

act:onaid



Toolkit on  
education  
financing

2009



Education International  
Internationale de l'Éducation  
Internacional de la Educación  
Bildungsinternationale



poverty. Together. End poverty.

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## Glossary

AA	ActionAid
ANCEFA	Africa Network Campaign on Education For All
CEF	Commonwealth Education Fund
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CF	Catalytic Fund (of the FTI)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CLADE	Campana Latino Americana por el Derecho a la Educación
EFA	Education For All
EI	Education International
EU	European Union
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GAW	Global Action Week
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
IFI	International Financial Institution
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LOI	Letter of Intent
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NDA	Net Domestic Assets
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NIR	Net International Reserves
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PEPFAR	President Emergency Plan For Aid Relief
PRGF	Poverty Reduction Growth Facility
PSI	Policy Support Instrument
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PTR	Pupil Teacher Ratio
SADC	South African Development Committee
SMC	School Management Committee
UPC	Universal Primary Completion
UPE	Universal Primary Education
VAT	Valued Added Tax
WB	World Bank
WTD	World Teachers' Day
WTO	World Trade Organisation

## Preface

ActionAid (AA) and Education International (EI) formed a strategic partnership in 2006 in order to address strategic challenges that are obstructing progress towards the achievement of quality public education for all. Overcoming past tensions between teacher unions and non governmental organizations (NGOs) is essential if we are to build strong national and international platforms to hold governments to account for the promises they have made and the rights they have guaranteed. It is partly in this spirit that the two organisations, together with others, founded the Global Campaign for Education (GCE).

The issue of education financing is perhaps the most crucial of all. Too many governments are spending less than they should on education. Whilst everyone seems to agree that education is important, it rarely reaches the top of the political agenda and rarely attracts the level of funding that is needed. Sometimes the problems are purely domestic: governments who lack serious commitment to education. But sometimes the constraints are also international ones: with Ministries of Finance coming under pressure from donors, regional economic communities (RECs) or the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Many people say that the problem in education is not just about a lack of money. We agree! But lack of money IS a massive part of the problem and without addressing this it will be difficult to make progress in other areas.

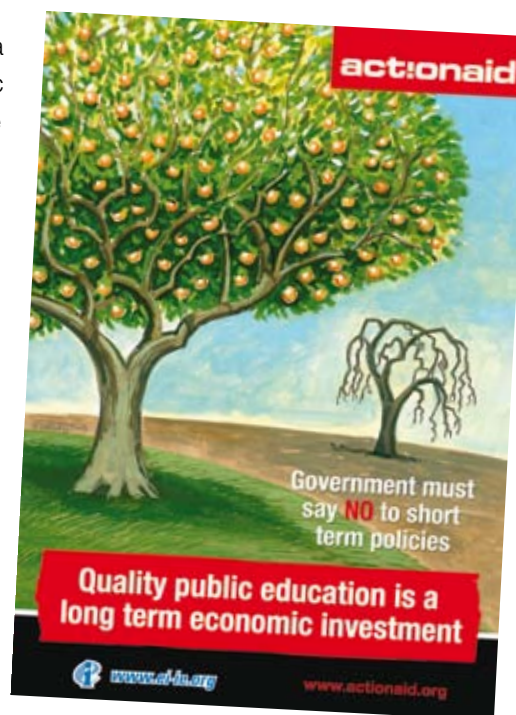
This toolkit aims to help you build a strong campaign on education financing adapted to your own unique national context. In the process of building such a campaign together we hope that trust can be built between agencies that have very different histories and working cultures but very strong common goals.

Together, Unions and NGOs can play a key role in both securing more money for education and making sure that it is better spent.

Quality public education for all has the potential to be the most powerful equalising force in any society. But this feels more like a fantasy than a reality for tens of millions of people. It is time for bold collective action to bring this powerful dream to life!

