **1. BACKGROUND**

Despite notable progress in the number of children enrolled in school over the past decade, an estimated 67 million children remain out of school worldwide according to the 2011 Global Monitoring Report. This includes 36 million girls, and 38 million children in Africa alone. Over 40 percent of children out of school live in fragile states.

The EFA FTI partnership's primary focus is on accelerating progress towards the core EFA goal of universal primary education by 2015. As 2015 draws closer, the partnership is therefore increasingly concerned with the high number of children who remain excluded from schools.

Children are out of school for a variety of reasons, related to inadequacies in the educational offer (with value-for-money a major issue for families), as well as difficulties posed by personal/family situations and socio-economic, cultural and political contexts. Out-of-school children include those who do not have access to a school in their community, children who do not enroll despite the availability of a school, children who enroll but who do not attend school, and children who drop out. Some groups are not in school because education systems are structured in ways that exclude them or are not relevant to their situations and learning needs—such as children with disabilities, children in nomadic communities and children who are part of linguistic or ethnic minorities. Millions of hard-to-reach children are left out of education sector plans due to faulty data collection and a lack of knowledge on how to include them in Education for All (EFA) planning and implementation. Their exclusion is also a result of lack of political engagement to adjust strategies and allocate resources more equitably—both nationally and globally.

Barriers to children's education include poverty, disability, poor health and nutrition, HIV AIDS orphanhood, child labor (including its more abusive sub-categories), migration, geographical disadvantages, cultural factors and situations of fragility and conflict. They also include limitations in the education offer such as lack of qualified teachers, poor teacher attendance, teaching methods and content inappropriate to children's background and needs, poor and insufficient school infrastructures, violence in and outside the school and lack of gender responsiveness. These school-level issues are in turn linked to overall capacity gaps in educational planning, resourcing and management, which play out differently in different contexts.

Activities targeting out-of-school children are dispersed, and significant gaps remain in terms of provision. Strategies that are effective at the local level are not always supported and scaled up through national policies and budgets. To accelerate global progress to reach out-of-school children, there is a need for concerted efforts to build and consolidate knowledge, and to improve the capacity of education systems to address the needs of children who have so far been excluded.

The mandate to accelerate progress towards education for all means that the EFA FTI partnership has a key role to play in driving efforts and supporting countries to build a stronger knowledge base and develop effective strategies to bring excluded children into schools. The partnership will therefore step up its efforts to ensure that barriers for out-of-school children are lifted, so that every child has an opportunity to enroll and succeed in school.

## **2. PROPOSED ACTIVITIES**

We see three areas of activity to address three key gaps: knowledge/data, policy, and implementation management.

### **2.1 Data Gaps**

The data gap is a challenge that will have to be addressed for education systems to plan for and implement the expansion of education provision to all children. Despite efforts, most notably by UIS, there are still knowledge gaps concerning the size and nature of out-of-school populations.

The UNICEF/UIS' Global Initiative on Out of School Children works to address the data gap in 25 countries, using a five-dimensional model of exclusion. The outcome of this initiative will help determine how to further build on and strengthen efforts to define, measure, and monitor out-of-school populations. Furthermore, ILO IPEC has helped develop linkage between the knowledge base on child labor and education. This could also contribute to close the data gap, as could better linkage with Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS). An important task will be to examine the content and quality of different surveys used to identify and count categories of out-of-school children. The GRA is intended to reinforce the UIS and other partners in closing the out-of-school data gap through strengthened partnership, consolidated efforts and additional resources for more reliable and comprehensive data.

#### *2.1.1 Gaps in defining and conceptualizing out-of-school categories*

Out-of-school children are defined as children of primary school age who are not in either primary or secondary school. These include children who have not entered school as well as children who entered school but have dropped out. While it is conceptually unproblematic to determine which children have never been in school, clarity on who has dropped out and who has not is more difficult to achieve, because it is difficult to estimate which children will definitively not return to school using simple mechanisms. Even household surveys often do not delve sufficiently into whether children have abandoned school definitively, are simply taking a break, or would go back under the right circumstances. Moreover, there is insufficient consensus that the definitions of dropout in use are what is actually measured when dropouts are measured with traditional means based on administrative data.

