

# THE CHALLENGE OF ACHIEVING EFA IN AFRICA

Civil Society perspectives and positions to MINEDAF VIII

**October 2002**



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# Foreword

Our objective, education for all Africans, cannot be achieved unless sustained by a broad movement of society and of viable partnerships among all actors in the field of education.

Increasingly, the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other civil society organisations (OCSs) play an essential role in this partnership. The NGOs/CSOs deliver educational services where the effort of the state is either non-existent or insufficient; they act as agents for innovation and initiate new approaches and methods. They organise efficient advocacy campaigns and activities, and play more and more important roles also as political partners.

The present document is one of the official working documents of the Eight Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Member States (MINEDAF VIII), and it presents the perspectives of civil society on the Education for All (EFA) processes in Africa. The document is the result of an exceptional collective consultation process among actors of African civil society facilitated by UNECSO, and initiated, under the direction of African Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA), by a group of actors recognised for their expertise in the field of education and representing a thematic, institutional and geographical diversity.

The participative process leading to the finalisation and validation by the African NGOs/CSOs at the Regional Consultation of NGOs/CSOs held in Malawi in September 2002, is remarkable. Since the Dakar Forum in 2000, the African NGOs and CSOs have made a considerable effort to network, to coordinate their actions and to reflect together. I consider the very existence of this document as a proof of the great success of their efforts to work and to act in association.

This document constitutes at the same time a critical analysis and an instrument for advocacy. It reminds all the actors of their commitment and proposes a number of recommendations. As well, the document is a source of inspiration and it upholds the holistic definition of the education for all movement.

Among the principal points made in the document, one notes the indivisibility and interdependence of the Dakar goals, as well as the importance of education, not only as a fundamental human right, but also as the most powerful means to development.

In fact, education in Africa should not only concern schooling, but also lifelong learning. Only a form of education which provides the learner the necessary abilities to act, to be and to learn to live together, can be the tool needed to foster the development of our continent. This form of education gives the means to Africans to “read the world” and to understand the stakes and challenges of globalisation, that we need to face and actively participate in for us to meet the challenge of the African renaissance – our common goal.

This document is equally the bearer of hope. UNECSO is convinced that a new culture of dialogue on EFA is necessary if we expect the international political will to transform into action at national and local level.

Evidently, the NGOs/CSOs cannot, and should not, replace the state in its domain of competence and responsibility in relation to education, and the present document is clear on this point: This is not the intention. The active participation of African NGOs/CSOs in the preparation of this 8th MINEDAF Conference and their contribution to the debates, is a clear signal of their will to engage in a constructive cooperation with governments and other EFA partners.

The present contribution of the NGOs/OSCs also serves to document the innovative practices and approaches making a difference in the field, and having a transfer value to be applied elsewhere. The contribution of African civil society to achieving a quality education for all is constantly growing. It is clear that contexts differ radically from one country to another. The possibility of participation for civil society can be limited in some countries and space will need to be created to allow for circumstances to change and for political processes to become more open and democratic.

The participation of African civil society in this MINEDAF Conference is unprecedented both in terms of quantity and of quality. To conclude, I would like to express the wish that this participation will allow for the commitments made at Dakar concerning the cooperation with civil society to be reinforced again in Africa. Considerable progress has been made in this direction. The key issue is to transform the well recognised necessity of civil society participation into concrete actions. There is no single ideal model for how to do this, and in this perspective, the processes are as important as the objectives.

I am optimistic and I believe strongly, that the process leading to the development of this document and the positive contribution of African civil society to MINEDAF VIII, is an important occasion for a sincere, open and constructive dialogue among the education partners, being the only way possible for education for all to be a reality in Africa by 2015.

**A. PARSURAMEN**  
**Director, UNESCO-BREDA**

# Acknowledgements

The preparation of this document is an important landmark in the process of setting up a framework for assessing progress towards the achievement of the targets and commitments made in Dakar in 2000.

The assessment derives information from a wide range of sources and processes and the authors would like to acknowledge all the researchers, commentators and writers whose work has contributed to the assessment process.

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In producing this document, the authors have consulted widely. However, the final views expressed here are those of the authors.

**Gorgui SOW**  
**On behalf of ANCEFA**



# List of Acronyms

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| ANCEFA   | African Networks Campaign on Education for All                         |
| BREDA    | UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Africa                         |
| CSACEFA  | Civil Society Action Campaign on Education for All                     |
| CSO      | Civil Society Organization   |
| CEDAW    | Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women          |
| DEDF     | Doma Education Development Foundation (Nigeria)                        |
| EFA      | Education for All  |
| ECCE     | Early Childhood Care and Education                                     |
| ECCD     | Early Childhood Care and Development                                   |
| ECD      | Early Child Development  |
| EMIS     | Education Management Information System                                |
| ESA      | Education Sector Analysis  |
| FAPE     | Federation Africaine des Association des Parents d' Eleve et Etudiants |
| FAWE     | Forum for African Women Educationalists                                |
| GNEFA    | Gambia Network on Education for All                                    |
| GNEC     | Ghana National Education Campaign                                      |
| GDP      | Gross Domestic Product   |
| GER      | Gross Enrolment Rate   |
| HIV/AIDS | Human Immuno Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome                 |
| HIPC     | Highly Indebted Poor Countries   |
| IDPs     | International Development Partners                                     |
| IDA/WB   | International Development Aid/World Bank                               |
| IMF      | International Monetary Fund  |
| INEE     | Inter Agency Network for Education in Emergencies                      |
| MDGs     | Millennium Development Goals   |
| MINEDAF  | Ministers of Education of Africa                                       |
| NCEFA    | National Coalition on Education for All                                |
| NGO      | Non Governmental Organization  |
| NEDAP    | New Partnership for Africa's Development                               |
| PRSP     | Poverty Reduction Strategic paper                                      |
| SANGOCO  | South African National Non Governmental Organizations Coalition        |
| STI      | Sexually Transmitted Infection   |
| TEN-MET  | Tanzania Education Network   |
| UNESCO   | United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization         |
| UNHCR    | United Nations High Commission for Refugees                            |
| UNCTAD   | United Nation Conference on Trade and Development                      |
| UBE      | Universal Basic Education  |
| UNAIDS   | United Nations Agency for AIDS   |
| UNFPA    | United Nations Population Fund   |
| UPE      | Universal primary Education  |
| WHO      | World Health Organization  |
| WTO      | World Trade Organization   |
| ZANEC    | Zambia National Education Coalition                                    |



# Executive Summary

Two years have already elapsed since the much publicized and well-attended World Education Forum that took place in April 2000, in Dakar, Senegal. At the conclusion of business the world was more optimistic about achieving the plan it set itself. It saw the well-defined and recommitted Education for All as the basis for peace, stability and sustainable development that would lead to human dignity.

Profound statements of intent were made – laying emphasis on national action if progress was to be seen towards achievement of the EFA goals; calling on the full and active participation of civil society in the formulation of policy, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of EFA efforts; and, willingness by the international community to mobilize resources in order not to allow any country with a serious plan to fail.

In the aftermath of Dakar, civil society has pursued its acclaimed role in the achievement of EFA with vigour. Many countries in Africa have witnessed the emergence of civil society networks and coalitions around education issues with intent to influence action by governments and donors over developments in both their own countries and in Sub-Saharan Africa. At regional level, civil society vigilance and resolve to participate in education issues is at an unprecedented level. Sadly, most national governments have, for various reasons, failed to capitalize on civil society fervent good will and synergy to work towards achievement of the EFA goals.

Using the structures set out in the Dakar Framework for Action, civil society now reports what it considers, from its perspective, to be progress and challenges towards achieving the 2015 goals of EFA. Civil society offers its perspectives in full acknowledgement of the many challenges that have impacted on Sub-Saharan Africa with over 25 million HIV infections on the continent; conflicts, natural calamities, famine and poverty which continue to militate against development. Some progress has been recorded in terms of access and higher enrolment figures for primary education. Some countries have even adopted “Free Primary Education” policies.

In pursuit of their commitment to developing or reviewing national action plans, countries promised, among other things to mobilize and raise public awareness of the importance of education for all for development. Countries promised to promote EFA policies linked to poverty elimination and development strategies; they committed themselves to ensure engagement and participation of civil society in the full process towards educational development; and they promised development of national action plans that would be inclusive – responding to diverse education needs.

Thirty-two months into the 2015 target, progress made on EFA in Sub-Saharan Africa presents a most discouraging picture. Very few countries can claim to have developed credible plans; few of those that may have “credible” plans can claim to have developed or reviewed them in a participatory manner. Some of those plans may not have even been preceded by comprehensive situation analyses to help bring about interventions that would make a difference.

The Dakar Framework for Action represents an embodiment of actions that must be implemented alongside one another to ensure achievement of all the EFA goals by 2015. The 6 EFA goals are so interlinked that actions at one level that do not acknowledge those at another, stand the risk of bearing unsustainable results. There is need to look beyond targets, to actions that will signal and usher in sustained successes as well as provide the basis for life skills to enable Africa to rise above the now monotonous song of poverty, HIV/AIDS, conflicts and hunger. This concept of indivisibility has not been given its adequate place in conceptualising the responses to EFA.

One of the resounding statements contained in the Dakar Framework for Action is “not allowing any serious country with a credible plan to fail for lack of resources”. In spite of the high sounding commitment to mobilization of financial resources not much has come forth. Due to unclear and even shifting financing policies being followed, some countries have not even advanced to the drawing board

due to lack of finances. Others who came close to completion of plans in readiness to be funded were sent back to the drawing board for clearer linkages with the Poverty Reduction Strategic processes (PRSP), Sector Wide Approaches (SWAps) or other such conditionalities. Some countries have, therefore, expended time and energy (which could be better used elsewhere) writing and rewriting plans due to the confusing international resource mobilization context.

It is clear that no amount of external resources will radically transform national situations through relevant education, if intended objectives lack national political will. The “business as usual” attitude will reduce or completely eradicate the potential of education to ameliorate situations of underdevelopment. Sub-Saharan Africa has no option but to overhaul its education system – turning it from ‘schooling’ to ‘learning’. Sub-Saharan Africa has no choice but to start by mobilizing resources at national level before expecting those from external sources. Most national governments have failed to rise to this challenge.

The above notwithstanding, it is clearly recognized that Africa faces unique challenges, as clearly elaborated by the Durban statement of Commitment of MINEDAF VII of 20 – 24 April 1998. Among them are HIV/AIDS, natural calamities, wars, conflicts, hunger, poverty, irrelevant education systems which do not take into account the language of the learners and Gender inequalities, and concentration on schooling rather than learning. From NEPAD to national plans, much is to be done to take enough account of these circumstances.

Appropriate learning and education have often been cited as key issues in EFA at conferences and gatherings. MINEDAF VII holds the same opinion. According to them. “For the role of education from early childhood development to adulthood to be seen as a lifelong process, a continuum which transcends schooling systems and which focuses on the building of a learning society” issues of appropriate learning need to be addressed. Education and learning indeed have to be appropriate otherwise individuals who will be exposed to societal ills would litter our streets.

HIV/AIDS is dealing a blow to Sub-Saharan Africa and almost wiping out any little progress made in raising numbers of trained teachers and quality of teaching/learning. In such a disastrous situation, civil society calls on all financial resources advanced towards mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS to be given as grants rather than loans. While awareness and sensitisation workshops are crucial, it is imperative that grants given towards HIV/AIDS interventions be put to better use, to purchase anti-retroviral drugs for affected teachers, and to provide micro credits to people living with HIV/AIDS to start businesses. Children have a right to accurate and sensitively presented information on HIV/AIDS in whatever form of media.

Civil Society’s contribution to EFA has been consistent, particularly where its input is acknowledged and recognized. Many international forums including the Dakar World Education Forum, acknowledge that Civil Society wants to be taken as a serious partners in the achievement of the EFA goals - data abounds which points to civil society capacity to assess needs of grassroots communities and to draw up programmes which address the needs in a sustainable manner. Pitifully, the utilization of civil society’s potential remains below expectations.

Any systems drawn up to monitor and to eventually evaluate programmes, strategies and resources developed to achieve EFA need to be participatory and inclusive. Participatory processes and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation allow for well-integrated and holistic interventions – coming from all stakeholders. Civil society calls on the deepening of processes for involvement in monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment. MINEDAF VIII offers new opportunities for building on the partnership with civil society which help to address the issues of funding, political will, an enabling environment, innovative and appropriate responses as well as a comprehensive framework for monitoring our gains and maximizing impact. We call on this forum to formalize the process and take civil society seriously in the bid to achieve EFA.

# Section One: Introduction and Context

## 1.1 Background

In April 2000, 164 countries gathered in Dakar to reaffirm the commitment to the right of every child, young person and adult to education. That historic commitment marks the basis 'hope' that, by 2015, our expectations around education, set out earlier in Jomtien (1990) will become a reality. By September of the same year, the United Nations, in the fanfare of the launch of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), put an extra emphasis on two of these goals directly (achieving universal primary education and gender equity in education by 2015) as well as laid the basis, through a further six goals, for an enabling environment to see education for all become a reality. Africa, intent of charting its own course of development, has been articulating a new partnership for Africa's development (NEPAD) in which it takes the lead in determining the future of the peoples of this continent.

Half way through the timeframe for the Millennium Development Goals, and two years after Dakar, this report seeks to assess achievements attained so far and gauge the challenge before us as we march towards the international development target date of 2015.

Africa, most notably Sub-Saharan Africa, faces some of the most fundamental development challenges today. Over the past twenty years, HIV/AIDS has taken a heavy toll on the continent – with over 25 million infections and over 75% of the disease manifesting itself on the continent. Conflicts and natural calamities continue to thwart development efforts across much of sub-Saharan Africa, and poverty is on the increase in two thirds of the countries on the continent.

Education for All, defined so boldly in 2000 through the Dakar Framework for Action, sets out a vision which seeks to provide the basis for peace, stability and sustainable development – alongside providing individuals with the skills and capabilities to lead lives of dignity.

