

March 13, 2009

Inside This Issue

- 1 Message from Bob Prouty of the EFA FTI Secretariat
- 2 EFA FTI Partnership Meeting in Copenhagen
- 3 School Deworming
- 4 EFA Global Action Week 2009: The Big Read
- 5 Election of new Steering Committee members
- 6 News from the task teams
- 7 Working group to support the quality of learning
- 8 FTI News from around the world
- 9 Upcoming events

A Note from Bob Prouty, Acting Head, EFA FTI Secretariat

Dear partners,

We hope that hundreds of partners from all over the world will join us on April 20 & 21 in Copenhagen, Denmark for our biennial EFA FTI Partnership Meeting. There will be discussions around three sub-themes; 1) hard-to-reach children, 2) the quality of learning, and 3) resource mobilization and aid effectiveness. These policy themes directly relate to the operational strategies necessary to achieve Universal Primary Education by 2015. Many speakers will contribute to what we think will be an exciting and perhaps even provocative event.

The Steering Committee (19 April), Catalytic Fund Committee (22 April) and EPDF Committee meetings (22 April) will be held back-to-back with the Partnership Meeting. The coming months will be of special importance to the Education for All – Fast Track Initiative as key decisions will be taken around the replenishment of the FTI trust funds and a mechanism to determine the prioritization of beneficiary countries. New steps will be taken to support the establishment of the UNICEF-led Education Transition Fund in support of fragile states. A remodeling of the existing Education Program Development Fund (EPDF) is also underway.

I am looking forward to seeing you all in Copenhagen next month. I hope we can achieve a few new milestones to bring us closer to our goal of providing quality education for all children of the world.

Bob Prouty, Email: rprouty@educationfasttrack.org

EFA FTI Partnership Meeting, Copenhagen, April 20 & 21, 2009 Registration now open

The Education for All - Fast Track Initiative (EFA- FTI) will organize its biennial Partnership meeting on April 20 - 21 in Copenhagen, Denmark. The Partnership meeting, hosted by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is open to all EFA FTI partners. It will focus on one overall theme in line with the last EFA FTI Annual Report: The Road to 2015. There will be discussions around policy sub-themes that are directly related to FTI's operational work. The Partnership meeting is a high level forum for mutual accountability. It allows its members to review progress and challenges and provides an opportunity for debate and knowledge-sharing. The Danish Minister of Development Cooperation, Mrs. Ulla Tørnæs, will give a keynote speech. To register and for more information about the program, including the Steering Committee and trust fund committee meetings, please see the [conference website](#).

Please send suggestions regarding
this newsletter to:
Abekkers@educationfasttrack.org
or Akonate@worldbank.org



Photo by: Henrietta Allen /WHO
Deworming young children in
Madagascar as part of a health
campaign in 2006.

Deworming children improves education results

Hundreds of millions of children worldwide are infected with parasitic worms, schistosomiasis and soil-transmitted helminthes (STH). These worms are detrimental to children's health and to their cognitive development, education and future. With very simple and cheap interventions, illnesses caused by worm infections can be treated and prevented. A recent workshop by the World Health Organization and other international partners focused on scaling up school deworming programs. Schools can play a major role in the treatment and prevention of worm infections. Teachers can be trained in simple procedures to give oral tablets albendazole or praziquantel once or twice a year, or once every two years to children. Treating a child for a worm infection is surprisingly cheap (the tablets cost between 2 and 7 cents) and less than the cost of the diagnostic test required to detect worms. Luckily, the treatment of a child, even when not infected, is safe. A few FTI endorsed countries support deworming programs, but not yet on a large scale. During a January 26-27 workshop in Geneva, representatives of WHO, World Vision, Feed the Children, Deworm the World (a coalition of organizations focusing on deworming) and the Fast Track Initiative Secretariat agreed on ways for scaling up school deworming programs in endemic countries.

For a feature article on school deworming, please visit the [EFA FTI website](#) .
For more information about the WHO workshop of January 26 - 27, 2009,
please contact Ms. Koli Banik, email: kbanik@educationfasttrack.org

EFA Global Action Week: The Big Read (April 20 – 26, 2009)

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) will organize the Global Action Week from April 20-26, 2009. This year's focus is on literacy around the 'Big Read'. The 'Big Read' is a book containing short stories from some of the world's most influential figures. It tells remarkable stories about how education changes the world and helps people take control of their lives. High profile events will be organized by various GCE chapters around the world (for more information, please visit [the GCE website](#)). At the end of the book there is a declaration to governments to provide finances and action on adult literacy. The stories and names of people who are demanding action on literacy will be delivered to politicians, world leaders and governments. The book will be distributed widely in 100 countries and more than 10 million people are expected to take part.

A highlight event of the 'Big Read' will be organized in Copenhagen at the Danish parliament square on April 22. Danish students will make speeches they have written about "helping the Prime Minister to ensure all children go to school by 2015". All participants in the EFA FTI Partnership meeting are invited to participate. For more information, please see the [conference website](#) of the EFA FTI Partnership meeting.

EFA FTI Annual Report 2008 now available in French

Since last month, the EFA FTI Annual Report 2008 is available in French. The French version entitled 'La Route vers 2015: atteindre les objectifs en éducation' can be downloaded from the EFA FTI website (please click [here](#)). Hard copies can be ordered with the EFA FTI Secretariat, please contact Angela Bekkers, email: abekkers@educationfasttrack.org

*Election of two new
members of the FTI
Steering Committee,
page 3.*

Election of two new members of the Steering Committee from partner countries

At the end of February 2009, a communication went out from the FTI Secretariat inviting partner country representatives willing to serve as members of the FTI Steering Committee (soon to be renamed Board of Directors), to email their expressions of interest to the FTI Secretariat. They can send their applications by **March 25, 2009** to the following email address: vote@educationfasttrack.org. At least two of the four partner country seats on the Steering Committee are reserved for African countries.