Surveys often accept as effectively attending any child who attended school at any time of the year. There is a need to capture and measure more evasive phenomena, however, such as non-attendance after enrollment, desultory attendance, and in-and-out of school. It may well be that the issue of poor attendance is nearly as pressing as the issue of being completely out of school. One could argue that there is an inappropriate generalization of concepts on “in school” and “out of school” from industrialized countries where, once enrollment occurs, attendance is relatively rigorously managed, to low-income countries where attendance is often so poorly managed that it is not clear who is in school and who is not. In systems where children—particularly in the early grades—might attend only 30 percent of the time, and then only for the first few months of the school year, are such children in school or out of school? Here there is not just a data gap but a conceptual gap, and one for which it is difficult to find good data. This issue directly links with the issue of learning outcomes (addressed in a separate GRA program), particularly in early grades, where attendance is often most desultory and where the line between being in school and out of school is most porous.

### *2.1.2 Gaps in data sources*

There are two main sources of data on out-of-school children: administrative records (EMIS) and household surveys. The numbers of out-of-school children from these sources can differ substantially due to the difference in the methodology used to derive them. There are both advantages and limitations in the use of either type of data for counting out-of-school children, and neither EMIS nor household surveys provide enough information on partial attendance situations.

Administrative data are collected by governments every year, and thus can allow for the annual monitoring of the number of out-of-school children. However, the reporting systems within countries often provide imperfect measures of out-of-school populations, and administrative data may be subject to unknown biases through both over- and under-reporting. In order to create indicators (ratios), EMIS data based on administrative records are combined with population data that are interpolations or projections from censuses, and therefore often suffer from considerable measurement error. The number of out-of-school children is derived using the “complement of enrolment.” But enrolment is a one-time event which can be followed by ongoing non-attendance. EMIS systems also often do not provide information on children who are being schooled outside the “regular” school system. The poor quality of age data provided by administrative sources further affects the reliability of the out-of-school figure. EMIS-derived data provide no information on the reasons why children are out-of-school, and hence contain few clues for management and policy, unless profiles are created. When they are developed, such profiles often correspond to fairly simple sociological categories, since more complex social issues are not “seen” by EMIS systems.

Household surveys mostly derive the number of out-of school children using the “complement of attendance.” They can under-estimate the number of out-of-school children because dropouts during the school year are not always properly captured. Household surveys are insufficient in determining children’s regular school attendance, and hence their risk of dropping out or failing to complete their education. Existing household surveys mostly collect the age of children at the time of the survey, and the age of each child at the beginning of the school year is not always known. In part, this depends on

whether the child's birth date is even known, as lack of birth certificates remains a major problem in many countries. In many household surveys, education is used as a background characteristic to describe other phenomena, rather than being the object of the study. Data collection may take place late during the school year, during school holidays or across two school years. As a result, the estimated number of children out-of-school can be unreliable. Household surveys typically do not collect "censal" information and, therefore, while they may be very useful for policy analysis, policy-setting, and general tracking, they are not so useful for targeting funding and resources, or localized tracking.

On the positive side, education data collected in household surveys provide information on children both inside and outside the regular school system. Additionally, household surveys collect information on children's other characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, health, and family status, as well as on the households in which they reside, such as location (urban/rural), wealth, and education and gender of the household head. This information can be used to identify target groups for policy (using a profiling or statistical approach). Although not all surveys collect direct, self-reported information on the reasons why children do not attend school, more surveys could, and should, do so.

In short, there are pros and cons to both EMIS and survey data, and there is a need to further understand and link them, to provide rounded views of the out of school and in-and-out of school phenomena. This dialogue too seldom happens in countries. In some countries controversies erupt, or poor policy decisions are made, because information is partial and there is an inability to bring to bear both EMIS and survey information. There is also a need to link EMIS and survey data with qualitative data. In addition, community-level data collection on children out of school (including by school children) has been successful in many contexts, and linkage with these kinds of initiatives should be explored to complement EMIS and survey data.