The Dakar framework is clear in placing an emphasis on national level action and seeking to achieve EFA through a concerted effort of partnership of all actors at all levels. Of particular note was the clear commitment to the active participation of civil society in the formulation of policy, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of EFA efforts. This marked a departure from previous approaches that have tended to place emphasis only on government and international development partner contributions. The Dakar framework recognizes the role of all actors and particularly the competencies within civil society for achieving the goals at all levels – from community grassroots level, through national action, to mobilization at regional and international level.

Dakar saw over 200 African civil society organizations attend the World Education Forum and a commitment from civil society to participate actively was delivered clearly in the closing remarks by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE). In the aftermath of Dakar, civil society has continued to play a strong and significant role in forging forward towards 2015. At local level, from community-based associations, through faith-based organizations and through the efforts on non-governmental

### The Dakar Goals

1. **Expand early childhood care and education.** Expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
2. **Free and compulsory education of good quality.** Ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and are able to complete primary education that is free, compulsory and of good quality.
3. **Promote the acquisition of life-skills by adolescents and youth.** Ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.
4. **Expand adult literacy.** Achieve a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
5. **Eliminate gender disparities.** Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
6. **Enhance educational quality.** Improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensure excellence so that all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills, achieves recognized and measurable learning outcomes.

organizations, actions that seek to address the learning needs of Africans have forged forward. At national level, the emergence of civil society networks and coalitions around education issues has seen phenomenal impetus – with organizations seeking to influence actions by governments and development partners emerging in over half of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa. At regional level, through the work of existing civil society networks such as Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) and Education International (EI), as well as actions by the post-Dakar sub-regional and regional network on EFA – the African Network Campaign on Education for All (ANCEFA)<sup>1</sup> and membership of the Global Education Campaign (GCE) – the vigilance and participation of civil society in education issues is at an unprecedented level.

Working through the structures set out in the Dakar Framework – national EFA forums and action plans, sub-regional and regional forums, the High Level and Working groups, which all aimed at pushing for the achievement of the goals - this report seeks to unravel progress made towards 2015 and to assess, from a civil society perspective, the challenges we face.

It commences with an assessment of the individual actions in countries by government to build on the commitments of Dakar. It also assesses civil society's contributions to EFA work as well as seeking to assess regional progress through the support of UNESCO/BREDA, from the Platform of Action developed in Bamako in November 2000, through the regional validation process and Capacity Building Programme jointly being launched by UNESCO and the World Bank, and the roles of other international actors in supporting the achievement of the Dakar framework.

Finally the recommendations provide a strong basis for action by national governments, civil society, and international development actors towards achieving the goals of Dakar. It is our hope that the analysis and its recommendations are taken as a serious contribution to the process of realizing the goals of education for all by 2015.

## **1.2 Process**

During the meeting organized to contribute to planning a capacity building programme for civil society and NGOs in Africa, convened in Dakar by UNESCO/BREDA between 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> June 2002, the group of government, UNESCO staff, and civil society representatives present discussed planning processes for the upcoming MINEDAF VIII Meeting due in December 2002. The group discussed the potential input of civil society to this important forum as a mechanism for building further political commitment and impetus for achieving the EFA goals of Dakar. The discussion proposed four main components in terms of civil society involvement –

- i) The drafting of a Position Paper from civil society
- ii) The proposal of civil society panellists on all MINEDAF panels
- iii) The organization of a special Ministers/Civil Society session during MINEDAF VIII, and
- iv) Exhibitions of the contributions of civil society towards the achievement of EFA

This document represents the outcome of the participatory process aimed at meeting the first of these inputs. The process involved in developing this document included the short listing of a wide cross-section of civil society practitioners and campaigners to provide a brief but sharp analysis of progress to date, the challenges faced in the process and some recommendations for action – all from a civil society perspective. A team of ten was agreed and funding was provided jointly by UNESCO and ANCEFA. The Draft document was presented and discussed and ratified by the CSO/NGO Consultation workshop – with representatives from 31 African countries, held in September 2002, in Lilongwe, Malawi.

For practical reasons, the delegated authors had to edit huge amounts of information and case studies submitted by networks and civil society actors. The document presents, as much as possible, evidence-based and the most relevant issues. We apologize if our selection is felt by some to be less than representative.

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<sup>1</sup> ANCEFA has emerged as an independent African CSO network on education, largely with support from ActionAid and Oxfam GB.

## Section Two: Progress, Contribution of Civil Society and Challenges

### 2.1 Overview on progress and issues

Acknowledging, that in spite of some significant progress made during the Jomtien decade, much remains to be achieved in order to make education for all a reality, the World Education Forum meeting in Dakar, Senegal, April 2000, recommitted itself to the achievement of education for all goals and targets – reaching every citizen and society.

The World Education Forum acknowledged, further among the weaknesses of the Jomtien commitments, the lack of specific targets and time frames for identified actions to achieve the stated goals. Subsequently, the Dakar Framework for Action provided strategies and actions, some of which were time-bound, to help countries, governments, organisations, agencies and various groups and associations achieve stated goals.

In identifying progress made and the challenges met in the last two years, from its own perspective, Civil Society reaffirms its own conviction in the Dakar value of partnership, collective ownership and respect for diversity. Civil society further underpins the notion that the heart of EFA action and success lies at the national level. It is in this spirit that it becomes desirable to share experiences both positive and challenging, gathered in pursuit of the collective commitment to the Dakar goals.

This section of the document begins by looking at the planning processes and their assessment. In addition, it examines some of the underlying assumptions in priorities and calls for significant shifts if EFA is to be achieved. In order to assess more concretely progress made this far, and to identify challenges that need to be addressed (including the role played by civil society), this section examines separately, each individual EFA goal and the implementation of the twelve strategies.

#### 2.1.1 EFA Planning processes

One of the key commitments made in Dakar was to develop a time-bound planning process. Towards this end, countries committed themselves to the development of a National Action Plan (NAP) that was truly participatory by 2002. Countries committed themselves to establishing national EFA forums to assist in this process. In countries where there were no plans, countries committed themselves to developing these within the stated timeframe. In some countries, it was acknowledged that there were existing plans. There was, however, universal agreement that where there were existing plans, these would be reviewed and brought in line with the Dakar Framework for Action. In developing and reviewing existing plans, countries agreed to

- a) Mobilize strong national and international political commitment for education for all. At national level, this entailed public awareness raising of the importance of education for all, for development; mobilizing and soliciting all stakeholders' input to a relevant curriculum; allocating sufficient resources to all components of education, greater transparency, efficiency and integrity; putting up structures that would enable civil society to be part of transparent and accountable budgeting and financing systems; mobilizing resources from among stakeholders within society, including different levels of government, the private sector and non-governmental organisations; and to set up national EFA councils or Forums and develop action plans.
- b) Promote EFA policies within a sustainable and well-integrated sector framework linked to poverty elimination and development strategies – whether these are based on existing 'external' frameworks or 'home-grown' alternatives.
- c) Ensure engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development. In particular, this implied recognising and

granting new and expanded political and social space to civil society to facilitate dialogue, decision-making and sharing of innovative practices around education in general, and responding appropriately to basic learning needs, in particular.

- d) Ensure that National Action Plans include strategies and mechanisms reached at through participation of civil society and other stakeholders, to respond to the diverse array of education needs affecting gender equality, areas in conflict, natural calamities, children and adults with different abilities, and programmes for peace, tolerance and understanding.

### *Are we planning to fail?*

As the year 2002 draws to a close, civil society's perception on progress made on EFA by African countries is, at best, mixed. While it is true that there has been a growth in the number of countries with 'credible' plans, this is far below the numbers expected and it is unlikely that this target date for participatory plans will be achieved in many countries. According to the BREDA Report of September 2002, presented to the NGO/Civil Society Consultation in Malawi, on the status of EFA plans.

Out of 46 countries, 8 countries do not have a National Plan for Education and Training, Five (5) countries (Eritrea, Ghana, DR Congo, Somalia and Zambia) have not provided the required data, thirteen (13) countries (Angola, Cameroon, Djibouti, Guinea, Gambia, Chad, Senegal, Ethiopia, Niger, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Guinea Bissau, Central African Republic) have a completed or almost completed version of the EFA National Action Plan, nine (9) countries have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with development partners.<sup>2</sup>

However, even where these processes of review or plan development have taken place, there has been limited civil society participation in the process. Process leading to establishment of the status of education in many countries, and the subsequent decision-making on appropriate courses of action remains predominantly unparticipatory. This implies for Dakar that, some of the goals may not be addressed fully. "Consultation" which is inadequate, is constituted to be synonymous with "participation", and yet the two concepts differ significantly.

Most governments have fallen far short of political will, thereby tending to carry out business as usual, to avoid the obviously greater demand of conducting a thorough needs assessment and critical analysis of current education systems to introduce in their place, systems which will make a marked and profound difference in people's livelihoods and development.

### *Lip service on partnerships?*

The concept and full realisation of partnership in working towards achievement of the Dakar Goals remain illusive. The full potential of respective stakeholders still needs to be acknowledged and put to full use for the achievement of the Dakar Goals. It is in this context that civil society highlights its own interventions and challenges in relation to the EFA goals.

Where national EFA forums still do not exist, there is little systematic approach or attempt to develop an institutional framework for civil society and other critical stakeholders in the process. Given that plans are the critical starting point for beginning to assess the potential of attaining the 2015 targets set out in Dakar, their non existence already brings into question the probability of achieving the firmly stated goals. The flawed planning process also brings to light the glaring issue of resource mobilization.

### *Prioritising local and national spending*

While it is true that there is a huge financing gap, it must be restated that national governments need to develop sustainable and realistic plans that can be implemented. The obvious reality about resourcing is

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<sup>2</sup> Survey of May 2002, updated July 2002, Sub-Saharan Africa, UNESCO-BREDA.

that international funding will constitute only a small percentage of the total funding required. Most national plans have tended to focus on the prospect of additional external funding – be it from debt relief, new grants, or loans, rather than mobilizing domestic resources and realigning priorities. The energy spent on focusing plans around these external sources, important as they may be, outweighs the import of having a home-grown sustainable and relevant plan.

Most country governments have expended huge amounts of time and energy writing and rewriting plans to fit the ever-changing goal posts at international level while ignoring the critical political importance of internal resource mobilization. As will be argued subsequently, contradictions in the international policy arena (especially the poor reflection of policy requirements in the practices of developed countries) have left many African governments drafting plans, which merely endorse the globalization agenda being pushed by the World Bank and IMF. Governments need to include and use the capacity of CSOs in negotiations at all levels. Conditionalities considered contrary to national exigencies should be rejected. The failure by the international community to provide significant resources since Dakar makes it imperative for African governments to rethink the approach to national education planning.

### *Processes are as important as targets*

Targets are useful means to ensuring that ends are met. When targets become ends in themselves, they cease to have value. Indicators toward achievement of the EFA goals need to go beyond reporting on the mere numbers of countries, which have a plan. Plans need to speak to relevance, sustainability, validity and genuineness. Obviously, EFA plans are not parallel - they should be integrated into broad national plan. Those which are prepared primarily to attract external and additional resources will in the final analysis, cost the architects' countries heavily in terms of development, both in terms of their relevance, and often at the expense of process issues – as governments rush to complete them to 'deadlines' which stifle genuine participation and considered needs.

### **2.1.2 The indivisibility of the EFA goals versus the Millennium Development goals (MDG)**

The Dakar agreement represents the set of actions that must be jointly taken to ensure that EFA is achieved. There is an indivisibility of the goals and a strong dialectical relationship between them. Girls do not prevent themselves from going to school – their cultures, poor economies, opportunity cost, HIV/AIDS and parents do. It is therefore not feasible, for example, to achieve sustainable increases in girl-child enrolment without addressing adult literacy. Education for livelihoods will not be attained unless quality is addressed, and so forth. Actions at one level that do not acknowledge the link to actions at another are unlikely to produce sustainable results. Precisely for these reasons, the groups gathered in Dakar reaffirmed their commitment to the range of actions necessary. Barely six months after Dakar, the world's leaders gathered at the Millennium Summit and committed themselves to eight over-arching goals. Two of these

#### **Millennium Development Goals**

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a Global Partnership for Development.

Two of these speak directly to Dakar. However, in the process of implementing Dakar, a new and dangerous trend of emphasis on the MDGs has become the basis for action. Countries are focusing on primary enrolment and girl's enrolment as the key indices of success. The international community, led by the World Bank, has aggressively adopted these two goals as the central basis for their support. The only two resource packages in sight since Dakar – The World Bank Fast Track Initiative and the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) – focus their emphasis on these two goals.

While these efforts must be commended, a focus only on these target-led approaches, it is argued, is not sustainable unless there are concurrent and serious actions on all the other goals. In the international context and rationale of increasing aid effectiveness, it is argued also that, unless actions on life skills, adult literacy, early childhood care and development and quality are taken, the emerging 'successes' in increased enrolment figures cannot be sustained.

Looking to the wider context that will ensure sustainability, we need to look beyond targets, to actions which will ensure sustained successes as well as provide the basis for life skills to enable Africa climb out of the vicious cycle of poverty as well as contribute to sustaining many fragile democracies as the basis for providing an enabling environment for future generations. The future, we argue, must be invested in NOW.

### **2.1.3 From 'schooling' to 'learning for sustained livelihoods' - the need for a paradigm shift**

Related to, and equally important, is the issue of the 'purpose' of education. Civil Society contends that there is need for a radical review of the purpose of education. In a continent faced with low education attainment levels and a focus on basic education, we must significantly move away from 'schooling' towards 'learning for sustained livelihoods'. The first nine years, where current emphasis is being focused, currently produces cohorts of individuals who are not capable of using the skills acquired directly in developing sustainable livelihoods.

On a continent where poverty, the impact of conflicts, HIV/AIDS and poor public resourcing are likely to prevent significant numbers of populations from attaining anything more than a basic education, we argue that it is time for a radical review – a paradigm shift – in our understanding of the purpose and outcome of education. It must make a difference in people's lives. The time has come to set aside classical notions of schooling and replace them with learning outcomes that lead to livelihoods in the context of the new global order.

### **2.1.4 Achieving education as a Constitutional right**

All the documents, from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, through the convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), as well as Dakar reaffirm the understanding that education is a basic human right.