**Ramesh SINGH**  
Executive director  
ActionAid

**Fred VAN LEEUWEN**  
General Secretary  
Education international







# Part A

what you need to know  
on education financing



1

**What is the  
toolkit for?**



# 1. What is this toolkit for?

This toolkit, with its related resources, aims to help education activists reinforce their advocacy and campaign work on education financing. It aims to give practical information in an accessible form, together with ideas for how to build an effective national campaign – the evidence you can build and the tactics you can deploy. It focuses on holding national governments, particularly Ministries of Finance (MoF), to account, challenging them when they are internalising ideological positions pushed by external actors.

The toolkit is addressed to national coalitions, teacher unions, NGOs and others, to deal with strategic issues around education financing so that more money flows more effectively into education systems and more children can learn in good quality public schools. It is possible to achieve the Education for All (EFA) goals over the coming years if we build strong enough campaigns with a powerful enough evidence base.

It aims to help you build a national campaign on education financing. It includes a set of easy to read resources on issues that are often considered complex and intimidating. It helps you build your own understanding as a basis for raising the understanding of others. It is part of a resource pack on education financing which includes some materials that will help you to raise awareness and promote a national campaign, including posters and bookmarks.

## The toolkit includes:

- “On the way to EFA”, which provides some international context to the state of education around the world and the critical role of financing issues
- An introduction to education financing issues, touching on macroeconomics, education budgets, tax and aid
- A list of twenty questions to check your collective knowledge
- Frequently asked questions (FAQs) so that you can pre-empt things that others will ask you, or get simple answers to questions you may have yourselves
- Ten key points on education financing: a simple way of popularising key ideas and facts
- Ideas on how to engage in education financing work or to build your national campaign
- How to collect key data / statistics as a basis for a national campaign
- Key questions to ask in an interview, for example with your Ministry of Finance

**This toolkit forms part of a resource pack which will help you build your national campaign. This resource pack includes some valuable materials that you can use directly or adapt for national use. For example:**

- A simple policy briefing: ‘why can’t governments hire more teachers?’, which provides the big picture case for why this campaign is needed
- A leaflet that gives a simple introduction to macroeconomics
- Some posters that you can display to raise awareness, or which can serve as a basis for inspiring national posters
- Some bookmarks: a great way of getting the key messages out more widely
- A CD which provides some valuable back up materials and reference documents including the toolkit itself, and additional resources such as “Confronting the Contradictions” (ActionAid 2007), “The Next Generation: Why we need a Global Fund For EFA” (GCE 2009), and “Education budget work and civil society organizations” (CEF 2008)
  - Some key recent publications are also included in this folder:
    - “Building Strategic Partnerships Between Teacher Unions and NGOs” (EI and AA 2007)
    - “Education rights: A Guide for Practitioners and Activists” section 3 ( ActionAid and GCE 2007)
    - “Report of the Survey on the Impact of the Global Economic Crisis on Education” (EI 2009)
    - “Education on the Brink” (GCE 2009)
    - “Education budget work and civil society organizations” (CEF 2009) (three publications)





2

What do we  
want to  
achieve?

## 2. What do we want to achieve?

### **TO HOLD GOVERNMENTS ACCOUNTABLE TO DELIVER FREE QUALITY PUBLIC EDUCATION FOR ALL BY 2015.**

All governments to make adequate budget allocations to education – at least 20% of national budgets or spend 6% of GDP (Gross Domestic Product), and to ensure that the funds allocated are spent

All countries to pursue transparent, democratic and sovereign processes in decision making over education budgets.

All teachers to be properly qualified, trained and remunerated – with an end to the use of cheap non-professional labour which threatens the teaching profession and the quality of learning.

Civil society actors in every country to develop the capacity and secure the political space to be able to assume the roles attributed to them since Dakar – to be actively engaged in every stage of the education policy process.

All donors to live up to their promises on filling education finance gaps in a harmonised way, supporting national education plans.

Governments should ensure that public funding for education benefits the poorest, especially women and girls.

So long as you find yourself broadly in line with the above we believe that you will find the practical resources in this toolkit useful for developing your own national campaign strategy - together with your partners!

TO achieve





3

On the way to efa:  
**the need  
for action**

## 3. On the way to EFA: the need for action

In Dakar, in the year 2000, governments from around the world reiterated the promises on Education For All that were first made in Jomtien in 1990. Having failed in the 1990s they set new targets for 2015.