Once all nominations are received, the Secretariat will circulate the nominations to all developing country partners in the form of a ballot. Partner countries will then be able to cast their ballot anonymously by email or fax. The first election process was organized in 2007, and the time has come again for the next election cycle which will replace two of the current four developing country partner seats. To ensure continuity between existing and incoming partner country representatives, Guyana and Mozambique will stay on the Steering Committee until the end of 2009.

The selected representatives will be announced during the Partnership Meeting in Copenhagen, and will participate in Steering Committee activities beginning in July 2009. Their tenure would end in June 2011.

Partner country representatives on the Steering Committee will have the possibility to shape the implementation of the FTI Partnership's mandate. We therefore strongly encourage partner countries to participate and to send in their expressions of interest.

For more information, please contact Michelle Mesen of the FTI Secretariat, email: mmesen@educationfasttrack.org

Updates from FTI task teams: meetings March 4 – 11, Paris and Bangkok

Successor Fund to the Education Program Development Fund

The team tasked with designing the successor to the Education Program Development Fund met in Bangkok from March 9-11 to agree on a set of recommendations for consideration at the EPDF meeting on April 22 in Copenhagen. The intent is that the new fund be in place by July 1, 2010.

Replenishment of FTI trust funds and resource mobilization

The replenishment task team led by the UK made recommendations on a large number of issues. The task team will put the recommendations forth for the Steering Committee meeting on April 19. It is expected that this will move the replenishment process forward enabling sufficient funds to be raised for the different trust funds supporting the EFA FTI.

Prioritization of Catalytic Fund recipient countries

The prioritization task team led by Sweden agreed on the principles of a revised model for prioritization of potential recipient countries of the Catalytic Fund (CF). The new model will enhance the predictability of funding for countries preparing their CF applications.

Establishment of the Education Transition Fund

The task team on an Education Transition Fund for countries in fragile situations met with UNICEF. Based on a detailed concept note, agreement was reached to further explore the involvement of UNICEF before a second meeting is held in New York on March 19.

FTI Task Teams

For more information on the various task teams, please contact

Olav Christensen of the EFA-FTI Secretariat, email:

ochristensen@educationfasttrack.org

New working group to support the quality of learning gets started

The Working Group of the new Learning Counts Initiative met during a March 4-5 workshop at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. The members of the working group agreed that students should be assessed in reading early in the primary cycle (grade 2 or 3). The know-how for measuring reading literacy should be made available to interested low-income countries, including those endorsed by the Fast Track Initiative. There is consensus that all children should have reading fluency after two (or three) years of schooling and to the extent possible, early grade assessment of basic math should be added. More research required before measuring writing skills in early grades could become easily operational at reasonable costs. The Working Group also discussed how to help poor countries develop robust evaluations of learning outcomes at the end of the primary cycle. The contribution of the Fast Track Initiative to UNESCO's Learning Counts work is part of FTI's evolving agenda on learning outcomes. Inter alia, the FTI Secretariat will liaise with expert institutions and donors to offer partner countries the opportunity to engage in the measurement of learning outcomes, as well as follow up actions.

For more information, please contact Ms. Alcyone Vasconcelos of the FTI Secretariat, email: avasconcelos@educationfasttrack.org

FTI News from Around the World

Former head of the FTI Secretariat now visiting fellow at the Center for Global Development, Washington

At the beginning of the year, Desmond Bermingham, the former head of the FTI Secretariat, joined the Washington-based Center for Global Development (CGD) as a senior Visiting Fellow. His research agenda at the Center focuses on the issue of aid effectiveness in education and the broader global education agenda. In a recent article on the Center's webpage ([please click here](#)), he summarizes some of the successes and challenges of the FTI, an issue he plans to address in greater depth in a forthcoming book publication later this year.

For more information on the Center for Global Development, please visit the [website](#). To contact Desmond Bermingham about his research, please email: dbermingham@cgdev.org

National education plan of Lao PDR endorsed

Lao's national education sector plan was endorsed in the beginning of March 2009 by the worldwide FTI Partnership, following a successful appraisal by the local donor group. The total number of FTI partner countries with endorsed education sector plans now stands at 37, of which 4 are in East Asia. The Lao endorsement documents as well as the welcome letter by the FTI Secretariat will be posted on the EFA FTI website shortly.

Upcoming events

March 22 – 26, 2009: Conference of the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES), with participation of the FTI Secretariat, Charleston, USA

March 24 – 26, 2009: 12th UNESCO-APEID International Conference - Quality Innovations for Teaching and Learning, Bangkok, Thailand

March 31 – April 2, 2009: Global consultation Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), Istanbul, Turkey

April 19 – 23, 2009: EFA FTI Steering Committee Meeting (April 19), Partnership Meeting (April 20 & 21), Catalytic Fund and EPDF Committee Meetings (April 22), Education Transition Fund meeting (April 23), Copenhagen, Denmark

April 25, 2009: World Bank / IMF Spring Meetings including ministerial side event around EFA FTI and replenishment of FTI trust funds, Washington DC, USA