An analysis of most African country's constitutions shows that constitutional rights for education exist in most African countries, but there is much work to be done to enable this to become a reality. Cost barriers, as well as other factors, continue to militate against citizens being able to demand and claim this right.

### **2.1.5 Financing Education**

Overall, financing to education continues to fall far short of the sums required to ensure access as set out in the Dakar Framework. Only a very few countries like the Gambia and Senegal come close to the necessary budgetary allocations necessary for achieving EFA – currently recommended at 26%. Most countries average between 5% and 10% with education often fairly low down on the list of national priorities – typically fifth or lower. Unless significant resources are mobilized into education at a local and national level, the EFA goals will remain a dream. National governments must first prioritise education internally and mobilize their own resources if the international community is to respond. Even finances that have been released through the HIPC process and other debt-relieving mechanisms have not necessarily been applied transparently to education. Civil society continues to try to develop processes for effective budget tracking and finance monitoring in a bid to create the necessary environment of accountability and transparency.

At international level, resourcing which meets the promises made in Dakar has been almost non-existent. The call for a Global Initiative has failed to materialize up till the present – in spite of the valiant calls from civil society, most notably through the GCE. The World Bank Fast Track Initiative is a narrow programme designed only to address the two MGDs (and with questionable mechanisms and intent) and cannot claim to come anywhere near being the Global Initiative which was discussed and committed to in Dakar. Goal 8 of the MDG is about a global partnership for development and is beyond the control of most developing countries since as stated it refers to the international development partners only. With the exception of the Scandinavian countries where significant commitment has been made (at the recent Amsterdam

Financing of Education meeting), little new resources are available. That, coupled with an increasing bilateralism in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, has combined to bring the promise of a global resource partnership to a nothing – so far!!

### **2.1.6 The characteristics of Civil Society participation**

One of the critical strategies for achieving EFA is hinged on the participation of civil society in the process. Theoretically, and as a community of stakeholders, it is agreed that Civil society participation in EFA concerns should be the norm rather than the exception. Many-a-conferences, even outside Education, in the recent past, have called for participation and involvement of CSOs in issues concerning development.

#### **CASE STUDY: THE COMMONWEALTH STUDY ON CSO PARTICIPATION**

Amanda Shah, a project officer of the Commonwealth Civil Society Project at the Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit conducted a study into enhancement of co-ordination between the official Commonwealth and Commonwealth civil society. In the main, it suggested that “The official Commonwealth should provide more opportunities for meaningful civil society engagement, particularly within the Commonwealth’s decision-making processes”

The example of the commonwealth Case Study confirms the many calls, globally, for Civil Society involvement for its flexibility; innovation and closeness to grassroots there by helping give activities greater impact. The challenge, however, remains with the pronouncements not matching action. Most governments remain suspicious and sceptical of CSO intentions for participation.

### **2.1.7 UNESCO Coordination and other international actors**

At the Dakar World Education Forum, UNESCO was mandated to lead the process of ensuring that the EFA goals are met. This, it was to manage, in collaboration with, and coordination among international partners.

As pointed out in the document on an International strategy to put the Dakar Framework for Action on EFA into operation (UNESCO, 2002), the key principle in the coordination of EFA is PARTNERSHIP. Stakeholders need to recognize comparative advantages of various actors in EFA. UNESCO has the added responsibility to ensure that there is equitable balance in coordination of, not just EFA activities but in addressing all the EFA goals. UNESCO, often hindered by competitiveness within the Un system and a reluctance to work collectively (evidenced in poor country coordination mechanisms), has failed to fully realize its role in coordinating EFA.

Much remains to be done.

## **2.2 Early Childhood Care and Development**

**Goal: Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children**

Early childhood care and education, the first in the 6 EFA goals recognises that one of the fundamental pillars supporting the realisation of EFA lies in effective early childhood development (ECD) delivery in respective countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. ECD’s effectiveness lies in its comprehensive and integrated approaches across sectors to ensure the survival, development growth and learning ability of the child. Determinants of ECD range from nutrition, health, sanitation, hygiene, environment; parental and early caregiver love and attention; adequate stimulation for cognitive and intellectual development as well as support for psychological development.

These determinants are directly impacted upon by the cultural, social, economic and political climate of the child’s immediate environment. The intellectual and cognitive function of the brain begins to develop from birth with the first three years being the most critical period.

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes therefore are expected to take into account the period from birth to the age when formal schooling begins and must embrace in a comprehensive manner the various factors of child development.

## **Progress**

Governments have not been very active and keen in the pursuit of early childcare and education in most sub-Saharan Africa for many years with the excuse that it is beyond the realms of their national budgets. Very few countries have ECD policies in place. Many are struggling with the idea of coming up with a policy framework to support ECD as an integrated holistic approach. At best, ECD is translated to some provision for pre-primary education, in isolation from supporting child development in the context of families and communities. Even where policies exist, such as Nigeria, the policy clearly relinquishes government of any funding responsibility – instead calling on civil society, international development partners, and the Education Tax Fund (with its resources derived from the private sector) as the key funding sources for this work. In some cases, governments' call for partnership approaches to ECD, actually translates to families and communities having to bear the full burden of ECCE provision even at the pre-primary level. Therefore, the disadvantaged communities are marginalized even further. In response to EFA, some governments like Senegal came up with a deep concern for the development of ECD in the country. The approach however turned out to be over and above the reach of the average Senegalese family.

One of the main stumbling blocks is that ECD demands commitment from a number of sectors, and strategies for working multi-sectorally are yet to be realised. The resultant effect has been minimal commitment to resourcing ECD at the family, community or institutional level; little or no concrete recognition that gender issues and women's empowerment are at the heart of ECCE issues, and therefore resourcing ECCE is of mutual support to women and children; the ECCE of the most vulnerable young children, in rural and urban areas, is being ignored through government relying on families and communities to take the full 'burden' of partnership approaches to ECD.

### **High Level of Political commitment but very costly implementation approach in Senegal**

In certain countries, as in Senegal, the government has established a Ministry charged with early childhood care, an initiative applauded by national and international partners. A year ago the Ministry launched a programme for early childhood care - a creation of the vision of the President of the Republic of Senegal and presented in his opening address at the World Education Forum in Dakar, April 2000. Even though this vision is shared by civil society organisation in Senegal, they find that the implementation of this policy is too expensive (20 000 000 franc CFA per institution for each of the 25 000 villages in Senegal). Besides this initiative, an NGO as PLAN International has over the last 10 years had a community project for early childhood care, run by women groups trained in literacy programmes at village level, at a lesser cost (not even 1/20 the cost of the state programme). The Plan International project is recognised by the Minister and often cited as an example of good practice to be shared with others.

## **Contributions from civil society**

Civil Society efforts have been enormous in this direction. Crèches, nurseries and pre-school facilities are being run by individuals, retired nurses and teachers, civil servants, elderly widows and community and faith-based organisations. This is prevalent in urban centres. They usually use attendants some of whom are school dropout and most have completed their basic education and for some reason are not able to continue.

### **Hope in The Gambia**

In The Gambia the Christian Children's Fund provides support to over 5000 families of 11000 children enrolled in the ECD programme in the Western Division of the country. This is in line with their development strategy for 2001-2003 that focuses on the well being of the child and their families. Basic services in health, education and nutrition are provided for the children as well as the creation of income earning opportunities for the families of the children. This is to ensure sustainability of the programme on the one hand and gradually build up the capacity of poor parents to take up financial responsibility of their children.

Observation shows wide disparities ranging from highly sophisticated, expensive pre-schools – largely for rich consumers - to very deprived settings. The content, most of the time, has no bearing on the cultural, social and indigenous context in which the children are grown. There are very few intellectual stimulating activities and much more emphasis on the development of rote-style learning in preparation for primary school. The level of stimulation that prepares the child for learning skills, concentration, analysis, creativity, innovativeness, independence and so on are completely missed out.

#### **Networking in Tanzania**

In response to Tanzania's growing recognition for the need for multi-sectoral approaches to ECD, government and civil society ECD stakeholders have come together under the umbrella of the **Tanzania ECD Network**. Whilst the Network is young, it is developing momentum, with representation from across the ECD related sectors, UN agencies, NGOs, and the private sector in Tanzania. Recognising that the realisation of integrated multi-sectoral ECD policies is a challenge, the Tanzania ECD Network has developed on the clear understanding that supporting young children's development demands **ongoing** dialogue amongst **all** stakeholders. As the demand for improved ECD support in Tanzania, intensifies, the ECD Network provides a constructive 'meeting point' for stakeholders **to work together** to find solutions to improving ECD support at family, community and institutional level.

Another area where civil society effort at ECD has been made is in the area of networks on ECD as a way of strengthening dialogue between stakeholders and ensuring that a wide cross-section of stakeholders is heard in ECD advocacy issues. One of the many challenges faced by networks is how to make sure that families and community voices, as the young children's primary caretakers and first teachers are also heard. Civil society initiatives, though few, also address the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. However, this is currently a significant gap area.

#### **Challenges**

The major challenge in ECD delivery has been the lack of political will in most countries evidenced by the absence of national policies on ECD. There is a poor conceptualisation of the importance of ECD as well as its

operations as many erroneously believe that it must necessarily take place in a 'formal' environment. Fragmentation of services with little or no linkages between the health and nutrition services and education characterize this sector.

The lack of accessibility to ECD programmes and facilities - indoor and outdoor facilities and equipment - presents another challenge. Inappropriate teaching methods, material content at the pre-school level for holistic development of the child does not take into account the culture and the indigenous strengths.

Training of appropriate numbers of teachers to deliver this area is also a challenge. In Nigeria, for example, less than 15% of the trained teaching output has relevant skills in early childhood care and development. The absence of trained caregivers in pre-school facilities is therefore an issue. Inappropriate teaching methodologies by inexperienced and untrained persons who do not appreciate the needs of the young child to move about and play and to learn through play and by doing

In the area of the needs of disadvantaged groups and vulnerable children – AIDS orphans and street children among them, there are even greater challenges. With the dramatic growth in orphans from HIV/AIDS, there is a large population of children whose needs remain unmet. Conflicts continue to leave large numbers of children without any basic form of support in refugee camps across the continent.

## 2.3 Achieving Universal Primary Education

### **GOAL: Ensuring that by 2015 all children have access to free and compulsory quality primary education**

Statistical data in EFA country, regional and international assessments and in national education statistics show that progress has been made in many countries towards achieving this goal. The adoption of this goal at Dakar strengthened the efforts in many countries for which UPE was already a target. Prior to Dakar, countries like Nigeria and Uganda had already declared universal basic education (UBE) schemes and have been joined by others – Malawi, Tanzania and The Gambia.

Interventions taken to achieve this goal in all the countries include improvements in the teaching and learning environment through provision of additional schools and classrooms and related infrastructure such as toilets and water facilities. Schools have been brought nearer the homes of the learners thus cutting down on the long distances that children had to travel to school with all its attendant problems. Flexible schooling and innovative practices such as mobile schools have tried to address the needs of nomadic people in Ghana and Mali. Interventions and incentives have been introduced to reduce the direct and indirect costs of schooling and this has translated into positive enrolments and retention of girls in schools. The number of teachers in schools has increased due to expansion of teacher training programmes or through alternative teacher education programmes to provide new teachers with minimal skills to teach.

#### **How it works in the Gambia**

The Gambia is committed to providing 9 years of basic education for all of its children. To this end basic cycle schools have been established that offer a nine course of studies to children in school. The Primary School Leaving Certificate has been phased out and children transit from Grades 1-6 in Primary School to Grades 7-9 in the Upper Basic/ Junior Secondary Schools. Enrollments in the Primary School are 157155 (74857 female and 82298 male). This represents a Gross Enrollment Rate of 87percent. The total enrollment for the Basic Education Cycle is 198770 (92435 female and 106335 male). This represents a GER of 64 percent. (Source Planning, Policy Analysis, Research and Budgeting Directorate, Department of State for Education)

This is the area where the greatest level of international support and resources have been placed – from direct country progress linked to HIPC initiatives as well as the World Bank Fast Track Initiative.

### **Contributions of civil society**

Many countries have not passed the necessary legislation that makes education compulsory. Even if this were done the necessary logistical and institutional support would not be available to enforce the law. Civil society actors at national level have increased voice on calling not only for enabling legislation but the entrenchment of the right to education within the constitution.

Support for capacity building for education delivery is an area where civil society has played a significant role. Zambia has seen the most phenomenal leap in growth in numbers of community schools in the entire country. From 38 such schools in 1996 with an enrolment of less than 7,000 pupils, the number rose to 700 in 2000 with an enrolment of over 75,000 pupils who would never, otherwise, have had a chance to enter school. In Tanzania and Zambia, there are efforts by civil society organizations to support the training of communities to increase their capacity for engaging in community schools management programmes. In Nigeria, NGOs such as DEDF in Gombe are providing teacher refresher training and skills for generating local teaching aids and learning new methodologies and approaches.

In addition, civil society has played a significant role in mobilizing for increased attendance by taking the message to the grassroots.

Civil society has played an important role in influencing the reduction and removal of user fees that act as a barrier to access for millions. Getting the World Bank to adopt this process is seen as a major area where civil society has played an important role. In countries like Zambia where Governments issued a “Free Education” policy, Civil Society continued to call for bridging the gap between intentions and actuality.

## Challenges

However, progress has not been equal across the continent. Where some have made gains others have made losses. Falling rolls were experienced in Zambia and Kenya, which were attributed to the introduction of cost sharing strategies. The incidence of HIV/AIDS has impacted negatively on UPE in Tanzania, Malawi and Uganda and the disease is now starting to rear its ugly head in other parts of the continent. Morbidity and mortality due to malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases as well as malnourishment keep children out of school thus affecting the realization of this goal. Poverty contributes to low enrolments as well as perpetuating the incidence of child labour. Countries in conflict and post-conflict situations have other serious problems to contend with and education is pushed down in the order of priorities.

Nearly all States have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and all states must be held accountable to fulfil their obligations to the CRC and to the realization of this goal to achieve UPE by 2015, as it is an embodiment of this fundamental principle of the right to education. However, even in countries, such as Kenya, The Gambia and Ghana, where education is a constitutional right, a number of other barriers access such as costs prevent people from attaining the standards. In many more countries, provisions within constitutions still prevent the achievement of education as a justifiable right.