At least 75 million children are out of school, down from 2000, but not down far enough. On present trends there will still be 29 million children out of school by 2015 and promises will once again have been broken.

Clearly there is a need for renewed political commitment and renewed investment. However, in the context of the global financial crisis, governments may come under pressure to reduce rather than increase spending on education, and aid budgets may fall rather than rise. There are real fears that the numbers of children out of school may go up in the coming years.

There are many challenges that we need to confront if we are to move forwards not backwards.

### 3.1 Education is a right<sup>1</sup>

It is important to start from the recognition of education as a fundamental right, but this is rarely the case in education circles. The promises made in Jomtien and Dakar are often our main reference points but these are only faint echoes of legally-binding international conventions, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child or the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The right to education is also embedded in most national constitutions<sup>2</sup>. Every country has legal frameworks that challenge discrimination, which can be strongly applied to education, but we rarely use these powerful levers to secure progress on education.

The challenge is to change our attitudes: to take rights seriously and use rights frameworks systematically. As well as being a right in itself, the right to education is an enabling right. If people have access to education they can develop the skills, capacity and confidence to secure their other rights.

One useful way of looking at the right to education is that it must be **available, accessible, acceptable** and **adaptable**. The concept of these 4 As was developed by the late UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Katarina Tomasevski, and it is a good way to assess and act upon education rights<sup>3</sup>. The framework of the 4 As can help us think through and popularise different dimensions of the right to education. The 4 As can be summarised as follows:

**Availability** - that education is free and government-funded, that there is adequate infrastructure and a sufficient number of trained teachers to support education delivery.

**Accessibility** - that the system is non-discriminatory and accessible to all, and that positive steps are taken to include the most marginalised.

**Acceptability** - that the content of education is relevant, non-discriminatory, culturally appropriate, and of quality, and that the school itself is safe and teachers are professional.



**Adaptability** - that education can evolve with the changing needs of society and contribute to challenging inequalities, such as gender discrimination.

This framework can help us challenge violations of education rights and make new breakthroughs. Education should be an equalising force in society, the means by which children from poor and rich backgrounds are given an equal chance in life. Home background will always be a massive influence, but government action in providing equal education to all children is vital if societies are to become more rather than less equal. The aspiration for equality in education thus goes to the very heart of social justice and human rights. It is unacceptable for any government to reduce its investment in education, even in the context of a recession, if this leads to the violation of rights that the government is constitutionally and legally committed to uphold. Even in cases where government has only promised to “progressively realise” the right to education, subject to available resources, any steps backward can and should be challenged.

## 3.2 Political will

Although legal reference points can add weight to our arguments, political momentum is still largely focused on the EFA and Millennium Development goals (MDGs). One of the great advantages of these is that they do fix a deadline for achievement - by 2015. This can help galvanize political energies. However, as the deadline is getting closer, it is becoming clear that more energy and urgency are needed. Most of all it is becoming clear that there is one unifying thread to all the challenges that are presently faced: **financing**.

Although we are off-track at present, the Education for All goals are still achievable. If governments in the North and South attach sufficient priority to these goals, we will see dramatic progress in the coming years. We can reach the historic landmark of having all children in the world in school. We can redress the injustices of generations by investing in adult literacy. We can give all children an equal start in life and use education as a democratising, equalising force. All of this can happen if there is sufficient political will, and this is something that we, collectively, can influence and help to build.

To secure greater political will we need to become experts at making the case for investment in education. For example, there is compelling international evidence that education is one of the soundest economic investments a country can make. Each year of schooling a person receives is likely to add 10% to their individual earnings, and if everyone in a country has a decent education, GDP rises by 1% per year.<sup>i</sup> There is also a powerful impact on all aspects of sustainable development. Education saves lives: if your mother is educated you are twice as likely to survive to the age of 5<sup>ii</sup>. At least 7 million cases of HIV would be prevented within a decade if every child completed primary school<sup>iii</sup>. Women’s education has a more significant impact on malnutrition than food availability<sup>iv</sup>, and it can also be key to building strong democracies, good governance, a culture of peace and active citizenship. The evidence from all sides is dramatic.