### 2.1.3 *Gaps in use of data*

The information collected through both administrative data and household surveys is insufficiently used for policy prioritization. For instance, even in countries where the data on self-reported causes of non-enrollment sets "lack of schools" as a distant third or fourth cause (and poverty may be the first), the preferred donor and government solution is sometimes to build more schools and train more teachers.

The data gaps identified above pertain to high-level systems data. In addition, in many countries there are gaps in the localized use of data to encourage and manage enrollment and in particular attendance (the latter relates to quality and learning outcomes issues linked to time on task). In fact, little is known about how countries use data at the local level to actively manage enrollment and attendance.

Another point to highlight is that there has been limited connection between education planning and analysis of survey-based data on child labor. Yet information collected through household-based child labor surveys could provide important information in efforts to develop strategies for out-of-school children. Child labor surveys might illustrate patterns of non-attendance and bring out issues concerning the geographical focus of new interventions, or the impact on hours of work on schooling.

#### 2.1.4 Suggested actions

<p><b>Proposed activity #1:</b> <b>Data</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EFA FTI Partnership should ensure that all EFA FTI developing country partners can access and use improved measurement instruments and approaches to define and count out-of-school children, assess their characteristics, classify the reasons why they are out of school and help manage the situations at the local level, with specific attention to girls and children in fragile states. This could involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A clearer definition of out-of-school children and conceptualizing of the meaning of enrollment or being in school when attendance is low, not managed or unknown;</li> <li>✓ Improve compatibility and complementarities of EMIS and survey data to better pin-point causes of non-enrollment and non-attendance, and to provide optimal suggestions for the use of data. This would have to cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Improved measurement techniques of out of school children through improved EMIS (e.g. documenting cases where EMIS has improved through better instruments combined with capacity building, and drawing implications for how to improve EMIS in other countries);</li> <li>– Improved measurement techniques of out-of-school children through household surveys, including better designed forms, for capturing both enrollment and attendance issues for policy analysis and action;</li> <li>– Using the two types of data together to calculate out-of-school children, and establishing processes to monitor the figures on a regular basis.</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Linking data for policy with data utilization for localized management action on enrollment and attendance, and strengthening data collection, analysis and planning capacity at local levels;</li> <li>✓ Taking a broader definition of “school” that includes non-formal education and opportunities for transitions;</li> <li>✓ In fragile environments, address challenges around capacity for data collection and storage and develop creative, adapted solutions.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Types of activities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and basic knowledge development</li> <li>• Technical workshops, peer learning events</li> <li>• Technical assistance</li> <li>• Pilot interventions to demonstrate usage of instruments</li> </ul>
<p><b>Link with Results framework indicators</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcomes: intake, gender parity, enrollment, completion, and transition.</li> <li>• Output 1: FTI partner countries develop and implement sound sector policies in education.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Proposed approach</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The GRA intends to stimulate a process of stock-taking of previous and current work, and promote linkages and strengthened collaboration among FTI partners. With linkage to improved EMIS and the connection between EMIS and survey data, a new survey instrument could be designed to be administered e.g. every 2 or 3 years and over a sufficient period of time to allow the collection of comprehensive data on out-of-school children and in-and-out of school children in any given country, at both national and sub-national levels;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new measurement instrument for directly counting out-of-school children could be designed to be administered as a stand-alone household survey questionnaire or be piggy-backed on another household survey. It would need to interact with and inform administrative or EMIS-based efforts to gather some form of information on attendance (e.g. whether schools are even keeping attendance);</li> <li>• The development of a new instrument should build on existing household survey questionnaires. It would need to explore how existing questionnaires can be modified to better allow the direct estimate of the number of out-of-school children, as well as in-and-out of school children;</li> <li>• A new measurement instrument should be able to collect information on children’s individual characteristics (e.g., date of birth, sex, or family status) as well as of households (e.g. residence, wealth-related variables, education and sex of household head) and the reasons for school dropouts;</li> <li>• Questionnaires, along with the rationale for questions and interviewers’ instructions, could be designed and field tested by survey specialists in a number of pilot countries (e.g., 3 to 5 countries);</li> <li>• Practical approaches could be conceptualized to measure attendance and to focus on the enrollment-attendance gap, studying the issue in the same countries, potentially with a sub-set of households and schools;</li> <li>• The GRA could support research and improve EMIS forms and the understanding and analysis of EMIS data on out-of-school issues, including repetition and dropouts;</li> <li>•</li> <li>• Methods for analyzing and comparing surveys and EMIS results could be developed to analyze out-of-school issues, taking advantage of the benefits while mitigating the disadvantages of both;</li> <li>• Activities could link high-level measurement to local-level measurement, and use of local reporting to provide evidence and data on non-enrollment and non-attendance, including methods to track whether local authorities are using measurement to target the issue. This could include the development of specific assessment techniques for special needs such as disability issues;</li> <li>• The supervising entity for this activity could consult good models of both survey and EMIS form design and data use with key survey and EMIS research groups around the world, to obtain practical examples upon which recommendations can be based.</li> </ul>
<b>Expected Deliverables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model household survey questionnaire(s) and model improvements in EMIS forms.</li> <li>• Workshops to advocate for the use of these improved instruments.</li> <li>• A report on the results of field testing of instruments in 3-5 countries.</li> <li>• A set of instructions and how-to for the process going forward, that survey supervisors, field survey workers, EMIS officials, and others can refer to when</li> </ul>