The International Development Partners are yet to give full support in spite of the assurance that Countries that are committed and who have demonstrated this through the development of national plans of actions should not be thwarted in their efforts because of lack of resources due to conflict or natural calamities. The only post-Dakar initiative around funding is the World Bank led Fast Track Programme, which is both restrictive – through the range of conditionalities, which it imposes - and also potentially misleading in its lack of connectedness between the UPE and other Dakar goals. The G8, though pledging new money, has failed to be specific. The USA is equally unclear about how new resources will be allocated and for what.

Education must be free in all aspects. Indirect costs of schooling contained in uniforms, transportation, school meals, teaching, learning materials and contributions to development activities must be removed as they continue to serve as obstacles to poor children attendance at school. Opportunity costs of schooling need to be addressed in innovative ways.

The school curriculum must respond flexibly to the circumstances and needs of learners and the communities in which they live. They must also include extra curricular approaches and the whole school development physically, culturally and socially. School calendars and timetabling need to take cognisance of this important barrier.

An all inclusive education programme will be the embodiment and goal of EFA, and must be developed to include learners with special needs including children from dispersed rural communities. Particular attention must be given to learners with special needs such as visual and hearing impairment, children in conflict, street children and other hard to reach children. The Sierra Leone and Angola cases need priority attention. Efforts need to be made to deliver Special Needs Education in an integrated setting where the children with special needs go to school along side their peers, rather than in a special institution.

The sheer numbers of children out of school also presents a huge challenge. In Nigeria, the estimate is 7 million and even in Malawi, the number is in excess of 500,000. This challenge presents huge pressures on the system if universal basic education is to be achieved.

### Exclusion in West Africa

The Dara in West Africa has contributed immensely to the social, cultural and economic development of countries such as The Gambia, Senegal, Guinea Conakry and Mali. Products of these "Daras" known as the Maglish fit the description of an educated person, that is self-reliant contributing members of society and have a voice in the development of their countries. They are literate in that they are able to read and write with understanding but they are excluded from information in the Education Statistics of these countries. Misconceptions are now being formed about what goes on in the "Dara" a major challenge rests with the Education Ministries to develop greater understanding about these institutions. Acquiring quality data will require national and sub-regional collaboration.

Gender equity remains a huge challenge and the actions necessary to bring enrolment, completion and transition to secondary school rates in line with MDG expectations are huge and require inputs on a range of different levels. Inadequate investment in appropriate infrastructure, a lack of understanding and non-addressing of socio-cultural factors, poverty, and opportunity cost continue to hit hard on the attendance of girls and women.

In addition, we must focus on eliminating disparities between rich and poor; and rural and urban. Understanding of non-formal education should be broadened so that it can pick up (as well as adults) children left out by the formal system.

Poor schools management and the lack of community involvement alongside a dysfunctional 'inspectorate' system that does not support or enable and assist in the process of standards maintenance constitute other challenges.

The inadequacy of teachers is another critical issue. The volume of increased enrolments has not been adequately matched by teacher outputs – leading to unacceptable teacher/student ratios – which affect quality. In addition, the poor quality of teachers and the associated low status given to them (in terms of remuneration and other terms and conditions) continues to contribute to high attrition rates. In most African countries, teachers are among the worst paid employees of government. This is made worse as the HIV/AIDS pandemic bites deep and many countries are facing infection and death rates as high as 27% in the teacher populations – especially throughout southern Africa.

## **2.4 Enhancing Life Skills**

### **Goal 3: Ensuring that learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes**

Many countries in Sub Saharan Africa continue to follow an education system that throws over 60% of primary or basic school graduates onto the streets. The system leaves them with no choice but to label themselves as failures. For the majority of them, education in its modern or official sense ends. Due to the obviously explosive youth response, developing countries have attempted to develop training programmes to provide out-of-school youths, in particular, technical, and practical and life skills. Minimum entry qualifications are stipulated; then at the end of training students can expect to acquire certificates.

The 'system' remains largely technical with few linkages to broader employment markets, proper planning systems, or appropriate technologies and credit packages to enable grandaunts enter into employment

### **Civil Society Interventions**

The majority of early school leavers tend to be in the cluster of youngsters who 'leave' the system – costs, poverty, opportunity costs, socio-cultural pressures among the range of 'sad' reasons for this state of affairs. Poor qualifications often deny such young people any opportunities for quality skills training in recognized institutions. Civil Society Programmes are known to be flexible and innovative – responding to specific needs – often of hard to reach groups like street children and the disabled. CSOs have made major contributions by picking up youth with almost no academic or professional qualifications, and trained them to become useful members of society, who can sufficiently take control of their lives.

#### **Friends of the Disabled - Lagos**

This is an innovative program-me targeting young disabled children and youth with opportunities for literacy, basic education, and skills-acquisition supported by credit and loans schemes to help them find meaningful livelihoods in Nigeria

### **Challenges**

It is a well-known factor that a country can only develop if the larger percentage of its population completed secondary education or more. Many challenges persist which make it difficult for youths who have never been to school, or those who left early, to, first believe that learning is life long, and secondly,

that they can be successful in life if they decided to acquire knowledge, skills and positive attitudes. African governments need to deal seriously with challenges that sometimes threaten lives of young people, and create opportunities in the face of substance abuse, exploitative labour, poverty, early pregnancies, lack of employment, HIV/AIDS, and conflict. Governments need to deal with appropriate education and learning systems that do not stigmatise those who cannot fit in.

## **2.5 Halving Illiteracy by 2015**

### **Goals 4: Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults**

“If you do not pay attention to literacy and adult education, you might as well forget about achieving anything through all the other EFA goals! When you throw youths onto the streets for a few or all years of irrelevant primary education each year – who lose literacy within a few years – and who then, in the few years become illiterate parents adding to the already high figures- what do you expect.” (Julius Nyerere).

In the introductory remark of the International Strategy Document to put the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All into operation, it is stated that at the heart of education for all is the vision of every person – female and male, of every age, in every community engaged in learning, the key to unfolding their potential as human beings. Unfortunately, many– even among educational circles, and well-meaning contributors to EFA, have missed the full impact of this statement.

Adult literacy has received very little attention over the years, and yet it is key in the realisation of better and improved lifestyles. It is key to addressing issues in the here and now, of quality education, poverty, HIV/AIDS, governance and democracy, accountability, gender equity and peace. In most African countries, overall populations of illiterates are on the rise.

## Civil Society Interventions

Over the years, civil society has contributed significantly to literacy programmes and in raising quality through various and better pedagogical participatory approaches. The approaches focus on the functionality of literacy, numeracy, and the ability of other approaches like REFLECT, to open up learners to discussion and analytical skills, and to appreciate development processes and the need for education in their broad sense.

Some civil society programmes have, over the years, implemented short courses for literacy facilitators and instructors in order to raise quality to literacy programmes. The quality is in the ability to recognise literacy and numeracy as tools that are necessary for continuing learning. They are not an end in themselves, but a means to reading and understanding the world, and to being an active participant in it. Adult literacy programmes further accommodate much more than reading and writing exercises by integrating multi-

### REFLECT in Zambia

HODI and People's Action forum in Zambia popularise the Regenerated Freirian Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques (REFLECT) approach. It brings meaning to learning by identifying, discussing and analysing issues of need in the locality, and using the material generated, not only to find solutions (which eventually give birth to projects) but to form the basis of learning matters for literacy and numeracy. The two NGOs organise regularly series of training of trainers and facilitators to help sustain quality and to reinforce facilitation skills.

### REFLECT in Ghana

**Reflect** is an approach to adult literacy and community empowerment. Local NGOs in the Northern Sector of Ghana have been using the approach in helping communities to analyze their own situations. Using local materials, communities develop maps, matrices, calendars and diagrams on local issues. In the process participants produce their own texts and use it for reading and writing. The discussions help individuals and communities to identify various action points that are undertaken to raise their standard of living, e.g., income generating activities such as pomade making, grinding mills, farming, etc. Some communities have even, contributed to the establishment of basic or secondary schools for their children. In Ghana there are over 500 reflect circles being implemented by 20 organizations across the country

sectoral issues concerning agriculture, health, income generation, human rights, governance and democratic issues.

Through literacy programmes, credit capacity building is in force for communities in rural areas to improve their productivity. In Senegal, for instance, literacy and numeracy skills were introduced along income generating activities and entrepreneurial skills. Learners spend 150 hours on literacy and 150 hours on practical skills for production. In Ghana, literacy programmes are addressing poverty reduction in similar ways. These approaches link education to improved livelihoods and learners find

learning relevant, and enjoyable, with visible and almost immediate results.

There is no doubt that an informed and educated parent will add to quality of his/ her child's education. A regional organisation, known as FAPE – based in Congo, Brazzaville, believes that while becoming a parent is natural and needs no training, becoming a good parent does. In pursuit of that belief, FAPE launched a project in which parents talk to parents – dubbed the "School of parents" It is being piloted in Congo, Brazzaville, Burkina Faso and Senegal. Parents are sensitised and educated in the school curriculum, role of parents, teachers, female educators and old people. Community radios are also utilised to foster and strengthen communications. In Nigeria, ActionAid is working closely with the National Commission for Mass Education (NMEC) to mainstream REFLECT approaches in the national response to the 58% of illiterate adults in the country.

## Challenges

Most African Governments lack the political will to assess the extent of illiteracy in their countries in order to determine appropriate corrective measures. The sheer volume of the challenge (in Nigeria, for instance, estimated at about 50 million people) puts people off attempting to address it. This translates into a lack of clear policy to support development of literacy.

As a result, literacy programmes have generally and in most countries, been very poorly funded. For example, literacy instructors are the most poorly paid actors – some earning about US\$2 per month. Even as little as it is, Government sometimes takes as long as 6 months to pay the so-called stipend.

Lack of an enabling environment, such as libraries, in most countries, to support continuous learning and use of literacy and numeracy skills leads to slippage of literates into illiteracy. A renowned literacy advocate, Daniel Wagner, Director, International Literacy Institute, Philadelphia, USA, could not have been further from the truth when he gave the title to his book: “Use It or Lose It”.

Most literacy programmes – be they civil society or government, lack monitoring and evaluating mechanisms to determine the rate of success or failure of planned and implemented strategies. There is lack of capacity to document successful and good practices on the ground for possible replication elsewhere.

There is poor quality control, with the literacy curriculum seen to be a “free-for-all zone”. There are no general guidelines to protect learners from low quality or irrelevant learning. In addition, the attention given to quality training of literacy instructors or facilitators is difficult to come by. The lack of quality and up-to-date training of instructors of functional literacy in most countries militates against the desired linkage between literacy and numeracy skills, and practical and life skills. Further, use of syllabi and methodologies meant for children, drive adults away from learning.

Literacy is often delivered in a language that is not local and the learners have not got a mastery of – even in spoken terms. The need to use local languages must be emphasized.

## **2.6 Promoting Gender Equity**

### **GOAL 5: Eliminate gender disparities in Primary Education by 2005 and achieve gender equality in education by 2015**

By implication the achievement of UPE means the achievement of much of this goal. However, it must again be emphasized that a singular pronged attack on this target is unlikely to see sustainable achievement over time unless linked with the other goals – especially adult literacy, providing quality learning environments, and making education and learning relevant to learner needs. This is the overt indicator but there are other hidden ones, which need to be addressed, and in the elimination of one set of biases one must be careful not to create a new set of biases against the other gender. Indications are that many countries have taken positive steps to increase female enrolments and participation in school. The availability of gender disaggregated data in many of the countries has facilitated the management of gender information and monitoring of progress made in this area. This data has also provided the evidence for advocacy and gender sensitisation activities. The mainstreaming of gender into national policies and programmes has led to the enabling environment that has impacted on the development of gender sensitive education systems.

Schools have been made safer and more girl friendly (e.g. separate toilet facilities for boys and girls). The presence of more female teachers in schools and in leadership positions means that parents are more willing to send their daughters to schools.

Teaching/ learning materials have been revised in countries like The Gambia, Zambia and Malawi and the school curriculum has been made more gender sensitive. Stereotyping in subject allocations have been minimized and girls are encouraged to study subjects that were seen as traditional male domains such as mathematics, science and technical subjects. A lot of work has been done in this area at the national, regional and international levels through the Science, Technical and Mathematics Clinics for girls and made gender ranks high on the international agenda.

Teachers have been oriented to become more gender sensitive through training and retraining programmes. The introduction of incentives and affirmative action policies such as the Girls' Scholarship Programme in The Gambia which offers full scholarships to girls up to the end of the secondary cycle (grade 12) and a quota system in Malawi which allocates 50 percent of secondary places to girls means that more girls are not only getting to school but are staying in school. Consequently girls' enrolment in The Gambia at the Primary level is 50 percent - the figures diminish the higher one goes up the education ladder. In Nigeria, the figures are slightly below 50 percent. South Africa has the highest percentage of female enrolment at 85.1 percent.

In spite of these interventions gender biased discrimination continues to limit female participation.

### **Contributions of civil society**

The Forum for African Women Educators (FAWE) promotes the education of women and girls and seeks to mobilize strong support through its chapters in the various countries in Africa. In Zambia, FAWEZA was key in the formulation of the "Re Entry" Policy by the Ministry of Education, for girls who left school due to pregnancy.

CSOs have played a critical role in the area of awareness creation and advocacy. Gender networks have been formed for information sharing to influence policy and campaign against existing harmful traditional practices that militate against the lives of women and children. Numerous studies too have been carried

### **Challenges**

Traditional values and norms of wider society continue to perpetuate the lesser status of girls and their non-participation in education processes both formal and non-formal. Early marriage and teenage pregnancy mean that those already in school are withdrawn and schools are ill equipped to deal with these situations even though policies may exist that address this situation.

The absence or low presence of female teachers in rural schools is still a stark reality because of the conditions of rural postings.

Unsafe school environments continue to threaten the security and reproductive and sexual health rights of learners and female teachers. Sexual harassment and abuse is on the increase. The situation is even more acute in South Africa and the situation given in the case study is even more frightening taking into consideration the high incidence of HIV/AIDS that exist in South Africa - 4.2 million cases were reported during the 13<sup>th</sup> AIDS Conference in July 2000.

