

Scaling up for Success: Redesigning the Global Education Aid Architecture

Wednesday, January 6, 2010, 9:00 am – 1:00 pm

[Center for Universal Education](#) at Brookings, 1775 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC

On January 6, the Center for Universal Education hosted a half-day consultation to develop recommendations for reforming the global education architecture and evolve current financing mechanisms for achieving universal education. The event included representatives from multilateral organizations, including the Education for All-Fast Track Initiative, World Bank, and UNICEF, as well as from major foundations working in global education, leading non-governmental organizations, and researchers from Brookings and elsewhere.

[David Gartner](#) of the Center for Universal Education moderated the discussion, highlighting the importance of 2010 for achieving the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education and the unique opportunity to put forward proposals to reshape the current global education architecture. Participants divided into three core discussions groups focused on 1) inclusive governance; 2) accountability for results; and 3) a stronger secretariat to support country-driven processes.

Inclusive Governance: Charged with thinking about how the contributions of developing country partners, civil society, the private sector, government donors, and multilateral organizations could best be leveraged through innovative governance, the discussion focused on structuring governance so as to elevate the perspectives of traditionally under-representative stakeholders, including recipient partner country governments and the national and local civil society sectors within them. Fully engaging the contributions of diverse partners must go beyond financing participation in meetings to include supporting organized constituencies and comprehensive capacity building.

Accountability for Results: Both donors and recipient partners need to be more accountable in order to achieve quality education for all. Enhancing donor accountability could be accomplished by more closely linking the structure of governance to resource mobilization efforts and investments in global education and evaluating those investments based on metrics such as the Paris Principles. To promote system learning, efficient deployment of resources, and enhanced overall results, a range of strategies could be employed to link investments more closely to effective country-level disbursements, improvements in enrollment, and learning outcomes for students. Accountability is also closely related to the country-level ownership, and requires that a range of stakeholders within a given country be involved in shaping national plans and, in some cases, in implementing them.

Stronger Secretariat to Support Country-Driven Processes: While the delivery of basic education services is ultimately the responsibility of governments, participants believed that a country-led process is not solely the government's responsibility, and local and national civil society, parents, teachers, students, private sector, and other relevant stakeholders must be actively involved in the development, implementation, and monitoring of education programs. If sufficiently resources, the Secretariat of the FTI could play a much stronger role providing technical assistance to support country-driven processes. In discussing the Secretariat's relationship to the World Bank, a number of participants expressed support for moving beyond a single default supervising agent for disbursement and supporting the capacity of the Secretariat to act more autonomously while still benefitting from the Bank's key role as a trustee and the Bank's systems.

Each of the core working groups developed several specific recommendations for reforming the global education architecture. Together the recommendations that emerged from these working groups provide a potentially important roadmap for the upcoming meeting of the FTI Board of Directors and broader global discussions about how to transform current mechanisms to achieve universal quality education:

Recommendations for Redesigning the Global Education Architecture

- 1. Accountability for Finance:** By linking representation on the Board to the contributions of donors and evaluating bilateral education assistance along metrics derived from the Paris Principles as part of this process, stronger accountability can be created among donors. In addition, closing the financing gap may require innovative financing mechanisms as well as the development of a formal replenishment process that is regularized along the lines of the World Bank's IDA replenishment.
- 2. Performance-Base Financing:** Effective accountability for results requires moving toward performance-based financing that will more closely link follow-on funding flows with effective evaluation of disbursement rates, local level educational investments, and educational outcomes. Pushing accountability to local levels and building on existing school-based management structures such as parent councils could be further enhanced through the model of school-level bank accounts.
- 3. Accountability within Country-Level Processes:** Requiring participation by diverse stakeholders, including civil society, in country-level processes to design national strategies could help promote broader country-ownership, as well as more effective implementation. One approach is rating proposals based on participatory nature of the process; while another would be to allocate funding to a more diverse set of recipients, including non-governmental organizations.
- 4. Strengthening Country Processes:** By enhancing the resources and staffing of the Secretariat to support country level processes in a more focused way, a stronger Secretariat could actually further a country-driven approach. In addition, better integrating country-level processes with technical assistance and data through UNESCO's International Institute of Education Planning (IIEP) and UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), outcomes could be improved by better aligning data collection with monitoring and evaluation.
- 5. Using Country-Specific Instruments:** Current frameworks and strategies, such as the Indicative Framework, are not always reflective of the challenges and objectives present within diverse national contexts. Revising blunt, cross-country instruments in favor of the creation and use of more country-specific tailored instruments could be important way to promote country-ownership and improved outcomes.
- 6. Inclusive Process for Reform:** Ensuring broader and more representative participation, especially from recipient country governments and civil society, in the overall reform process is critical to transforming the current global education architecture. A "transitional working group," commissioned by the Board of Directors, could be best positioned to design and put forward an enduring framework that will reflect the will of the broader Partnership which formed the FTI's initial governance body.
- 7. One Board for All:** By creating a single governance entity with responsibility over both policy and resource decision-making, the FTI could better align its governance structure with actual authority over its core work. At the same time, by expanding multipartite representation on such a governance body, including multilaterals, global and national civil society representatives (i.e. teachers, parents, student groups), and the private sector and organizing effective constituency structures, the FTI could foster a more inclusive and deliberative governance process.