This international evidence needs to be supplemented with national level evidence from each country, as national politicians invariably respond best to evidence from within their own countries. Be prepared to adapt your arguments to the particular interests of the politician you are talking to or the critical issue on the national agenda. Education can link with almost anything! So build your evidence base and become an expert in making the case for education.

## 3.3 User fees

One of the most obvious examples where the right to education is violated and where political will makes a difference is in respect of user fees. In 2006 Katarina Tomasevski documented that in 92 countries children



had to pay to go to primary school<sup>16</sup>: either user fees or other charges. This has a particularly strong impact on excluding girls. In many countries, national campaigns against user fees have been successful in recent years, and as soon as fees are abolished millions more children enrol in school. Indeed, the abolition of user fees has been responsible for many of the biggest gains in enrolment since 2000, especially among girls. But often this does not go far enough. Governments have not taken other essential measures to accompany the abolition of fees such as training and recruiting more teachers or investing in new school buildings. Moreover, whilst user fees are removed, many other costs continue to be passed on to parents. Whether these are compulsory or supposedly voluntary, nationally set or locally imposed, the effect is often to continue to exclude the poorest children. We need to sustain the pressure to make basic education genuinely free.

### 3.4 Reaching all children

The 75 million children out of school around the world are not a random group. There are certain categories of children who are more likely to be excluded. This includes girls in many cultures, linguistic minorities or indigenous groups and children with disabilities. Children whose parents are pastoralists or seasonal migrants face particular challenges as do those whose lives are affected by conflict, or who are internally displaced or in refugee camps. Often children fall into more than one category and face multiple discriminations. The costs of educating these “hardest to reach” children is likely to be higher per capita than for other children, but often in practice there is little or no funding earmarked or available to make special efforts to reach these children. This is another challenge for any work on education financing: to get the money to where it is most needed!

### 3.5. Education and HIV & AIDS

There are also new challenges that are being faced, and new arguments for investment in education. HIV is affecting education profoundly in some countries, with children orphaned, more child-headed households,

teachers falling sick or dying and stigma going unchallenged. It is now clear that going to school and staying in school can save lives<sup>vi</sup>. Girls who stay through primary into secondary education are several times less likely to get infected by HIV. Partly this is to do with confidence - the empowerment that comes with education - and partly because schools are (usually) relatively safe environments where teenagers are more likely to enter into relationships with people of their own age rather than enter adult sexual networks. It is clear now that schools can play a pivotal role in the prevention of HIV, but most of the comprehensive approaches to sex education, which are proven to work, remain under-funded. In contrast, ideologically-driven “abstinence only” programmes, which have been proven not to work,<sup>4</sup> are being funded on a massive scale by the US government’s PEPFAR programme. President Obama has reversed the worst aspects of these programmes, but change will take time to filter down into practice.

In respect of wider policies on education and HIV and AIDS, most countries do now have national policy frameworks and even agreed curricula and textbooks that address HIV - but these are rarely translated into practice in the classroom. The biggest gaps are often in respect of training teachers to use these materials – and putting in place fair workplace policies for HIV positive teachers.

### **3.6 Beyond access: quality concerns**

Whilst being out of school is a problem for tens of millions of children, being in school is a problem for millions more. Too often classrooms are overcrowded, with over 100 children crammed into a poorly built and equipped room, few textbooks and teachers who are under-trained and overwhelmed. This becomes a form of containment, not education, and children’s rights are likely to be violated rather than protected in such conditions.

Schools are often not the safe environment that they should be, especially for girls. Millions of girls suffer from violence in school, on the way to school and around school. This may be physical or mental violence, but the effects can be equally devastating. The perpetrators of violence, whether peers, parents or teachers, are rarely punished. Governments need to provide a joined-up response to this challenge, linking legal and policy frameworks so that children can receive counselling and have confidence that registering violence and abuse in schools will lead to meaningful action.

