

Basic Education

Recommendations: We urge the U.S. Executive branch to take a strong leadership role at the June 2009 G8 Summit and call for action on global basic education. We request these points to be included in the G8 communiqué:

1. Commit the G8 to achieving the estimated annual \$11 billion funding level considered necessary to reach Education for All by 2015, while ensuring appropriate follow-up and monitoring in connection with new and prior commitments by G8 leaders towards education;
2. Renew the G8 commitment to the MDGs of universal primary education and gender equality at all levels of education, with increased attention to and funding prioritized for emerging and conflict-affected states, girls and marginalized populations;
3. Affirm a new G8 commitment to make education an integral part of humanitarian responses to conflict and emergencies;
4. Continue improvements in access and quality in conjunction with a country's national education plan and education planning efforts in those countries willing to develop a national education plan;
5. Urge the IMF to take social sector needs into consideration and to act as an advocate for increased investment in education when negotiating macroeconomic framework agreements; and
6. Allocate sufficient funding for adult literacy for the achievement of all the MDGs.

Problem:

Lack of access to a quality, basic education affects 75 million children around the world, 55% of whom are girls. Roughly three-quarters are in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia; and some 40 million are in conflict-affected countries or emerging states. Tens of millions more children drop out of school before the 5th grade because schools are overcrowded, unsafe, poorly equipped, poorly managed and have inadequately trained teachers. This education deficit effectively cripples the ability of these countries to participate in the global economy, build stable and democratic government systems, and protect their citizens from abuse and ill health.

We applaud President Obama's call for a significant increase in foreign assistance, including the elimination of the global funding gap in primary education by 2015. The United States, historically, has shown strong and steady leadership in allocating greater resources towards basic education, and we anticipate this U.S. leadership role will continue in the Obama Administration, given his clear commitment to provide \$2 billion dollars to support basic education development.

Challenges to achieving Education for All (EFA)

Today, approximately 75 million children are out of school despite great progress made towards the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education. More than half of the world's out-of-school children – 40 million – are in conflict-affected countries or emerging states. Over half of out-of-school children are girls. Globally, tens of millions of children who start primary school drop out by the 5th grade because of poor quality and economic need. Hundreds of millions more are denied a secondary school education. Globally, roughly 776 million adults are illiterate.

A severe shortage of adequately trained male and female basic education teachers, textbooks, learning materials and classroom resources underscore significant quality problems in too many countries. School fees and poor quality are obstacles for many children, particularly girls, HIV/AIDS orphans, and other vulnerable children. IMF macroeconomic policies sometimes restrict governments' ability to utilize foreign assistance for education, particularly through wage ceilings and macroeconomic targets that prevent the training, hiring, and retaining of teachers. In addition, conflict-affected and emerging states have the highest numbers of out-of-school children, yet they receive significantly less basic education aid than all other countries.

The availability of pre-primary education in the developing world remains low. Uneducated children in the developing world are particularly vulnerable to human rights abuses, including trafficking, forced child labor, early child marriage, and indoctrination into the ranks of child soldiers and militias, and are more likely to fall victim to deadly disease, including AIDS, and other serious health problems.

Education and development, security, and human rights

Education is a human right, enshrined in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Schools offer safety and protection to children in emergencies and conflicts. Education is one of the best ways to prevent child labor, trafficking of children, child soldiers and child marriage, and schools help to reintegrate children returning home after conflict.

Education is fundamental to sustainable development. In light of the threat that the current financial crisis poses to countries struggling to rise out of

poverty, it is more important than ever that education is prioritized. Successful economies invest in their education systems, building civil society and respect for rule of law. Education allows farmers to be more productive through implementation of effective and environmentally sound agricultural methods. It also saves lives by providing children and youth with the tools to avoid AIDS and other deadly diseases.

Education leads to economic and political security and builds stronger, healthier families. Educated women tend to marry later in life, and their children have higher survival rates and are more likely to succeed and stay in school. Education is particularly important for women and girls, boosting their economic productivity, reducing poverty, increasing life expectancy, and improving the health, well-being, and the educational prospects of the next generation.

Recommendations for the G8 on education

1. **Address the funding gap while ensuring accountability:** An estimated annual \$11 billion is considered necessary to reach EFA, and will require strong support for global initiatives and mechanisms such as the MDG movement and the Fast Track Initiative (FTI). In this regard, and recalling our pledge at Heiligendamm (2007) that “no country seriously committed to ‘Education for All’ will be thwarted in their achievement of this goal by lack of resources,” we renew our commitment to achieving this funding level, and we will strive to fully finance the national education plans of all countries endorsed by 2009, through new and reinforced approaches to sustainable funding via partnerships between government, industry and civil society. Furthermore, recalling our pledge at Hokkaido (2008) to monitor G8 compliance with past commitments to support FTI, and per the report on this issue delivered at this summit, we shall undertake appropriate follow-up and monitoring in connection with new and prior commitments by G8 leaders towards education.

2. **Reaffirm the MDG goals of universal primary education and gender equality at all levels of education, with increased attention to emerging and conflict-affected states, girls and marginalized populations:** Recalling the G8 Communiqués in Hokkaido, Okinawa and Gleneagles respecting EFA, we renew our commitment to the Millennium Development Goals of universal primary education and gender equality at all levels of education, and resolve to help countries, with increased attention to emerging and conflict-affected states, girls and marginalized populations, achieve the goals of the EFA agenda.

3. **Education as an integral part of humanitarian assistance:** Building on the commitment made at Hokkaido to pay specific attention to countries affected by conflicts or crisis, we affirm a new G8 commitment to ensure that education is an integral part of humanitarian responses to conflict and emergencies. Such commitment is necessary to increase long-term, predictable aid for basic education and readiness for early primary education in conflict-affected emerging states, and should be implemented with reference to the Minimum

Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction. Given that over half of the world's out-of-school children are in conflict-affected or emerging states, our education allocations will reflect that proportion, including through the EFA-FTI and related initiatives.

4. Improving quality and access: We resolve to continue improvements in access and quality in conjunction with a country's national education plan and education planning efforts in those countries willing to develop a national education plan.

5. IMF policy issues: We urge the IMF to take social sector needs into consideration and to act as an advocate for increased investment in education when negotiating macroeconomic framework agreements with developing country governments. Specifically, the IMF should: (a) support policies in borrowing countries that will allow for the rapid expansion of the teaching service where a shortage of teachers is a constraint to EFA; (b) support policies that allow for the payment of a living wage to teachers, health care and other professionals in the social sectors; (c) encourage the programming of increased foreign aid for education; and (d) urge country governments to use budgets appropriately and spend accountably.

6. Adult Literacy: We commit ourselves to allocating sufficient funding for adult literacy for the achievement of all the MDGs. This should include committing to raising greater public awareness of the importance of eliminating adult illiteracy, and calling on governments to allocate sufficient funds for programs addressing adult illiteracy.

This paper is not endorsed by the InterAction Board or its Members

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