	administering new forms and approaches.
<b>Timeframe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately two years from start-up (2012-2013).</li> </ul>

## 2.2 Gaps in Evidence-Based Policy Development

Policy gaps may be due to lack of knowledge and data about the main determinants of out-of-school status, lack of demonstration projects, experience and effective strategies, or failure to apply existing knowledge to address out-of-school children in policy development. Governments constrained by the availability of resources may decide that they cannot afford to prioritize a focus on particular excluded groups perceived as more complicated to address. Some governments may also not see immediate political value in addressing the needs of more disenfranchised populations who are excluded from education, in part because civil society may not be focusing on their needs or may not be effective policy advocates. The lack of linkage between education policy and other policy areas such as health and poverty alleviation is another obstacle: The problem of out-of-school children cannot be addressed by ministries of education alone.

### 2.2.1 Gaps in knowledge about the determinants of out-of-school status

Knowledge on the causes for exclusion from education is a prerequisite for developing appropriate, effective policies to get out-of-school children into schools. Research indicates that the factors contributing to exclude children from schools are a complex mix of socio-economic, cultural and political factors and individual circumstances, attributes and learning needs.

Challenges related to limitations in the educational offer include, but are not limited to -

- Lack of basic resources and facilities such as school buildings, teachers, books, water/sanitation infrastructures, etc.;
- Distances children have to travel to schools, often combined with risks and dangers children face along the way;
- The quality of education and relevance of the curriculum: Research shows that children perform better and stay longer in school when they learn in their local language, learn from a culturally relevant curriculum, and when they and their parents feel that school is preparing them adequately for life and work;
- The opportunity (or not) to transition to the next level of education can also be a determining factor.

Whether or not a child is in school is also determined by context or personal circumstances, such as:

- Conflict and fragile contexts, where weak institutional capacity, poor or non-existent education plans, poor governance, political instability and in many cases, ongoing violence, all contribute to prevent or limit children's school enrolment and attendance;
- Poverty – children in the lowest socioeconomic quintiles are less likely to regularly attend school, and household wealth looms strong even when all other factors are taken into account;

- Social exclusion – children in certain ethnic, linguistic or caste groups are excluded through discrimination and/or and lack of relevance of education;
- Personal attributes and situations that subject individuals to discrimination and exclusion, such as gender, disability, and being affected by HIV/AIDS. This might also include environmental situations, such as living with a lack of water and hygiene, that impacts a child’s health and acts as a barrier to enrolment, attendance and learning.

Children are more at risk of being excluded when dealing with a combination of obstacles. For example, a girl with a disability living in poverty in a remote, rural community faces multiple challenges. The factors interact, so it is difficult to say whether the key limitation is an offer (supply) or poverty (demand) factor. Quality-for-money is a key determining factor, since cash and opportunity costs exist even when fees are eliminated. Holistic approaches, or multiple approaches to address the out-of-school issue holistically, are needed.