Even those in a safe school environment may fail to learn. When schools are under-resourced and unaccountable, and when teachers are poorly paid, poorly trained and poorly motivated, learning rarely takes place effectively. Children may go through five or six years of primary school and still be unable to read or write. The fragile skills they do have are all too often lost over the years, leaving them with little benefit from the investment of so many years of their lives.

### **3.7 Quality teachers for quality education**

There is a widespread perception that the quality of education in government schools is deteriorating. When class sizes rise, this is hardly surprising. But other policies also contribute to this loss of effective learning. Most notably, there has been a rapid spread in recent years of “para-teachers”, who have received little or no training and receive no professional development. International literature shows that the quality of learning depends on the quality of teaching. The quality of teaching is determined by a range of factors including training, professional development, academic achievement of teachers, teaching strategies in the classroom and school-based factors such as school size.<sup>vii</sup> It is shocking then to find that teacher training colleges in most countries have had hardly any investment in recent years and many are being closed down. Despite evidence to the contrary, the idea that “anyone can teach”, even without training, is taking hold. NGOs who run community schools are part



of the problem here. Governments are unsurprisingly seduced by the idea that they can get three teachers for the price of one (non-professional teachers can be paid a third of the salary of a professional teacher). But the impact of these policies on the teaching profession as a whole is very serious.

It is becoming clear that whilst dramatic gains in access to school can be made at relatively low cost, ensuring that children actually learn will cost more, and nothing is more important in achieving this than investing in a good quality teacher. There are particular challenges in financing teacher salaries, which form the largest part of any education budget. These challenges must be addressed and this toolkit aims to help you do this.

### 3.8 Adult literacy and early childhood education

Of all the Education for All goals agreed in Jomtien and Dakar the most neglected is the adult literacy goal. Most governments and donors have narrowly focused their agenda on primary schooling over the past twenty years, and effectively abandoned generations of adults. There are at least 750 million adults who are officially illiterate and probably double that number with such low levels of literacy that they cannot meaningfully be called literate. Two thirds of these are women. Despite strong evidence that effective adult literacy programmes can make a massive impact on the full development agenda<sup>viii</sup>, there is still almost no investment being made.

Early childhood education is also overlooked in most countries. The biggest returns to investing in early childhood education come where provision is available for the poorest children, as an act of positive discrimination, creating a more level playing field for children entering primary school. However, in most countries, private provision is dominant and access is thus restricted to those who can afford to pay.

Education budgets often exclude adult literacy and early childhood education, not only because these sub-sectors are not prioritised, but also because they are often governed by other Ministries. When the Ministry of Education (MoE) puts together an education sector plan they will consider only the formal education system – those things under its control – and this makes it easy to ignore the full EFA agenda. Yet there is growing evidence of inter-dependency. If we want all children to complete primary school, we cannot ignore the impact of women's literacy on the education of girls, or the equalising effects of early childhood education which will reduce early drop out from primary school. When looking at the financing of education we should always look at the whole sector and at all EFA goals!

### 3.9 Donor aid to education

The international community made one particularly important promise in Dakar: no country with a credible education plan would be allowed to fail for lack of resources. Since then many countries have developed plans and many of these are very credible, but the donors have not come up with the resources needed to respond. At present, global aid to basic education is about \$4 billion a year but the estimated need for ODA to fill resource gaps is between \$11 billion a year (just for primary education) and \$16 billion a year (for the fuller EFA agenda).<sup>ix</sup>

The main effort to coordinate resources between donors is the EFA Fast Track Initiative (FTI) where 30 bilateral and multilateral donors have joined together to help countries with credible plans. But a number of problems hamper its effectiveness. Bilateral donors are not fulfilling their commitment to finance credible plans by increasing aid at the country level. The FTI 'Catalytic Fund' (CF) attempts to fill the gap, but has recently encountered severe problems with disbursement. A number of countries have found that, even after they have received approval for CF funding, the money has arrived very late because the World Bank, which manages the fund, has added a number of additional "fiduciary" conditions concerning procurement and



financial systems. Any country accessing this money has to meet World Bank procurement standards which require time and effort that governments can scarcely afford.