Another major challenge for all governments is the mainstreaming of gender into national development plans and programmes. Accessing the necessary financial and human resources to sustain this is also a problem. Resources must be mobilized to ensure that families are supported to send their daughters to school and keep them in school.

#### **FAWEGAM experiences**

In The Gambia FAWEGAM has trained 65 focal point coordinators for Girls' Clubs to provide peer group counseling and support to school and community based activities. They have also trained 50 Parents' Teachers Associations (PTAs) in school management and created 51 Mother's Clubs to help with the sensitization of rural communities where the enrolments of girls are lowest and to improve the retention and performance of girls' through mother to daughter counseling. They also monitor the incidence of early marriage and have confronted families that have tried to withdraw their children from school with positive results.

#### **Fighting Sexual Harassment in South Africa**

The Human Rights Watch "Scared at School Sexual Violence Against Girls in South African Schools" quoted in South Africa Democratic Teachers Union Report 2002 states that girls participation in school is threatened by violence including rape, sexual harassment and assault by male students and teachers.

## **2.7 Enhancing Quality**

### **GOAL 6: Improving every aspect of the Quality of education**

Inputs into education are generally regarded as indicators of quality even though it is the learning outcomes that determine the quality of education. Quality education is one that “satisfies basic learning needs, enriches the lives of the learners and their overall experience of living”. (The Dakar Framework for Action, World Education Forum, Dakar Senegal 2000). If inputs are used as indicators of quality then progress has been made to achieve this goal. Classroom construction, and rehabilitation has taken place to a large extent in many countries. Some related infrastructures such as toilets and water have also been made available thus creating learner friendly environments. More teachers are being trained to ensure that supply meets with demand and alternative training programmes have been introduced in Malawi to provide teachers with the required skills. Class sizes have been reduced to improve pupil teacher ratio in some countries.

Curriculum revisions have taken place to make the curriculum more relevant to individual and community needs. Family Life Education, Reproductive and Sexual Health Education, Peace Education, gender and environmental education programmes have been incorporated into the school curriculum to prepare the learners for changing environments in which they live. Capacity of local management committees have been built in The Gambia, Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania and Uganda to enable them play a more effective role in education monitoring and in budget monitoring in educational expenditure to influence pro-poor education spending. The Inspectorate divisions of many of the countries including The Gambia, Zambia and Tanzania have been restructured into Standards Quality assurance Divisions. Progresses on reform are reported also in Nigeria and other countries.

However, they lack the logistical and institutional supports to sustain a well articulated programme of monitoring and evaluating teacher and schools performance especially those in dispersed rural areas.

### **Contributions of Civil Society**

Acknowledging the importance of professionalism and technical and managerial aspects of education, civil society organisations in Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia implemented a four-year UNESCO-initiated capacity building project of local NGOs in Basic Education. An important aspect of the Training was development of relevant learning/teaching materials – best suited to local needs – as opposed to random use of materials produced externally.

The Global Education Campaign (GCE) has carried out a very comprehensive study on the issues affecting quality that has been fed into by civil society organisations from over thirty countries worldwide. This analysis, if properly adopted, will make huge contributions towards addressing issues in terms of quality education.

Teachers Unions, cognisant of the low quality of educational outcomes, have initiated and run specialized teacher training programmes and study circles for teachers to upgrade their knowledge and skills for better delivery of teaching and learning.

Youth organizations have organized study circles and clubs to support and strengthen each person's efforts to study and improve on their learning skills - the Lend a Hand Society in The Gambia is one such example.

In addition, a range of out-of-school initiatives such as provision of safe water and sanitation facilities have been provided by community based organizations or NGOs operating in the locality of the school which have enhanced quality.

### **Challenges**

In spite of these developments there are still critical shortages in the availability of classroom space. Past knowledge shows that declarations of UPE have always come with their attendant problems of shortages

of classrooms, human and material resources and the competences to cope with large increases in student enrolment at the institutional level. Classroom shortages exist in Malawi, Nigeria, The Gambia, Tanzania and South Africa.

Studies show however that a significant number of children are not mastering the knowledge that is critical for their livelihoods. This could be attributed to rapid expansion without due cognisance of the detail that should be given to teacher education courses as well as to the production of teaching learning materials. Inappropriate methodologies continue to promote teacher centered rather than learner centered teaching/learning

Factors outside the school also impact on the learning process. Hungry, sick and malnourished children are less likely to learn and benefit from schooling than healthy and properly nourished children.

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| <p><b>Challenges in South Africa</b></p> <p>The Auditor General's Report quoted in the Meeting of South Africa Democratic Teachers Union of the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2002, states that 34 percent of schools do not have access to water; and <i>that there is a 40 percent classroom shortage.</i> At least 19,000 classrooms are required in the Limpopo Province and 15,538 in the Eastern Cape Province.</p> |
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High illiteracy of the adult population means that they are unable to help their children or supervise their homework. There is very little convergence between the home and the school in this area.

Inadequately trained teachers with low levels of education are not able to interact with the materials that they themselves can hardly understand.

The lack of a clear definition and accurate assessment of learning outcomes in all domains of learning including knowledge, skills, attitudes and values remains a major challenge. In most of the countries teachers are not familiar with the processes of continuous assessment and would need to be trained in this area. Well-trained teachers and appropriate technologies are required to motivate learners to learn.

Facilities and materials must be provided in environments that are not only conducive to learning but are healthy, safe and gender sensitive. Linkages between the schools and communities must be established and participatory governance and management of schools promoted and tolerated.

In addition, a number of other challenges remain if quality is to be realized. These include the need to avoid cost-containing practices such as shift-schools, and utilizing volunteer or untrained teachers; poor quality of adult programmes, with diverse and unstructured curriculum, affect quality of children's own learning; lack of the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction in early grades; access to quality learning for girls is still unmet due to sexual harassment, poor facilities; poor and inappropriate curricula that make no difference to quality of learning; non-inclusion, for a range of reasons, of relevant components such as life skills, reproductive health skills, peace and gender education and poor linkages between formal and non formal education as well as poor attention to the proper registration of private schools and delivery mechanisms.

## **2.8 Crosscutting Issues**

### **2.8.1 The Impact of HIV/AIDS**

HIV/AIDS is no longer a public health problem but rather constitutes a rapidly growing obstacle to development by impacting on, among other areas, education. HIV/AIDS is eating away at the development gains of African countries. In the education sector, it is decimating teacher populations, creating new child-headed households, reinforcing opportunity cost barriers for children to access education, producing a new generation of orphans without education, and increasing pressure on the range of already inadequate social services – this shows up glaringly in health and education systems.

The impact of HIV/AIDS and its spread in Africa is a big burden not only on education but also on national economies. Statistics show that out of 33.6 million people affected by HIV/AIDS in the world in 1999 over 23.3 million are in Sub-Saharan Africa. The majority of those affected are in education or related to

education being parents, teachers or students. The worst hit countries are South Africa, Malawi, Botswana, Tanzania, Zambia and Mozambique where 8-10 percent of HIV/AIDS related deaths are of teachers – with other countries like Nigeria rapidly catching up with these unfortunate trends.

The major contributing factors are poverty (exposing vulnerable girls and women to transmission), harmful traditional practices that affects the lives of women and children such as wife inheritance and initiation ceremonies and poor access to reproductive and sexual health information and services that will enable them make informed choices.

The impact of HIV/AIDS on the education system is well documented. Its impact includes - fewer children in schools and buildings become under-utilised; increase in number of out of school children – orphans and street children; a decrease in the number of qualified teachers as a result of mortality from the disease; frequent absenteeism of teachers and learners because of morbidity, increased health care responsibilities and attendance at funerals; a reduction in availability of public and private funds to invest in education among others.

African governments are reacting – putting in place multi-sectoral approaches which recognize the cross-cutting impact of the pandemic and which seek to bring all players on board in addressing and halting the advance of this epidemic in the African continent.

### **Contributions of Civil Society**

It is pleasing to note that like both government and the international community, civil society organisations have done and are still doing much towards combating HIV/AIDS through community sensitisation, the creation of community based responses such as Stepping Stones involved in prevention, pre and post test counselling (as well as counselling services), community and home based care, support for safe practices, campaigns around safe behaviour and treatment of STIs as well as the production of sexual health materials and lobbying and advocating for flexible and sensitive employment policies for persons affected by HIV/AIDS. More recently, the movement for access to affordable treatment programmes, especially for teachers and de-stigmatisation campaigns, which seek to return the dignity and rights of those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, are all examples of the laudable work of civil society organisations.

### **Challenges**

In spite of the above, many challenges remain. A good number of countries need to develop a policy framework to guide planning and action, and to coordinate interventions. The major challenges for HIV/AIDS are how to minimize the impact on family, community and national development.

Preventive education and measures need to be put into place to put a cap on the spread of the disease. Emphasis should be placed on behavioural change as well as a break in the culture of silence and denial with teachers taking a lead role in the campaign against HIV/AIDS. There is need for strategies and actions which affect the children's right to accurate and sensitively presented information in general, and HIV/AIDS in particular, in the mother tongue.

There should be more and meaningful programmes for HIV/AIDS orphans.

Employment policies need to be revised to make them sensitive to HIV/AIDS as well as laws affecting school attendance.

The most critical issue is resources to combat HIV/AIDS. The World Bank has provided loans for HIV/AIDS in view of the devastating effects of the disease on human development. The resources available should be in the form of grants and the international development partners should take some responsibility to alleviating the human suffering that is associated with HIV/AIDS. Resources available to national governments are limited to combat the disease and as it respects no boundaries and is generally not immediately visible there is need for greater sensitivity towards the provision of resources.

African countries should be pressing for provision of affordable HIV/AIDS drugs for teachers.

There should also be ongoing research and data collection to assist impact planning.

A further challenge is to integrate or mainstream HIV/AIDS education in curriculum without overburdening syllabi as well as overcoming prejudice to the introduction of sexuality education into the curriculum.

### **2.8.2 Nutrition**

The first of the MDGs aims at eradicating extreme poverty, malnutrition and hunger by 2015. Nutrition in economic capital development terms relates to ensuring that the nutrition and economic production activities are mutually positively related. In human capital development terms nutrition relates essentially to the areas of health and education. The nutrition components within education are many but should include the school as a place to deliver nutritional services as part of an integrated school health and nutrition package. The school is also a place where students acquire sound nutritional knowledge in preparation for adult life - the nutrition component of the school curriculum should be nutritionally sound.

An understanding and awareness of the heavy burden of malnutrition and disease among school age children is growing. Until recently there have been relatively few large-scale surveys that document levels of morbidity in any detail. While a better picture of the health and nutrition status of school age children is being built the true extent of the burden of ill health and malnutrition is not fully known<sup>3</sup>.

The main nutritional problems facing school age children include stunting, underweight, anaemia, iron and vitamin A deficiency. Studies show that these may limit a child's cognitive development and their ability to participate fully in schooling. Deficiencies in cognition often occur with poverty and are associated with chronic malnutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, infections and lack of stimulation. Establishing causality is difficult as many factors occur together and often interact.

**Nutrition impacts on education.**  
An in-depth study of 2998 children aged 8-9 and 12-13 years in Ghana and Tanzania revealed that 77% of children in Tanzania and 41% of children in Ghana were suffering from IDA (Partnership for Child Development (1999a)'The Health and Nutritional Status of School Children in Africa Evidence from School Based Health Programmes in Ghana and Tanzania' - Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene 92, 254-261).

In addition lower test scores were related to later enrolment, increased absenteeism and repetition of school years among stunted children. The relationship between short stature and late enrolment has established for children in Ghana and Tanzania with short stature (height for age z score) being strongly associated with late enrolment<sup>4</sup> Recent studies in school age children have found very high levels of goitre and iodine deficiency. In studies comparing children living in iodine deficient areas with those living in iodine sufficient areas the iodine deficient children were found to have lower IQs, poorer cognitive and motor functions and low school achievement<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The Partnership for Child Development, the American Journal for Clinical Nutrition, the American Society for Nutritional Sciences, Journal of Nutrition, Transactions of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene; Annals of Tropical Paediatrics, to name just a few and numerous other research institutions and individuals, have greatly contributed to this understanding through making the relevant data available. It is now established and recognised that nutrition is a development issue and that malnutrition in children can affect their intellectual growth and development. It is also well documented that malnutrition in women causes an intergenerational vicious cycle. Good nutritional status of the mother is important as an under-nourished mother will give birth to a low birth weight infant-in turn associated with morbidity and impaired immune function.

<sup>4</sup> (Partnership for Child Development (1999b) 'Short Stature and Age of Enrolment in Primary School. Studies in Two African Countries'. Social Science and Medicine 48, 675-682)

<sup>5</sup> (Grantham-Mcgregor S, Ani C (2001) 'A Review of Studies on the Effect of Iron Deficiency on Cognitive Development in Children.' American Society for Nutritional Sciences, Journal of Nutrition 131: 649S-668S).

In addition to the problems associated with malnutrition in school age children there is also evidence of negative consequences for children suffering from short-term hunger, common in children who are not fed before going to school.

The school curriculum offers courses in foods and nutrition and the health packages also offer courses in balanced meals and diets. Foods and nutrition is however generally regarded as a girl's subject and the types of menus thought are normally not suitable for local consumption so students do not generally apply the knowledge and skills learnt outside the school.

National Nutrition Agencies have been established in most countries to address nutrition related problems and to mainstream nutrition into national development.

The West African Health Organisation organises Annual ECOWAS Nutrition Forum. The 7th was held in The Gambia from the 2nd-6th September 2002 to address the situation of nutrition in ECOWAS countries. The theme for 2002 'Nutrition the Key to Sustainable Development ' brought nutrition to the centre of the development agenda and has made it an indicator of social progress that can impact on national wealth and the gross domestic product.