Not all countries have an evidence base for policy development that clarifies which constraints are most binding on their out-of-school children, or which are the main groups of excluded children. As a result, many countries do not have well-considered, cost-effective policies for addressing their needs. Strategies specifically adapted to the needs of hard-to-reach groups, such as non-formal pathways to provide alternative learning opportunities, are often overlooked in education sector plans.

### *2.2.2 Gaps in the application of knowledge*

Even when there are data and available knowledge, knowledge is not always applied. There is sometimes a contradiction between what is known about non-enrollment and non-attendance, and the policies in place. Many education sector plans have identified school construction and teacher recruitment and training as the key means for addressing the out-of-school problem. However, issues of cost and relevance may be just as important, if not more, to parents and children. While improving equity in the distribution of quality infrastructure is a laudable goal on its own, it may nonetheless come as a policy surprise when such a change does not lead to significant increase in enrollment in cases—for instance because the barrier to enrollment was attendance costs rather than the lack of complete schools or poor quality of school infrastructures.

In the case of gender, there is basic knowledge and demonstration projects—and even whole-country success stories—on good practices for including more girls in education. However, there are gaps in the application of this knowledge. In such cases, gaps appear to be related to political will, managerial know-how, or budget, rather than to lack of basic knowledge. Moreover, links to other policy areas such as health and poverty alleviation are often weak or non-existent, even when they are clearly relevant. Although poverty is recognized as a root cause for the exclusion of children and particularly girls from schools, policy often fails to combine demand and supply strategies to effectively bring children living in poverty into schools and to keep them there.

Although there is strong evidence that the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools advances universal primary education, is cost effective and contributes to the elimination of discrimination, effective policy to provide education for children with disabilities is the exception rather

than the rule. A number of system-wide interventions are needed, including legislation, policy, national plans, funding, as well as school and community interventions. Education for children with disabilities is often left to NGOs and private providers, and is given little notice in education sector development. Successful experiences by NGOs or local governments are often not scaled up. Despite the production of a multitude of guides and studies globally, the commitment, resources, guidance and support to adapt these into operational, national strategies are insufficient.

Similarly, ill health and hunger often act as a barrier to education and contribute to the out-of-school population. Children have the highest burden of intestinal worm infection, which increases absenteeism and may lead to dropout. HIV/AIDS and orphan hood have also been associated with out-of-school status (or, perhaps quantitatively more important, desultory attendance and poor concentration). Many children are withdrawn from school or prevented from enrolling to care for sick relatives—with disproportionate impact on girls. While a number of FTI partner countries have put in place policies and strategies to deal with such issues, more could be done to strengthen national policies on school health and nutrition.

In fragile states, policy development to address out-of-school populations has obvious constraints, which the international community has largely failed to address through consolidated approaches and resources. Where the education authorities are conflicted, fragmented or de facto, the development of sound education programs must sometimes be achieved through alternative means, with a stronger role for international and civil society partners. The experiences of NGOs and multilateral partners delivering education support in these contexts, increasingly through clusters, are an important basis for improved overall strategies.

To develop relevant, effective policies for access to quality education for out-of-school children, there needs to be a clear understanding of what drives governments and local educators in making or resisting changes to schooling. Beyond technical knowledge, policy development is based on political, social, cultural and economic dynamics. Moreover, the global focus has given governments incentives to concentrate on enrolment, with less attention to attendance and learning. For the EFA partnership, this means that while development and dissemination of experiences and studies is important, it is equally important to engage in dialogue with governments, partners and constituencies to shift the agenda and to support the adaptation of global and regional knowledge to local realities. Local Education Groups have a key role to play.