More critically, neither CF nor bilateral funds are spent where most needed: on recruiting more teachers. Over 18 million new teachers need to be trained and recruited globally in the coming years, but governments are reluctant to use FTI money to pay for teachers because the money is not predictable, it comes for one or two or three years whereas employing teachers requires a longer term commitment.

The Fast Track Initiative has many strengths, as it does represent a harmonization of donor efforts to support governments, but it needs to be more ambitious and less bureaucratic. One of its particular problems is that it has a narrow focus on primary schooling and formal education. The effect of this is that the vision of Education for All has been diminished and FTI has effectively undermined investment in adult literacy and early childhood education.

### **3.10 The global financial crisis**

The global financial crisis that emerged in 2008 and deepened in 2009 represents both a threat and an opportunity. With shrinking national incomes, the money available for education will decrease even if the percentage allocated to education from the national budget stays the same. In some cases, as education is often one of the larger parts of government spending, the percentage allocated to education may also come under threat. Aid budgets are also likely to feel the strain and this could diminish the funding available from donors for education. But none of this is inevitable and everything depends on the political priority attached to education.

We need to join others in arguing for a coordinated global stimulus package for developing countries, that will allow them to protect and expand social spending in key sectors such as education. We need to argue vigorously that increasing investment in education makes sound economic sense in the context of a recession. The recent GCE publication included in this pack, "Education on the Brink", helps to make the argument that investment in education makes both short term and long term economic sense, arguments which we all need to become familiar with. We also need to keep a close eye on the actions of the IMF, which has found a new lease of life as a result of the recession. Given hundreds of billions of dollars by the G20 countries, the IMF could have a negative impact on education spending around the world if it continues to require overly restrictive inflation and deficit targets. This could be reversed, but to do so will need concerted action with Ministries of Finance in every country!\*

## 3.11 Civil society partnerships

Even if rights are non negotiable and legally binding, every government faces competing priorities and our challenge is to make sure that education comes out on top, or at least as close to the top as possible. This will be especially important at a time of financial crisis, where there are fewer resources to go around. To achieve this we need to be able to argue the case for investment in education and we need to have a powerful coalition of forces on our side. If we succeed, we can increase the share of the budget that goes to education (e.g. instead of defence).

The partnership between ActionAid and Education International that lies behind the production of this toolkit lays the foundation for the much broader alliances that will be needed in each country to secure real change and get full financing behind education for all. The Global Campaign for Education (GCE) has member coalitions in 65 countries and a capacity to mobilise people in 120 countries during the annual Global Action Week. This adds further weight to this drive for building broad alliances. In the same way, the annual celebration by Education International member affiliates of World Teacher's Day is a driving force for civil society advocacy work on education. It is clear that we all need to work together, to build our strategic understanding of the constraints that are faced, in order to campaign at every level for full and effective financing of the right to education.

Without adequate funding, universal access to education for all children will not be achieved and illiterate adults will still be abandoned. Without more money, quality will not improve and better learning outcomes will not be achieved. Money is not everything but it is fundamental, a necessary if not sufficient condition for improving education. There are, after all, schools in appallingly poor conditions which manage to work effectively, where children learn from committed teachers. These can be inspiring stories, but if we want more of them then we need more investment.

### The Parktonian Recommendations

### Box 1

ActionAid and Education International are specifically committed to working together based on the "Parktonian Recommendations", an agreement reached in April 2006 (full text in annex 2). In respect of macro-economics / education financing the agreement says:

"Achieving quality education for all will require massive new investment in the coming years– new teachers, new classrooms and new textbooks. Whilst predictable international aid may (and should) help, increasing investments from domestic budgets is crucial. Unfortunately national education budgets are being unnecessarily constrained by macro-economic positions imposed by the International Monetary Fund. The IMF ideology controls the discourse and thinking in Ministries of Finance even where no direct conditions are imposed. Whilst maintaining sound public finances is important, national governments need to be able to decide for themselves the trade-offs between investing in education for long term growth and unnecessarily tight fiscal and monetary policies that constrain investments. Education should be at the top of domestic political agendas. We recommend that:

