

What is the Education for All Fast Track Initiative?

Progress in reaching the Education Millennium Development Goal

The world has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make access to education for all children a reality. **Primary school enrolment is on the rise**, especially in Africa and South Asia. Between 1999 and 2005, the total number of out-of-school children dropped from 103 million to 75 million. The share of children in developing countries completing primary school has also risen: from 69% in 1995 to 79% in 2005.

Despite the progress, one should not forget that around the world **there are still over 75 million children out of school**, of which half are in Sub-Saharan Africa. There is overwhelming evidence that education – particularly for girls – is one of the best investments in development. It can increase economic growth, break the cycle of poverty and halt the spread of communicable diseases. Official Development Assistance (ODA) for education has more than doubled since 2000 when world leaders gathered for the Millennium Development Goals Summit and unanimously endorsed the goal of universal primary education by 2015. But ODA levels – especially to support basic education in Sub-Saharan Africa - are still far below the estimated needs.

Education for All – Fast Track Initiative

In response, the Education for All – Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI) was launched in 2002 as a **global partnership between donor and developing countries** to ensure accelerated progress towards the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015. All low-income countries that demonstrate serious commitment to achieve universal primary completion can receive support from FTI.

FTI is built on **mutual commitments**. Partner countries have put primary education at the forefront of their domestic efforts and develop sound national education plans. Donors provide coordinated and increased financial and technical support in a transparent and predictable manner.

FTI manages **two trust funds** that can provide **financial support to the education goals in low-income countries**; the Catalytic Fund for Education with a total of US\$ 1.5 billion in commitments (2003 – 2009) and the Education Program Development Fund with US\$ 92 million in commitments (2005 – 2009).

FTI is a global education partnership that aims to support and promote:

- Sound education plans
- Better coordination
- Country-led programs
- Predictable aid
- Measurable results & best practices

Countries endorsed by EFA FTI

As per November 2008, FTI endorses the education sector plans in 36 countries:

Albania	Ghana	Madagascar	Sao Tome & Principe
Benin	Guinea	Mali	Senegal
Burkina Faso	Guyana	Mauritania	Sierra Leone
Cambodia	Haiti	Moldova	Tajikistan
Cameroon	Honduras	Mongolia	The Gambia
Central African Republic	Kenya	Mozambique	Timor Leste
Djibouti	Kyrgyz Republic	Nicaragua	Vietnam
Ethiopia	Lesotho	Niger	Yemen
Georgia	Liberia	Rwanda	Zambia

FTI Aims to Support All Low-Income Countries

FTI is **open to all low-income countries** demonstrating serious intent toward achieving universal primary completion. It is expected that by the beginning of 2009 there will be over 40 countries within the FTI Partnership. By 2010 FTI hopes to support 56 low-income countries including some large and populous countries such as Bangladesh, Nigeria (several states), Pakistan and D.R. Congo. However, successful expansion of FTI will depend largely on greater financial commitments by donors.

The FTI partnership has been praised by the international community as a **model of donor harmonization**. Early results show that its Catalytic Fund has been effective in providing additional resources to implement sound education sector plans. Nonetheless, FTI's Catalytic Fund faces a funding shortage. With an expansion agenda to support the education MDGs to around 45 to 50 low-income countries by 2010 and their need for sustainable and transparent funding, the Catalytic Fund will require an estimated \$1 billion annually for the coming years.

Who Supports FTI?

Globally, the Fast Track Initiative is supported by **all major donors for education** – more than 30 bilateral, regional and international agencies and development banks including: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and USA. The multilateral agencies include the African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO and the World Bank. The coalition of civil society organizations assembled in the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) also supports FTI.

Since late 2007 FTI collaborates with the Global Education Alliance, a coalition of large multinational corporations under the umbrella of the World Economic Forum (WEF), that want to advance the education goals in developing countries.

How Does FTI Endorsement Help Countries?

- While FTI has the benefit of being a globally agreed upon partnership, it is implemented through **country-owned programs**, avoiding fragmentation and creating coordinated approaches.
- FTI enables current and new donors to **confidently provide increased and more effective aid** to country-led education programs – through existing bilateral and multilateral channels.
- FTI endorsement signals to the world community, including potential investors, that a country's education plan is sound, sustainable, and therefore a **good investment**.

Therefore:

- FTI countries, with a sufficient number of donors, can receive **increased and better coordinated aid directly from existing donors** and from potential new donors.
- FTI countries, with an insufficient number of donors and good absorptive capacity, are eligible to receive **funding from the FTI Catalytic Fund** for two to three years.

Placing More Countries on Track:

- For those countries without education plans and with weak capacity, the **Education Program Development Fund (EPDF)** can provide technical support and build capacity required to prepare a sound education plan.