### 2.2.3 Suggested actions

<p><b>Proposed activity #2:</b> <b>Policy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EFA FTI Partnership should ensure that all EFA FTI developing country partners are enabled to develop effective policies to bring out-of-school children into school, with specific attention to girls and fragile states. This could involve:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Inventories and assessments of existing policy frameworks, assessing whether countries have clear, well-articulated and cost-effective policies for out-of-school children that deal with all key specific reasons (and combinations of reasons) for non-enrollment and non-attendance;</li> <li>✓ Where there is no policy addressing out-of-school children, assessing whether</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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	<p>this is due to lack of knowledge, lack of capacity to translate knowledge into policy change, lack of resources, etc.;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Identifying and documenting policies that work as well as policies that have been ineffective, in order to help inform education sector planning;</li> <li>✓ Assessing whether structures in place are the right configuration for addressing out-of-school issues and inequities, and draw conclusions on effective structures in order to inform education sector planning;</li> <li>✓ Identifying and documenting successful participatory approaches, partnerships and inter-ministerial collaboration as well as effective linkages between formal and non-formal education;</li> <li>✓ Providing resources to improve policy-making according to the various causes for policy gaps: e.g. putting the UNICEF/UIS OOS Guidance Document to use, providing assistance and workshops to improve education sector plans' content in key areas addressing out-of-school issues.</li> </ul> <p>It is not intended that reviews be top-down; LEGs should always take the lead. The supervising entity for this activity may stimulate LEGs to examine education sector plans to assess policy issues, using good, process-oriented guidelines. The LEGs could be supported by experts in assessment, benchmarking, etc.</p>
<b>Types of activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and dissemination</li> <li>• Technical workshops and knowledge dissemination</li> <li>• Technical Assistance</li> </ul>
<b>Link with Results Framework indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcomes: Intake, gender parity, enrollment, completion, and transition</li> <li>• Output 1: FTI partner countries develop and implement sound sector policies in education</li> </ul>
<b>Proposed approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With interested LEGs, assess Education Sector Plans' ability to address out-of-school issues from a policy planning point of view in cases where data is available;</li> <li>• In 3-5 countries, provide a deeper assessment of main causes of policy inattention, with regard to all major categories of exclusion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provide or enable targeted technical assistance to improve policies;</li> <li>✓ Work with LEGs to develop a country-based policy statement and action plan on out-of-school children (using tools such as the EFA FTI Equity and Inclusion in Education Guide). This could involve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– In-country consultations with key stakeholders, fostering dialogue in the planning process among stakeholders, including communities, civil society organizations and other ministries;</li> <li>– Training/support for government officials and LEGs to develop effective strategies for out-of-school children;</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Link data collection/profiling with service provision (use of data for planning), demonstrating use of data for policy setting (emphasis on country-issue cases where the data gap is not constraining and where the key gap is a policy gap);</li> <li>✓ Document emerging successes and good practices;</li> <li>✓ Conduct regional and global workshops, emphasizing shared experiences and peer learning;</li> <li>✓ Create a network of specialists across countries who can share expertise with other countries.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Expected Deliverables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A sample of Education Sector Plans (ESPs) assessed for their capacity to address and prioritize key out of school issues – Should include country policy statements as part of the FTI endorsed Education Sector Plans;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of issue-country combinations where the policy gap and not the data gap is the main problem;</li> <li>• Successful support to 3-5 countries in ESP development or improvement to improve inclusion within the context of an existing ESP, recognizing that this may require a more detailed action plan than was originally sketched in the ESP;</li> <li>• Gathering of experiences into source-book, a network of expertise and a platform for learning from effective policy responses;</li> <li>• Experience sharing workshops via experts and peer networks.</li> </ul>
<b>Timeframe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Piloted 2012-2014.</li> </ul>

### 2.3 Management and Implementation Gaps

The effective and efficient implementation of policies is often prevented by management gaps. These are often not specific to the out-of-school problem, but affect the performance, expansion or improvement of the school system as a whole. Management gaps can be a barrier to the development of strategies for addressing out-of-school children, as they tend to overtake the policy dialogue and intimidate any notions of taking on an even more complex set of challenges. In many cases, decentralized education officials responsible for the implementation of policy lack information and knowledge on the policy itself, and do not have clarity on roles and responsibilities for implementing it. If an education system lacks the basic capacity for managing enrolment, attendance, teachers, assessment, materials, construction, etc., for children who are “average” within the context of their societies, then these (and worse) constraints will also have to be taken into account when planning and implementing strategies targeting specific groups of out-of-school children. In addition, there are specific management challenges in delivering education programs for hard-to-reach groups.