- AA and EI affiliates should work together on national level studies to better understand how IMF policies constrain budgets and contradict the achievement of education goals.
- EI and AA should link up with wider education coalitions nationally and internationally (with the Global Campaign for Education) on this work.
- Efforts should be made to build links with parliamentarians (working with existing committees or creating new ones) and to raise public awareness through links to national media.
- Connections should be made with work that is demystifying and tracking education budgets.
- Joint advocacy and campaigning should be developed to place this issue at the centre of national and international attention"





4

Key issues  
in education  
financing

## 4. Key issues in education financing

There are 75 million children out of school around the world and hundreds of millions of children who go to schools where they learn very little, in large classes with few textbooks and under-trained teachers. It is estimated that 18 million teachers need to be trained and recruited by 2015 if all children are to be taught in class sizes that do not exceed 40 children per teacher. Significant progress has been made in recent years, with about 40 million more children in school today than there were in 2000. However, much more is needed in the coming years if the Education For All and Millennium Development goals are to be achieved by 2015. Over 30 multilateral and bilateral agencies are working together in the Fast Track Initiative to deliver on the pledge made in Dakar in 2000 that no government with a viable plan to achieve progress on these education goals will be allowed to fail for lack of resources. However, a major obstacle towards progress is now becoming evident. Ministries of Education, who should be the driving force in determining what investment is needed to improve their education systems, have remarkably little control over their budgets. Most importantly, they cannot hire enough teachers to guarantee education of quality.

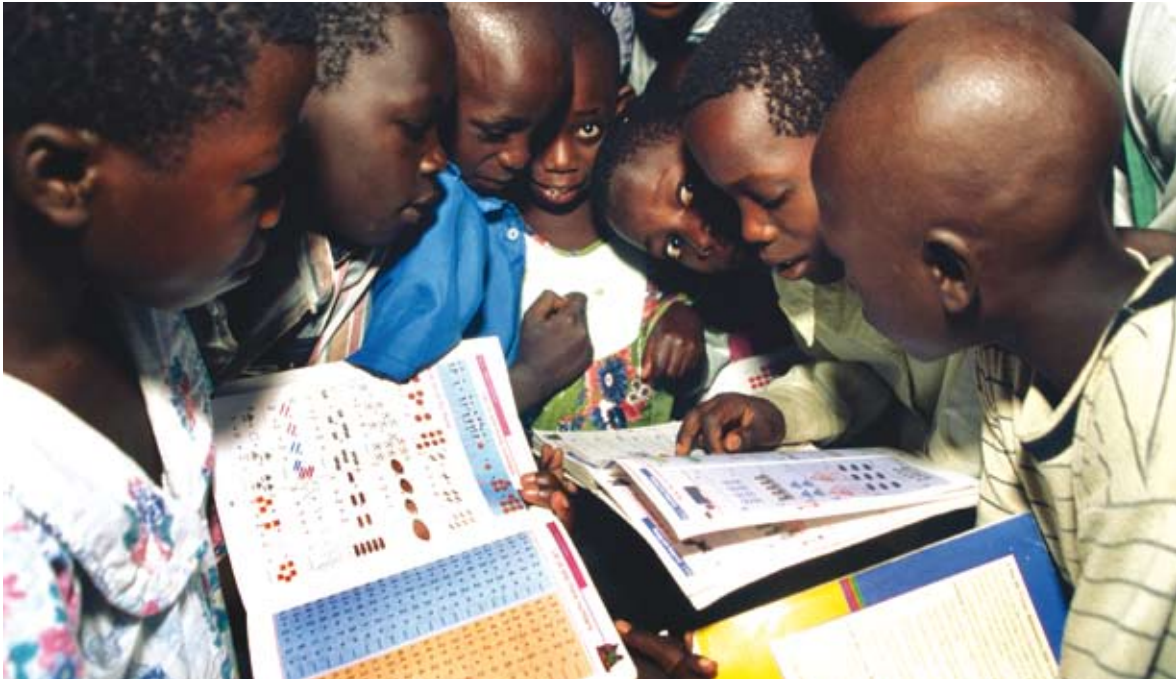
National education budgets in most countries are determined by the Ministry of Finance based on the proposed budget presented by the Ministry of Education. It is common practice that the Ministry of Finance limits the education budget based on the spending limits it has set for itself. However these limitations rarely make reference to the legal commitments of the state or the needs of expanding education systems or the achievement of agreed education goals. Even where millions more children are enrolling in school and there is a clear need for more teachers to be employed, the voice of the Ministry of Education is rarely heard at all in decision-making over education budgets. Rather, the key parameters of the education budget are determined by the political priority attached to education, the resources available to the country from domestic revenues and aid, and the macroeconomic policies agreed, usually behind closed doors, in discussions between the Ministry of Finance and the International Monetary Fund. Even where the IMF is not directly involved in discussions, their ideological influence can still be substantial.

