

Teachers have the future in their hands': New EFA Report highlights teachers the key to solving education crisis

GCE-international

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) welcomes the [2014 Education For All Global Monitoring Report \(GMR\), Teaching and Learning: achieving quality for all](#), released today, which both paints a stark picture of ongoing failings to meet the commitment to guarantee education for all, and offers some critical insight into what must be done by the world's governments to get back on track to ensure a meaningful education to every girl, boy, woman and man. GCE calls on governments, donors and the international community to take action to address the lack of quality financing and ongoing exclusion as a result of poverty and discrimination, which together mean that, as the GMR finds, not one of the six [Education For All \(EFA\) goals](#) agreed in 2000 will be met by their deadline. In particular, we endorse the statement that "good teachers are the key to improvement": we cannot achieve quality education for all unless there is greater and better investment in teachers and teaching.

GCE is concerned that despite significant progress in getting children into school since the year 2000, there is – as the report highlights – a continuing crisis in access and a huge gap in the quality of education. There are still 126 million children out of primary and lower secondary school; at least 250 primary school-aged children – around half of them in school – are unable to read, write or do basic maths; and 774 million youth and adults still cannot read and write. Despite commitments made over many years, one in four young people in developing countries still cannot read a single sentence. And the most disadvantaged and discriminated against are the most likely to be excluded from education, as part of a persistent cycle of inequality within and outside education: the report estimates, for example, that at current rates of progress it will be 97 years before the poorest girls in rural communities see their right to quality education fulfilled.

Given the continuing crisis in quality of education, GCE welcomes the emphasis of the report on the need to boost teaching: the quality crisis in education cannot be solved without a sustained focus on good teaching by professional, well-trained and well-supported teachers. Yet, to date, there has been serious underinvestment in teachers, with governments and donors tolerating or even encouraging a situation where schools are understaffed, classrooms over-filled, and teachers are untrained, unqualified, poorly paid and unsupported. UNESCO estimates that in Africa, for example, half of all teachers have no or very limited training. Without adequate numbers of well-trained, motivated teachers, it is not possible – as experience shows in many countries – to deliver even basic outcomes such as literacy and numeracy, let alone the skills and values necessary for an equitable, sustainable and peaceful future.

GCE members around the world have been drawing attention to these critical issues, not least during GCE Global Action Week on education in 2013, with the theme '[Every Child Needs a Teacher](#)'. [GCE's recent report on teachers](#) found startling examples of how the teaching crisis is impacting on the quality of education around the world. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania and Ethiopia, more than 75,000 additional primary teachers are needed to just to ensure an average of one teacher to every 40 children, while the governments of Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau and Liberia all report that 40% or fewer of their teachers are trained.

Together, we are calling for governments and donors to prioritise quality education by prioritising investment in teachers. The Global Monitoring Report warns of the huge cost to countries of poor quality education: in order to ensure that education finance has the impact needed - for individuals, communities and nations - governments and donors must invest much more, and more effectively,

in teachers. This is how we can ensure that new and existing investment in education is put to the best use, not just putting children into school, but ensuring that they receive a quality education.

The report's findings must act as a catalyst for higher quality and sustained investments in free public education, to ensure that all are able to enjoy their right to quality education and the individual and social benefits it brings. Despite clear commitments to provide sufficient financing for education, dating back to at least 2000, today's report – reinforcing the findings of [GCE's Education Aid Watch 2013](#) – highlights a continuing and unacceptable trend in underinvestment in education, with overseas aid decreasing and being diverted away from areas of greatest need, including countries hit by humanitarian crises. GCE both urges donors to immediately reverse this trend, upholding the promises made in 2000, and welcomes the GMR's assessment of the importance of increasing domestic resources for education. We are calling on donors to keep their promise to provide at least 0.7% of GNI in aid, and to allocate at least 10% of this to basic education; on national governments to devote at least 20% of their domestic budget to education, of which at least half should be for basic education; and on all to prioritise funding to ensure a fully trained, fully qualified professional teacher workforce. The Pledging Conference of the Global Partnership for Education in June 2014 offers donors and governments the opportunity to increase their commitment to education financing, and we call on donors to commit to providing at least \$4 billion in education financing through the GPE over the next four years. In addition, national governments must also deliver on their responsibility to [finance education for all their citizens](#) and develop serious strategies to increase domestic revenues through more progressive taxation systems, and spending this revenue more equitably and effectively.

GCE strongly supports the messages in this latest GMR that it is not too late to accelerate progress towards the EFA goals, and that there must be a robust framework for education post-2015. We are therefore calling for a broad, rights-based, overarching education goal within the post-2015 development agenda – one that goes far beyond basic learning outcomes to embrace a quality education for all. Further, when the evidence so clearly shows that government will fail to achieve any of the six Education For All goals, now is not the time to abandon a dedicated EFA Framework. This must be aligned and revitalised, and fully integrated with any overarching education goal.