#### **'Fresh' responses**

The FRESH (Focussing Resources on Effective School Health) Partnership focuses on an essential component of the 'health promoting schools' initiative of WHO, the school Feeding Programme of WFP and the global efforts of UNICEF, UNESCO and the World Bank to make schools effective as well as healthy safe and hygienic. FRESH promotes a core group of 4 simple and familiar interventions that captures the best practices from programme experience in i) Nutrition and Health Related Policies; ii) Provision of safe water and sanitation; iii) Skills based nutrition and health education and iv) School based health and nutrition services.

### **Civil Society Contributions**

In Burkina Faso in 1998 a new concept of school canteens "Endogenous" or village school canteens were introduced. They substitute the humanitarian support given by donor agencies by village production or contributions. They are self-managed and autonomous. Village committees provide foods (cereals, beans and fat). Some also run a school garden. This subsystem is currently composed of a well-organised network covering 528 primary schools with 41216 pupils.

Another example is the Baby Friendly Communities Initiative of The Gambia. The initiative promotes maternal and child nutrition, supplementary foods, environmental and personal sanitation and hygiene. The programme is community based and is run on the spirit of community participation with both men and women participating. The communities themselves form the groups as they have better knowledge of the traditional groupings. The group members themselves carry out information dissemination through religious sermons, songs, dance, and theatre or through interpersonal communications. Monitoring and evaluation of the programmes is also done by the communities themselves

A number of NGOs are into food production, preservation and supplementation activities. One such NGO is the Alternative Action of African Development (AGADA) in Senegal, which looks for alternative solutions to development problems rather than those based on Aid or the importation of foreign goods. In its attempts to fight hunger and malnutrition the Organisation in collaboration with the Church World Services are promoting the Moringa Oilifera Tree (known as 'Never Die' in some countries) dubbed 'The Miracle Tree' which grows in Africa, India and Central America. The Moringa Tree has vitamins and minerals vital for nutrition and has other properties that purify water making it safe for drinking and cooking. All the parts of the tree can be used to provide health and well being for the family.

Parent Teachers Associations also run school farms and gardens to compliment and supplement school based school feeding programmes

### **Challenges**

There is inadequate distribution of findings related to nutrition and education - the two-way link between the nutritional status of the mother and the survival and healthy development of her children need to be better articulated and disseminated.

Investing in female nutrition through long-term comprehensive life cycle based programmes to break the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition must be given greater attention.

Improving the health and learning of school children through school based health and nutrition programmes and environmental sanitation programmes

Rapid response to countries faced by food crisis and sensitivity to the specific food needs of the country

The international response is far from acceptable. While the politics of food aid rages on and the politicians bicker, the poor suffer and the attainment of educational goals continues to elude us.

### **2.8.3 Poverty**

Slow economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa has meant increases in poverty and the number of people living on less than one dollar a day. Poverty is pervasive and affects the majority of the populations in most countries. In The Gambia according to the 1998 Poverty Survey overall poverty stands at 69%. A significant proportion of households (37%) and 51% of individuals are extremely poor. For poverty in Senegal a 1999 Livelihood Survey indicated that 57.9% of households are below the overall poverty line and in Guinea Bissau 88% of the population are poor. Even in so called 'rich' countries like Nigeria, about 70% of the population lives on less than US\$1 per day.

Poverty manifests itself in several ways and has wide-ranging effects on people. It is a multidimensional phenomenon that denies people their basic rights to food, shelter, clothing, and social services for their survival and development.

It is about exclusion and deprivation and voicelessness and powerlessness.

#### **PRSPs - the right medicine?**

A review done by the World Development Movement indicate that up to a year ago only 4 countries (Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Guinea and Niger) had completed their PRSPs and 10 had developed interim PRSPs. Consultations with NGOs and CSO indicate that they perceived them as similar to the Structural Adjustment Processes, which failed to reduce poverty in the past. The review noted a remarkable similarity across all PRSPs almost as if they had been following a blue print. In the area of macro-economic policy there is a consistent adherence to neo-liberal market tenets and an emphasis on extensive privatisation and liberalization. Despite commitments to increased social sector spending there is a continued reliance on user charges in some countries and this risk compromising poor people's access to basic services. The PRSPs are silent on the issue of rights and do not address issues such as land tenure and labour laws (Marshall A and Woodroffe J (2001) 'Policies to Rollback the State and Privatise?' World Development Movement New York)

The first MDG aims to eradicate poverty and hunger as the two are inextricably intertwined. The elaboration of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) were to serve as the framework for development assistance beyond the operations of the IMF/WB and will form the channel of funds from the UN and bilateral agencies to achieve these goals by 2015. PRSPs were to be developed on a fully participatory basis and on completion and approval the country would qualify for debt relief. However, experiences of PRS processes and earlier Structural Adjustment Programmes is that they have had an adverse effect on poverty and impacted therefore adversely in citizens gaining access to education.

With the majority of the poor people living in rural areas and deriving their livelihoods from agriculture, increasing their productivity should be a major focus of poverty reduction strategies. Food is often one of the central commodities used in the creation of economic capital, thus - a main area of concern should be food security, food safety, marketing, labelling all of which need to be regulated by the state. Yet this is an area which is left to free market forces.

The Education Sector Reviews indicate that education expenditure is skewed in favour of rich. In The Gambia Children from the poorest quintiles have the largest share of the school age population (29%) at the basic level yet they have the lowest subsidy per capita compared with subsidies of nearly two fold for household from the richest quintiles.

## **Contributions of civil society**

Many CSOs and NGOs are committed to fighting poverty. CSOs and NGOs are involved in implementing service delivery to poor communities in health, education and income generating activities. Pro poor Groups play both an advocacy and monitoring role in budget tracking and analysis as is the case with the Uganda Debt Network and the ProPAG (Pro poor Advocacy Group) in The Gambia

CSOs are involved in community empowerment to address root causes of poverty through human rights and gender training programmes, access to loans and income generating activities and giving a "voice to the voiceless" in participatory interactive multi-media packages.

## **Challenges**

The following are major challenges to alleviating poverty – addressing issues of child labour to earn a living causes absenteeism and drop-out in schools; sexual harassment and abuse of the rights of women; the impact of HIV/AIDS; poor nutrition and debt and a poor articulation of debt-relief programmes to addressing the root causes of poverty; organisational responses, especially among civil society and development actors are more inclined to service delivery with limited advocacy activities centring the fight against poverty at a rights and justice level (especially as the rights based approach is seen a double edged sword that empowers people and communities on the one hand but threatens the power base of rulers on the other); the removal of agricultural subsidies resulting in high cost of agricultural inputs on the one hand while the international community allows cheap food imports threatening the livelihoods of farmers and local food production systems; poor food preservation and processing capacity and inappropriate technologies that continue to limit productivity.

Others are unsuitable school calendars that do not meet the learning needs of farm children; the development of suitable learning packages that apply to farm based learning and production activities

### **2.8.4 Conflict**

It is unfortunate that out of 53 African countries no less than 17 have been confronted with wars and civil conflicts during the last decade. This has had an impact not only on the countries in conflict but has affected neighbouring countries that have to take the onslaught of refugees and internally displaced persons – themselves not recognised under international statutes or by UNHCR. The effect of this on education in the country of origin and the host country can be devastating and can put all efforts to achieve the goals of Dakar into a quandary. The major causes of wars can be cited as: lack of natural economic resources; high level corruption, power struggle, boarder conflicts, abuse of power, illiteracy, cultural beliefs, poor leadership and bad government policies.

Attempts have been made after the Dakar summit in 2000 – some governments have attempted to reconstruct the educational systems at the end of the emergencies to heal the effects of the crisis and remove the roots of conflicts; the international community has given funds to support initiatives to handle the emergencies; support has come from other governments by hosting refugees and giving relief in time of emergencies; and some renowned government leaders have played mediation roles to resolve conflicts; communities have recruited and supervised teachers; local languages have been used as a media of instruction; host governments and humanitarian organisations strive to ensure the survival of the displaced persons and the right to education for children, youth and adults.

Aware of the devastating effects of war and its long term effects on both economic and human development, several initiatives have been set up that promote a culture of peace and development. The 'Health for Peace Initiative' is jointly implemented by The Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Senegal. An 'Early Warning Observatory' has been set up in The Gambia to monitor potential threats to peace in Cape Verde, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Senegal. NEPAD has a Peace and Security Component as part of the Initiative. The African Union at the Lusaka Summit indicated its intention to take drastic measures to revive the organs responsible for conflict prevention and resolution.

Within the school level the UNESCO Clubs promote a culture of peace and more recently peace education has been integrated into the formal school curriculum. Education is also viewed as the fourth pillar of humanitarian response in conflict situations. The "Education in Situations of Emergency and Crisis' Flagship Programme to meet the needs of education systems affected by conflict, natural disasters and instability is in place. The Inter Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) consisting of UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, CARE and the Norwegian Refugee Council is the interagency vehicle for the Flagship Programme. It provides assistance to agencies involved in crisis-affected countries, and is working to develop sharable generic learning materials as well as policy guidelines and standards.

### **Civil Society Contributions**

Local and international NGOs provide social services including schools to refugees in camps. CSOs and NGOs are also working with rehabilitation activities with child soldiers and former combatants. In Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Burundi and Ghana, ActionAid has programmes aimed at reintegrating child-soldiers and conflict victims into mainstream education. Shepherd Schools initiatives and the use of REFLECT for rebuilding local peace and acting as conflict-prevention mechanisms are further examples from ActionAid. CSOs and NGOs are in advocacy for good governance to maintain a peaceful operating environment

### **Challenges**

The impact of war and conflict on educational progress is very grave – creating a flow of displaced persons and the refugees who are denied access to educational opportunities. There is increased absenteeism from schools by pupils and teachers, destruction of educational infrastructure; additional resource allocation for restoration and reconstruction, increased loss of life and disabilities in children, with high dropout rate in schools. Governments need to support post-conflict work of Civil Society for greater impact.

#### **2.8.5 Civil Society and The Policy Environment**

One of the distinctive features of the Dakar framework is the mandate to include civil society in the policy formulation and planning process. This is significant because it acknowledges the distinctive competencies of civil society in the process of policy formulation as well as the positive role that citizen participation, at all levels, plays in building ownership of the education processes which are set out in Dakar.

At national level, this should be articulated through the process of formation of national EFA forums and the integration of active, representative civil society within that process.

There has been mixed success in the process. Countries like Malawi, The Gambia and Nigeria, Zambia and Tanzania have set processes in motion, which have involved civil society in planning. Other countries are yet to integrate civil society into the national planning processes.

A critical review of those countries where civil society has been involved reveals that there has been much to gain. Civil society has helped to input sharp and critical perspectives, both on the local, national and international level, into the planning process – introducing more participation (as opposed to consultation) and ensuring that the international dimensions of the policy context is fully understood by policy makers. Examples of this work include the involvement of the national coalition in Nigeria in the Education Sector Analysis (ESA) and the Education Management Information System (EMIS) development.

The need to make policy dialogue 'accessible' to its users is a critical challenge. Often couched in highly technical terms, the debates and process is seen to be that of experts and specialists. The role and place of communities in managing their own schools and environments is relegated to the background.

With education shrouded in mysterious technical language, capacity to engage is often an issue. For example, in countries like Tanzania where the processes have been devolved, the capacity of often-illiterate communities to manage local schools is being questioned. Quite aside from the challenge of

providing capacity to these communities, there is the issue of the indivisibility of the Dakar goals. To achieve local participation in schools management, not only must we invest in schools but also in adult literacy programmes. It is not possible to provide functional relevant education unless it has quality. If our democracies and economies are to become more self-reliant, we must have a capable and ready citizenry NOW – tomorrow will be too late for the next generation and we have already lost one generation!!!

A closer look at the national macro-environment shows that there is still a lack of political will to involve civil society. Participation is characterized by late involvement, a consultation approach, and a reluctance to open up space for dialogue on new and innovative ways of doing things. A 'tick box' mentality still pervades the policy environment where emphasis is placed more on ensuring that civil society 'attends' rather than being focused on taking the perspectives coming from the sector on board.

All processes will, to some extent legitimately, claim to have involved SOME actors from civil society. The process has looked only very cursorily at the constituency of these actors and the true representativeness of their perspectives. The importance of this point is even more critical when one realizes the challenge of ensuring that the views of grassroots organizations and poor people are integrated into processes which are often abstracted to very high levels and where 'business' is transacted in highly technical and inaccessible 'language'.

At an international level, the policy space is at best confused. The myriads of agendas and documents have created a maze, which is, the authors contend, aimed at 'losing' contributors. The international policy environment is also characterized by 'double speak' from donors and northern governments who, on the one hand, profess commitment to the process of ensuring EFA targets, while on the other, move with deadly efficiency to create a kaleidoscope of conflicting and often contradictory policy frameworks which make it impossible to 'comply'.

The first evidence of this is in the process of moving forward from Dakar. Barely six months after Dakar, the international community committed itself more broadly to eight goals at the Millennium Development Conference. While it is true that all the millennium goals are relevant, the effect of that was to reduce, in one single stroke, international action around EFA to two very simple and 'output' based targets – achieving UPE and gender equity. This is evidenced in the premise and starting points of the only two clear financing initiatives to emerge since Dakar – the World Bank led Fast Track Initiative and the British Government funded Commonwealth Education Fund. These goals, while laudable, tend to address the numbers dimension of the education crisis in sub-Saharan Africa. In the absence of a wider socio-economic climate of stability, the gains of new enrolments and greater gender equity will not be sustained over time. In some ways, achieving these targets will sweep the larger issues of the relevance of the education for livelihoods, as well as the bigger issues of quality, life skills and the needs of adults under the carpet.

As if this were not enough, the simple language of Dakar - which emphasized the production of well thought-out and clear national education plans – has been complicated with new and additional requirements around sector-wide planning, integration of these into macro-economic contexts and the PRSP as well. This creates additional confusion as both governments and civil society at national level constantly juggle with new requirements (and the need to rapidly absorb new capacities) to keep track of what is required.