#### 2.3.1 Gaps in the management of enrollment and attendance

Education ministries sometimes lack the capacity to use available data and knowledge to develop and cost relevant strategies for bringing out-of-school children into the system, and furthermore to track the impact of strategies on vulnerable populations. Education sector planners could sharpen their reflexes and capacity to look beyond the management of schools and teachers to better plan for, manage and monitor cohorts of children as they enter into and move through the system.

Education systems generally lack adequate mechanisms to identify children at risk of dropping out or to identify conditions that affect non-enrollment and non-attendance. The gap in management of compulsory enrollment and attendance creates vicious cycles of non-attendance leading to low learning outcomes, further non-attendance and high repetition rates, all of which increase the cost of enrollment and completion and perpetuate inefficient use of limited resources. This also creates a problem of age-heterogeneity, particularly in the early grades, leading to a problem of “failure at the first step.”

When schools are over-crowded or when there are “objective” barriers to enrollment and attendance such as over-crowding, high fees, high uniform costs, or under-nutrition, it may be considered inappropriate to try to enforce a goal of making schooling effectively compulsory. In such cases, complementary efforts are needed to enable families to send their children to school, including financial support such as cash transfers, as well as mechanisms for communities to get involved in ensuring that children go to school. Addressing the needs of out-of-school children holistically will often require inter-ministerial collaboration, although practical inter-ministerial collaboration is often easiest at the local level. Various NGOs and international agencies have experience in this area, but to take it to scale requires a decentralization agenda that encourages local actors to see their children’s needs more integrally and to insist that line ministries also do so. Access for civil society organizations to engage with the government at different levels would be another enabling factor.

### *2.3.2 Gaps in managing the provision of education inputs*

Many countries experience capacity gaps in the management of school construction, including the management of planning, costs, bidding processes, works supervision and quality control. Similarly, countries struggle with fundamental management gaps that make books and other learning materials expensive and scarce. These gaps include poor contracting with and supervision of publishers and printers, inability to deal with non-competitive tendencies, ineffective distribution systems, and so on.

Gaps in teacher management have an adverse effect on time-on-task and education quality. Many countries struggle to manage teacher rosters and salaries, resulting in payments to ‘ghost’ teachers and disproportionate deployment of teachers compared to numbers of students. Lack of school management and leadership, the need for teachers to travel long distances to pick up salaries, low salaries pushing teachers to engage in other income generating activities, and poor work conditions, all lead to high teacher absenteeism, which in turn takes a heavy toll on student attendance and learning.

Gaps in education management take on a particularly complicated dimension in contexts of conflict and fragility. In collaboration with global partnerships such as the INEE, the EFA FTI partnership can play an important role to bring together partners in these contexts to ensure less fragmented, more coherent interventions for planning, capacity building and school management.

### *2.3.3 Gaps in the management of interventions targeting children out of school*

Hard-to-reach out-of-school children often require targeted interventions and support to overcome the multiple disadvantages and barriers that lead to their exclusion from schooling. Greater attention is needed to the management difficulties, cost burdens and scaling-up strategies of such interventions. Although education officials are accustomed to dealing with key inputs such as the management of schools and teachers, they are not necessarily used to adapting education provision to specific needs,

identifying and setting up support strategies, mobilizing community participation, etc. Civil society can play (and often does play) a key supportive role in such programs.

If poverty is a major cause of non-attendance, the use of financial instruments to deal with this issue, from conditional cash transfers to pro-poor school funding formulas, may be a suitable response (see GRA paper on Finance, where this is dealt with explicitly). In countries where there is a will to undertake such approaches there may be a lack of practical know-how in the design and management of such financial instruments. For instance, there may be excessive use of specific targeting mechanisms with a proliferation of funding approaches, all for specific problems that are just basically manifestations of poverty, and some of them poorly targeted or creating perverse incentives.