An analysis of what is required in these processes leaves a greater sense of trepidation than hope. At the heart of these requirements are a globalisation process, which seeks, both directly and through the less transparent processes peddled through the WTO, World Bank and IMF to create a free market in which goods and services flow with ease. The processes require southern governments to increasingly open up all aspects of their economies, societies and cultures to global influences. These laudable goals of a 'global village' do not contend with or offer strategies for dealing with the uneven playing field nor, more pointedly, do they recognize the disjuncture of policy requirements in the south with policy practice in the north. For example, an examination of how subsidies in the European Union and the United States influence the capacity of poor farmers in The Gambia, Malawi, Nigeria and Tanzania to produce enough food to generate incomes to support their children in schools will reveal that nationalist and protectionist

policies in developed countries have an immediate and direct impact on poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. When poverty bites hard at the over 60% of sub-Saharan African's poor, education is one of the first things that drops off the agenda as poor families turn to the more basic survival issues of food security.

This policy landscape creates huge challenges for African governments, faced on the one hand with growing poverty and dwindling resources (in all but a very few cases) and meeting the demands of donors and northern governments, on the other. The vision of a new partnership in Africa, articulated through NEPAD, has not helped to create a clearer path to development through education.

### **2.8.6 NEPAD**

The New Partnership for the Development of Africa – is a pledge by African Leaders to lift the continent out of the desperate poverty and backwardness. It is a pledge centered around the necessity to ensure that it is owned and managed by Africans.

#### **Whose benefit?**

The UNCTAD Report on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), which although welcoming and endorsing the PRSP process, largely disagrees with its policies and adoption in the LDCs. The Report points to 3 key problems that threaten the successful implementation of the PRSPs. The first is the incomplete transition from donor driven policies and programmes to national ownership and policy autonomy. The second relates to the policy content of the PRSPs which seek to integrate pro-poor public expenditure patterns with deeper and broader structural reforms and macro-economic policies adopted in earlier structural programmes that had failed. The third problem is that of resource constraints as the amount of funds available for the PRSPs are not enough to make a difference.

The long-term vision of NEPAD is a programme focused on six priority areas: infrastructure, human resources, agriculture, environment, culture, science and technology. The six areas are supported by initiatives for peace, security, and good government; for economic and business management; in favour of capital flow; and for access to markets

### **Contributions by civil society**

The key flaw with NEPAD has been that it is the brainchild of a few. There is hardly enough information about NEPAD and participation in the process of producing Africa's master plan for recovery has been deplorable.

Civil society has been at the forefront of calling for greater openness and participation in the NEPAD process in order to ensure its relevance in meeting the aspirations of the millions of Africans it purports to serve – especially poor people. As the process unfolds, this remains a critical area for civil society engagement.

### **Challenges**

While acknowledging the importance of NEPAD's programme focus, one notices the loud absence of Education, which is articulated in many other ways as the basis for success. There is great need to highlight and give Education the proper place it deserves, as well as to integrate NEPAD and EFA.

### **2.8.7 Financing EFA**

The Dakar Framework recognizes that in order to achieve the ambitious but urgent goal of Education for All, investment of large amounts of new resources will be required. The Framework states that a significant proportion of funding must come from the individual countries themselves through, for example, re-allocation and adoption of cost-effective measures to reach EFA goals. However, the Framework points out that most countries will need considerable additional resources from outside help.

The Dakar Framework calls for such outside assistance on a systematic basis. Specifically, it states, 'The international community will launch a global initiative aimed at developing the strategies and mobilising the resources needed to provide effective support to national efforts' (para.11). It also goes on to declare, ' We affirm that no countries seriously committed to education for all will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by lack of resources' (para. 10).

Given the strategic importance of initiatives at the national level, the national plan was considered to be the central organising basis for the financing of EFA at the national level. National plans are viewed as a national commitment on behalf of the government, NGOs and donors to the promotion of EFA.

**Who pays for education in Nigeria?**

Constitutionally, primary education is a responsibility of the state and their local governments. It is managed through the state primary education board (SPEB), which receives funds mainly from the local governments and from the state governments.

Overall around 86% of the funds for primary education are derived from the local governments allocation from the Federation accounts. Most of this is for teacher's salaries. Only very small amounts are provided by the Federal Government and state Government contributions, which are around 10% - 12% (source Federal Government expenditure shares by the level of education 1996 - 2000)

The Dakar Framework specified six strategies for promotion of the Global Initiative (GI) as the basis for financing education – through increasing external finance for basic education; ensuring greater predictability in the flow of external assistance; providing debt relief and/or cancellation for poverty reduction and basic education; facilitating more effective donor co-ordination; strengthening sector-wide approaches; and monitoring progress towards the goals and targets of EFA

At the international level, the assessment shows that the global initiative is still a virtual initiative since Dakar and that the international community seems to have forgotten this

commitment. The High Level group meeting held in Paris in September 2001 had no impact on international financing policies on EFA and there are no clear indications that Abuja (2002) will be any different. UNESCO is losing more and more leadership in the implementation of the Global Initiative and giving more and more space to the World Bank through the 'Fast Track Initiative'. This situation is based more on normative approach than on dialogue and participation with governments and civil society.

In the emerging new bilateralism, fuelled by the tragic and unacceptable events of September 11, 2001 which have left international cooperation and concerted efforts in near tatters, it is noteworthy to acknowledge some positive sparks of some new financing initiatives for EFA – such as the World Bank Fast Track Programme (FTP). It is appreciated that the FTP is a fairly large initiative, which will directly finance government efforts to achieve the universal primary education and gender goals of EFA by 2015 and 2005, respectively. Being multilateral in nature, it can only be hoped that the FTP will provide the critical vehicle for donors to coordinate their efforts, as promised in Dakar. The initiative also ties donors to a relatively objective, quantifiable, transparent set of criteria and procedures agreed to ahead of time. The FTP is also potentially accessible to any country seriously committed to EFA and would commit donors to guaranteeing a long term and predictable flow of funds – dependent on good progress based on well defined quality oriented indicators agreed to, upfront, between donors and governments. The FTP would guarantee donors meeting the full remaining costs once governments make their revenue contributions to help achieve free and universal education. On the other hand, the World Bank Fast Track Programme needs to bring on board, more international partners with enough resources. The African civil society also wants to see an FTP which mobilizes donor support for all six EFA goals and which is flexible enough to allow governments to set their own goals for education reform in dialogue with civil society.

At the national level, it is interesting to note that barely a month left for governments to give updates on status of post EFA compliance on National EFA action plans, very few countries are ready. The few existing drafts of National EFA Action Plans have mostly been formulated without the participation of civil society; what the governments usually understand by participation has been 2 or 3 days workshops with few national and international NGOs, at short notice. This denies NGO/CSO representatives time to consult widely among themselves.

The national governments have not devoted sufficient national budgets to meet EFA goals and transparent mechanisms that allow citizens at all levels to understand where and how resources are being spent, are not in place. Our assessment is that most governments will need to double investment in education if we are to come anywhere near achieving the goals of Dakar.

Governments lack assessment systems to measure progress and ensure accountability for results. The reticence of most of the technical and financial partners to support the process, the governments' lack of

commitment and the poor institutional capacity at the national level are the main reasons of bottleneck on financing EFA

The national budget allocated to basic education is normally lower than what is allocated for the tertiary education. There's a need to reverse the trend. National Governments need to be more creative in finding ways to expand or strengthen the Education budget. One such approach is to offer tax waivers on education materials imported from outside of their countries, and to encourage local production of such materials.

### **2.8.8 Secondary Education**

Secondary education is creating concern among most African countries. Too many young people are being denied opportunities to go beyond basic education. Civil Society Organisations hardly contribute to Secondary education. A country can hardly develop without putting its secondary education system in order.

Many challenges remain in the development of this education sector. Data is hard to come by; not much investment is being made to expand the sector; there are teacher shortages, particularly for science and mathematics subjects; there is need to create linkages between basic, secondary and tertiary education, and to involve civil society.

There is need also to create different paths, for students, within the secondary education system to meet the needs of both those academic and technically oriented.

### **2.8.9 Investing in Higher Education**

There is no doubt that Higher Education is an important component of an overall education strategy that will enable Africa compete effectively in the context of globalisation. Clearly, a strategy that is innovative, flexible and sensitive to the needs and aspirations of poor Africans to attain higher education is a central plank in achieving EFA. Of equal importance is the effective development of appropriate and relevant tertiary education opportunities, which ensure a pool of appropriately qualified and motivated teachers.

Past records across the continent, however, show that a disproportionate percentage of investment has been in higher education. While investment must certainly be maintained, the challenge is to increase the proportion available at basic education level in order to ensure both a steady supply of quality entrants to a higher education system as well as increasing the chances of poor children (without the benefits of access to quality private basic education) of accessing higher education opportunities.

# Section Three: Monitoring, Conclusions and Recommendations

## 3.1 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Since Dakar 2000, Civil Society has consistently followed up action towards the Dakar Framework for Action. This it has done through advocacy and lobbying national governments on the need to address EFA goals; it has sensitised the public on EFA issues during Global Action Weeks and other forums; it has insisted (where this is not in place) on the establishment of National EFA forums and development of National Action Plans.

Challenges lie in lack of shared understanding, between national governments and CSOs, of what the monitoring indicators are, and the involvement of civil society and communities in monitoring and evaluation processes.

There are no clear mechanisms for monitoring the process. At international level, there remains much work to be done to put adequate systems and approaches in place, in spite of UNESCO's efforts. At continental African level, nothing is in place to build on the commitment of African governments to deliver EFA. MINEDAF is irregular and has no teeth, the African Union has no specific mandate, and NEPAD continues to lack the focus and sharpness required for driving forward the process. At national level, EFA forums are only being formed with inconsistent mandates and unclear terms of reference. The situation at local level is even worse.

We therefore call for the introduction of strong and enforceable mechanisms at international, continental and national levels to enable the monitoring of the progress towards Dakar. The picture above is an alarming one. If we are not to approach 2015 with a sense of broken promises and unrealised dreams, a heavy emphasis on this must be placed now.

## 3.2 SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The preliminary analysis of the EFA by CSOs indicates that the situation is a daunting one. The likelihood of achieving the goals for 2015 seems very remote. While it might be possible to achieve the quantitative targets for UPE, the qualitative targets are much more difficult to achieve. Quality education encompasses not only teaching and learning but also the development of the physical, social, emotional, moral and spiritual aspects. It addresses gender equity and equality and nutrition and demands that schools are zones of safety for children - that is a place where they can find safe water and sanitation facilities, well informed and skilled educators, a respectful and friendly environment free from violence, sexual abuse and harassment, and an educated and knowledgeable body of parents and adults in the home environment.

This requires community involvement in the management of education and proper systems of monitoring. Achieving all of this within 13 years is a Herculean task- challenging but not impossible and calling for deep reservoirs of commitment, political will, dynamism and innovativeness.

Special needs education is confined to the needs of disabled children that can be integrated into normal schools but the needs of children who require specialist care are not mentioned. In countries with high populations of children with disabilities, EFA is but a dream, as they will continue to be marginalized.

Teacher shortages continue to threaten the achievement of EFA. Unless large numbers of teachers, including female teachers, are employed soon and properly motivated and compensated then efforts will be seriously thwarted. Innovative ways of training teachers need to be institutionalised such as distance learning packages or educational broadcasting for the teacher training institutions would not be able to train the required number of teachers within the given time-frame.

De-linked policies especially ECD and adult education deprive both sectors of the synergy that would be mutually strengthening and enhancing. The use of the official languages rather than national and mother-tongue languages constrain parents and communities from effectively participating in the teaching and learning activities of their children.

The hydra headed monster of 'poverty' is a threat to the EFA not only in terms of access but also in learning outcomes. The inter-generational transmission of poverty is insidious and persistent. While national Governments and their partners strive to improve their economies, they are pulled back by fast growing populations of poor people. Poverty is synonymous with food insecurity and this has an impact on enrolments and school achievement. Poor people tend to keep their children at home as they need them to contribute to household livelihoods thus perpetuating child labour.

The effect of HIV/AIDS not only on the infected but also on the affected can be enormous. Children may suffer physically, socially and psychologically through the death or illness of one or both parents and close friends and relatives. One of the greatest impacts on HIV/AIDS will be as result of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS. Orphans are among the most vulnerable members of society. They run a greater risk of suffering from malnutrition and of being denied access to school.

**The 'new' poor in Africa**  
A study in East and Southern Africa found that when a family member had AIDS, food consumption dropped by 41% and family income by 52%-67% and expenditure on health care for AIDS related illness quadrupled (UNICEF/UNAIDS (1999) 'Children Orphaned by Aids Front Line Responses from Eastern and Southern Africa' UNAIDS Geneva

### **3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Top Priority Recommendations to MINEDAF VIII**

1. African Governments must recognise the crisis in education and recommit themselves to investing appropriately in education. For most governments, this implies a radical shifting of education to the top of the agenda and at least a doubling of resources dedicated to education delivery from 2003 onwards until 2015.
2. The benefits of genuine partnership in the fight to achieve EFA are undeniable. Given the poor record of African governments, civil society makes a renewed call for governments to institute genuine partnerships with Civil Society. Towards this end, all African governments should institute participatory EFA Forums for the development of inclusive, holistic EFA plans and frameworks for implementation, monitoring and evaluation by the end of 2002.
3. In our fight to ensure sustainable gains in EFA, we must look to how our democracies are sustained today as well as in the future. Investment in education must be on the principle of the indivisibility of EFA goals – which calls for appropriate and equitable investment in all six goals.
4. Governments must place emphasis on strategies that will enhance Gender equity and address the impacts of poverty, HIV/AIDS and conflict in a sustainable manner.
5. Northern governments and donors must be held accountable to their promises in Dakar. Support for education must be clear and readily available, free from the myriad of conditionalities, and supportive in assisting Africa address the monumental problems of achieving EFA. We specifically call for the increased acceleration of existing programmes and an expansion of support to all African countries during 2003.
6. In the absence of clear monitoring and follow-up mechanisms at national and African levels, MINEDAF must develop a clear plan of action and follow-up mechanisms, which will help us to ensure the achievement of the Dakar dream. The role of civil society should be clearly spelt out in such mechanisms.

## **More broadly, the analysis offers the following wider recommendations**

### **The Dakar Framework for Action**

**Governments** must commit themselves politically to the achievement of the EFA goals, while acknowledging the achievements and contributions of civil society by allowing their full participation in the entire process from policy formulation to monitoring and evaluation, and develop clear and participatory plans with great urgency.

**International Development Partners** must make good the promises made at Dakar without further delay and without shifting the goal post back and forth. There must be support implementation of EFA in a decentralized but coordinated manner and not on a piecemeal basis. What happens in early childhood impacts on what happens in the primary school and what happens in adult education also impacts on the other two sub-sectors.

**Civil Society** must continue to establish and maintain credible EFA networks, pushing for space and participation in analysis and policy assessment, conducting studies on certain educational aspects with a view to influencing policy, monitoring implementation of EFA and ensure that indicators and targets are being met, while developing effective communications strategies for sensitisation and advocacy purposes and mobilizing resources at the local and international levels to maintain and sustain programmes

### **Early Childhood Development:**

**Governments** must recognise the input /contribution of civil society groups and NGOs as equal partners in development and provide them with the necessary assistance to deliver on ECCE and ECCD issues. In order to ensure the targets of 2015 are met, they should demonstrate their political will and commitment to ECD for all citizens by providing the necessary legal framework with policies and other instruments that promote integrative and inclusive approaches to ECCE in each country. Capacity building for caregivers should be put high on the agenda to ensure effective and qualitative delivery in pre-schools centres, and partnership with communities and families and development partners must be promoted for effective support for ECCE programmes

Further more, teacher training in pre-school skills and the design of appropriate and relevant pre-school curriculum is essential to promote stimulating learning experiences and activities. An emphasis must be placed on implementing policies on mother tongue education. There must be defined early childhood indicators and provide the measurement instruments that can be modified for specific context

**International Development Partners** should assist developing countries in strengthening their capacities for high level training and research through joint programmes geared towards reinforcing and creating policy, training and research activities in the area of ECD. This would include support for building the capacity of CSOs working in ECD through technical assistance and training as well as through the promotion and support of national, international and regional networks and cooperative ventures designed to increase the learning capacities of very young children and improve the skills of families and communities.

**Civil Society** must increasingly advocate for government expenditure in support of ECD programmes and advocate for the institutionalisation of ECD into teacher training programmes. Civil society must strengthen partnership with Government in all issues concerning ECD, promote the production of play and educational ECD materials at the local level, develop strong ECD community relationships and support the development of holistic approaches to child development that cater for the intellectual, physical, emotional, spiritual, moral, nutritional and health needs of the child

### **Achieving Universal Primary Education**

**Governments** must make a clear commitment to re-prioritising and freeing up the huge resources necessary to achieve this goal. Proper planning and a phased approach to reaching targets, which assure

quality, prioritise retention and completion as well as transition must be developed as a matter of urgency.

African governments need to deal with the challenges of teacher remuneration and motivation including involving teachers in decision-making; develop better pre and in-service training; and to prepare teachers for changing roles, new approaches and new technologies to meet the challenge of relevance in a global context.

International Development partners must support the process with funding and technical support. Civil society calls on the international community to honour its resource promise through a Global Initiative. Specifically, we call for a strong and rapid assistance package that has minimum conditionalities which supports countries in achieving EFA through the Fast Track Initiative.

Civil society must remain vigilant and build constructive but positive demand for the achievement of this goal.

### **Life Skills and Adult Education/ Literacy:**

Civil Society entreats **African Governments** to retrace their steps in order to validate the absolute importance of literacy and adult education to raising the quality and quantum of development in their countries. Assessing lifelong education for all in Africa, MINEDAF VII, held in Durban, South Africa in April 1998, acknowledged the role of adult education in enabling human beings to meet this personal needs and contribute to the development of their immediate environment. Emphasis should be on practical aspects of literacy approaches, which empower learners to be active participants in the development process.

Governments must demonstrate political will for life skills and adult learning through the institution of national participatory developments to definite policies, institute curriculum development and reform, initiate participative development of qualitative indicators for effective programmes identification, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The mid-term review of the Jomtien Conference in Amman, in 1996, articulated the positive correlation between children's success and the parents' level of education and literacy. Governments should also address post-literacy that enables sustained livelihoods and lifelong learning and try to inspire indigenous writers to encourage and develop a culture of reading. Non-examinable areas should be emphasised because they contain a lot of life skills.

There is need also for programme designers and implementers to understand the definition of life skills; and, to develop indicators and monitoring and evaluation tools to measure success and the impact of training programmes.

**International Development Partners** should assist through the support for action plans, which balance formal and non-formal Education and support an equitable resource distribution between the six Dakar goals.

**Civil Society** must accentuate sensitisation of communities on importance of education as a human right and pre requisite to development, expand capacity building of institutions in relevant areas of need in order to meet the challenges to manage youth skills and adult education programmes professionally as well as advocate and lobby for participatory development and establishment (where they do not exist) of official policy, curriculum and its reform.

### **Promoting Gender Equity in enrolment and completion**

With 2005 looming large, governments must act decisively if this goal is to be achieved through a range of initiatives such as affirmative action programmes (flexible learning, scholarship schemes and so forth), implementing the outcomes of studies in order that both long-term and short-term barriers to girl's access are removed, provision of child-friendly (and particularly girl-friendly) school environments. In addition, a

balanced approach that seeks to focus on adult literacy as a mechanism for enhancing and sustaining girl's participation through the removal of socio-cultural barriers must be promoted. Legislation and action on harmful social-cultural practices should be effected. Close cooperation must be developed and maintained between households, communities, local and central government to promote gender sensitive socialization processes and practices and to bring about changes in the status of women and girls in society.

## **Quality Education for all**

### **❖ Recommendations for Governments**

National education plans need to be simple, with strong analysis identifying a limited number of genuine priorities and outlining strategies to deliver and finance these. It is essential for governments to bring together all education partners within the planning process to agree which quality interventions are possible and appropriate priorities for a country.

These are our suggestions for objectives that are likely to strengthen any national education plan.

1. Ensure that every classroom has a trained teacher who turns up every day to teach.
2. Ensure that every classroom is well supplied with books and learning materials.
3. Agree a national maximum ratio of teachers to pupils in the classroom.
4. Support teachers to broaden their teaching approaches.
5. Support local officials to make education more responsive to local needs and to the needs of marginalized groups of children.
6. Put communities and children at the heart of processes to monitor the effectiveness of education.
7. Make schools safe and ensure they are seen to be safe.
8. Include issues of citizenship, values, tolerance and life-skills in the curriculum.
9. Ensure that children are taught in a language they understand.
10. Support appropriate, good quality early years provision.

### **❖ Recommendations for International Development Partners**

1. Quality improvements should become a top priority in aid allocation decisions. Donor financing priorities need to demonstrate that commitment to quality reaches beyond the pages of international documents. Donors have sometimes given mixed messages on what kinds of education strategy will be rewarded with new resources, adding to pressure on governments for very rapid enrolment increases with no attention to the associated deterioration in quality.
2. More effective aid makes for more effective education systems. Despite growing commitment, at least in rhetoric, to "country ownership", too many donors still succumb to the temptation to superimpose their own priorities, initiatives and projects on top of national plans in the name of improving quality. The proliferation of parallel and sometimes competing donor initiatives, together with the failure to deliver predictable and coordinated budgetary support for agreed plans, plays a significant part in the policy incoherence and implementation failure that plagues struggling education systems. Reform of donor technical assistance strategies, and an end to tied aid, would also significantly increase the impact of aid on quality improvement.
3. Financing gaps and recurrent cost. Quality improvements costs money, but there are high returns on this investment. National education plans need to identify financing gaps that must be filled to deliver priorities for improving quality, and donors must meet their pledge to fill these finance gaps.

4. Donors' responsibilities in countries emerging from conflict. Children's right to a quality education was guaranteed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and reaffirmed in the Dakar Framework for Action. Donors cannot ignore their responsibility for securing this right in situations where national capacity is very limited, such as in post-conflict contexts.
5. Strengthening capacity to make decentralisation work. In supporting the strengthening of state capacity to deliver quality education, donors must need to move beyond technical support to central Ministry staff, and fund training to equip local government officials to take on the roles outlined in the national priorities above.

❖ **Recommendations for civil society**

1. Expand the vision of what can be achieved in a successful primary school.
2. Represent communities "and all learners" perspectives in national education planning processes. This involves providing a reality check, that central planning is responding to the diverse needs of communities, and particularly ensuring that marginalized groups' interests are represented.
3. Share learning through networks and coalitions. These alliances are essential for effective challenging of other powerful interests in national education planning processes. But they also help build consensus among civil society groups on the priority interventions to improve quality, and ensure that different innovations on improving education are built on a shared understanding of past experience.
4. Strengthen government education systems rather than develop parallel service-delivery approaches. Civil society innovations within the government system can demonstrate approaches that could be extended to benefit all children in a country.

## **HIV/AIDS**

**Governments** must treat the threat posed by HIV/AIDS seriously and provide policy on HIV/AIDS to guide action, looking at innovative ways in protecting educational institutions and learners from the effects of HIV/AIDS, and coordinate interventions. Emphasis and priority must be placed on reproductive and sexual health education programmes in regular education programmes both in and out of school, including the promotion of appropriate integration of sexual and reproductive health services including family planning, maternal health care and STI/HIV/AIDS prevention and care. The introduction of flexible schooling in areas that are worst hit by HIV/AIDS and programmes for orphans and young children affected or infected by HIV/AIDS to ensure that their educational, health and social needs are taken care of, and review existing laws and introduce stiff penalties against persons who commit crimes of a sexual nature. In addition, we must review existing employment policies and build in clauses that safeguard the interests of people infected by HIV/AIDS and develop the capacity to forecast, finance, procure and deliver good quality reliable supplies and services over the long term to all children, men and women who need them

Finally, the development and implementation of treatment programmes, including the provision of anti-retroviral therapy for teachers infected with HIV/AIDS must be a considered component of the strategy.

**International Development Partners** should continue their support for HIV/AIDS, with a focus on grant-support and not loans, the provision of technical and financial assistance to build national capacities in achieving security in reproductive health supplies as well as building momentum through the sharing of good practice.

**Civil Society** must enhance advocacy at all levels to build political commitment for priority for reproductive health supplies and services and to mobilize the financial resources needed to ensure a

consistent, adequate and appropriate supply of reproductive health products, advocate for affordable anti viral drugs as HIV/AIDS is impoverishing individuals, families and communities in countries that are already struggling with poverty, accentuate community sensitisation and awareness creation activities for HIV/AIDS prevention and care, strengthen networking to share ideas, experiences and information, and build capacity of communities for home based care of persons infected with HIV/AIDS.

Civil Society should work within national coalitions to develop communication programmes for children such as relevant reading materials on sexuality, culturally relevant but modernised approaches to behaviour and attitudes change.

## **Conflict**

**Governments** must foster a culture of peace and education and integration of children of soldiers and ex-service men and provide for the needs of the victims of wart and internally displaced persons.

**International Development Partners** should participate in brokering mechanisms and processes for countries in conflict to maintain lasting peace as well as provide material and financial support to countries hosting refugees to specifically run quality education programmes.

In addition, the international recognition of the educational needs of internally displaced persons must be given priority and addressed.

**Civil Society** can contribute through the development and support for appropriate programmes for refugees and the expansion of successful peace initiatives and programmes such as those promoted through REFLECT and peace education programmes like Shepard Schools programmes.

## **Poverty and Hunger**

**Governments** must address issues of poverty in a sustainable manner through the adoption of locally appropriate macro-economic and social frameworks, which focus on child needs, strengthen local food security safety nets and create the basis for sustained educational attainment. The appropriate reinvestment of funds released through debt-relief programmes such as HIPC and increased investment in social sectors will provide the overall basis for growth and sustained educational programmes. Governments must review and position themselves in relation to international community policies on agriculture, trade and globalisation as well as mainstream gender into national policies and programmes, institute flexible schooling for farm children with appropriate learning packages.

School Feeding Programmes throughout the world have successfully attracted children to school and retained them by offering them what they could not get elsewhere-hot food and nourishing snacks. School based feeding programmes have proven effective in encouraging enrolment, increasing attention spans and improving attendance.

**International Development Partners** must participate more positively and contribute to reviews of the policies in favour of fair trade, aid and development.

**Civil Society** must redouble efforts to work with Government and other institutions at national and international levels to influence international policies that impinge on food rights, take actions that support Government's poverty reduction programmes, participate in national forums for policy review formulation and implementation, monitor the macro-economic frameworks (including PRSPs) to ensure timely implementation and promote the acquisition of life skills for adolescents and youths

## **Financing Education**

**African Governments must commit themselves to** generating/mobilising resources locally and not being over depend on external resources – through tapping into the private sector (using such initiatives

as the Nigerian Education Tax Fund); insist on external and internal funding supporting indivisibility of EFA goals.

With wastage and corruption, Governments should put in place, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to enhance transparent budget management and tracking through the inclusion of civil society in budgeting and monitoring expenditure from local level to national level.

**International Development Partners** must deliver on their promises for the Global Initiative to fund EFA. International partners must rally round and follow on the commitments demonstrated through the World Bank Fast Track Initiative and the Commonwealth Education Fund. In addition, international funding should provide an equitable and balanced approach to all of the six EFA goals.

**Civil Society** must step up vigilance through public finance analysis and advocacy, monitoring both local expenditure and planning as well as resources from the international community coming through debt relief and other initiatives.

## **CONCLUSION**

At the conclusion of the Dakar World Education Forum participants foresaw a marked difference between what they had just attended and the Jomtien World Conference on Education. The major difference was created by their recommitment to achievement of the time-bound EFA goals and mobilisation, locally and internationally, of resources necessary to implement the Framework for Action.

Two years down the line, the world community is far from being satisfied with action taken so far towards achieving the 6 EFA goals. It is in this spirit that Civil Society decided to input the Eighth Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Member States (MINEDAF VIII) to be held in Dar Es Salaam, in December 2002.

Civil Society's contribution is its perspective on progress made in achieving the Dakar Goals. In its own assessment the picture is nothing short of being fuzzy. It is hoped that issues highlighted in the document will help bring about concrete action and put Africa's Education programme back on course.

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**ANNEX: List of Civil Society organisations involved in reviewing the draft of the document**

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|---------------------------------|---|
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