#### 2.3.4 Suggested activities

<b>Proposed activity #3: Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification and sharing of best practices to address management issues, including in fragile states and programs addressing girls' education, with regard to (a) the direct management of enrollment and attendance, including of populations with specific needs such as nomadic populations, children with disabilities, etc.; (b) input-related barriers such as school management and leadership, management of qualified teachers, school construction, input supplies, nutritional supplementation, etc.; (c) programs targeting special hard-to-reach groups, cost and poverty issues, such as conditional cash transfers, poverty-targeted allocations, and alternative basic education. Management gaps can be substantially strengthened through partnerships between government and civil society.</li> </ul>
<b>Types of activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research, technical workshops and knowledge dissemination.</li> <li>• Reviews and investigations to determine which guidelines and operational models are working best, including for girls and in crisis-affected countries.</li> <li>• Initiating and documenting replicable experiences in coordination with LEGs.</li> </ul>
<b>Link with Results framework indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcomes: Intake, gender parity, enrollment, completion, and transition.</li> <li>• Output 1: FTI partner countries develop and implement sound sector policies in education.</li> </ul>
<b>Proposed approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature review and key informant interviews to identify and share good practices in addressing key out-of-school limitations:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Methods for localized management of enrollment and attendance, using communities, school outreach, etc., with link to reporting of data on attendance and enrollment (feedback to the policy and data gaps);</li> <li>✓ Input-related barriers in areas where there is a clear knowledge gap, e.g. school construction; input supplies; low-cost, high quality teacher training; school-based health services, school feeding and, where needed, complementary deworming and nutritional supplementation;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Inputs needed for specific excluded populations such as girls, nomadic children and children with disabilities;</li> <li>✓ Cost and poverty factors such as conditional cash transfers and poverty-targeted allocations and funding formulas (with due attention to partnership, civil society and inter-ministerial collaboration);</li> <li>• Dissemination of research in workshops for government officials, LEGs, etc.;</li> <li>• Linking the above to start-up or continuation of well-evaluated replicable experiences through sector plans with LEGs.</li> </ul>
<b>Expected Deliverables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operational models (integrated in education sector plans) linking obstacles/barriers with services and interventions targeting specific groups of out-of-school children;</li> <li>• Guidelines and approaches for linking measurement at national/policy level with measurement and management of enrollment and attendance at the local level;</li> <li>• LEGs have better capacity and tools to address management/logistical issues affecting out-of-school children and children at risk of dropping out;</li> <li>• Could lead to better accountability/data on school attendance, teachers, etc;</li> <li>• Replicable pilots started with LEGs in 3-5 countries.</li> </ul>
<b>Timeframe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge products by end 2012, workshops and events mid to late 2013, and pilots 2013-2014.</li> </ul>

### 3. SUMMARY

The purpose of the out of school (OOS) GRA program is to enhance the understanding of key issues surrounding out-of-school children through research, knowledge development, practice and capacity building. The GRA OOS program aims to improve knowledge development and sharing among EFA FTI partners and strengthen the capacity of global, regional and country level partners to develop, implement and monitor sustainable national strategies to reach out-of-school children.

This paper highlights three areas where there are gaps in how countries, partners and donors address the issue of out-of-school children: data, policy, and management. The paper proposes three activity areas to fill these gaps. First, the OOS GRA proposes collaboration in efforts to develop and agree on an improved instrument that accurately identifies the number of out-of-school children and helps to understand their characteristics and the reasons why they are out of school (with due attention to on-going efforts). Secondly, the OOS GRA proposes systematic assessment of whether/how existing policies address out-of-school populations, with concrete actions to improve education sector planning. Finally, the OOS GRA proposes strategies to address management issues that affect the inclusion of out-of-school populations. Once countries have better capacity to identify and count out-of-school children, targeted policies and interventions can be developed to address their specific needs, so that they not only have access to school, but attend school regularly and complete their schooling.

Next steps will include consultations with key stakeholders and possible implementers to begin to design activities that can be turned into Requests for Results Partnerships.