### 4.1. Breaking the mystery of macroeconomics

Macroeconomics is about the big picture of the national economy, dealing with things like inflation, deficits, interest rates, foreign reserves and exchange rate. It is concerned with how policy-makers can avoid short-term 'boom and bust' fluctuations in prices, employment, and exchange rates while also trying to gradually increase overall levels of output and income, so that the country becomes richer in the long term. Few governments these days attempt to directly control the economy, but they can influence its behaviour in various ways, including by raising or lowering interest rates at the Central Bank; and by increasing or reducing what the government itself spends and borrows. On paper there appears to be no immediate connection to education. But in fact the connection is very strong because the macroeconomic policies pursued by the Ministry of Finance significantly affect the overall spending that is available to government. This is hugely significant for education as it is one of the largest spending items in any budget.

In many countries, the Ministry of Finance is heavily influenced by the International Monetary Fund when setting macroeconomic policy. In many poor countries this influence is direct, linked to loans that the IMF gives with strict macroeconomic conditions. But even in countries where they have no loan agreement, the IMF's views





## Teacher shortages in Kenya

### Box 2

In Kenya, after the abolition of user fees in 2003 over a million children enrolled in school for the first time. But the government had an agreement with the IMF dating back to 1997 which said they would not employ more than 235,000 teachers. Despite the dramatically changed circumstances, this limit was not removed and the result was inevitable. Class sizes, especially in rural schools and poor areas, rose rapidly. Often there were more than 100 children in a classroom, creating a situation in which no teacher can teach and no child can learn. The Ministry of Education protested but was not allowed to employ a single additional teacher.

on macroeconomics influence thinking in Ministries of Finance, which want to obtain a good “rating” from the IMF to encourage foreign investment and aid flows. In fact, the IMF, through its Article IV consultation process, has a quasi monopoly on macroeconomic statistics and models in many developing countries. The influence is sometimes subtle, sometimes direct, however ultimately macroeconomic and education policy decisions are made by national governments, and they should therefore be the ones questioned and held accountable.

In addition, regional economic convergence agreements are an increasing source of influence on national macroeconomic policy. For example SADC countries have agreed to keep their deficits within a very narrow range. The West African Monetary and Economic Union (UMEOA) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) both have a common currency, meaning that their macroeconomic policies must be harmonised. These organisations often impose direct targets and ceilings on spending, wage bills, deficit and inflation levels.

In its discussions with Ministries of Finance, the IMF shows little interest in helping countries achieve national education goals. Their central concern is to balance the country’s external accounts, and to achieve this they focus most of all on setting **low inflation targets** and **low deficit targets**. Typically they will encourage governments to keep inflation under 5% and to work towards having little or no deficit. This means that countries either have to achieve big increases in export earnings (something that is difficult or impossible for many low income countries), or they have to hold down domestic consumption, including public spending.

As education is one of the items on which governments spend most money, any limits put on public spending are felt very directly by the Ministry of Education. This recipe is a standardised one and is rarely adapted to the national context, even for countries in exceptional circumstances such as Sierra Leone, a post-conflict country.

Until recently, the IMF intervened further in some countries by setting a direct limit or “ceiling” on the **public sector wage bill**. This is the item in the national budget that pays for all government employees. The impression was given that this was a way of cutting back bloated government bureaucracies, or enabling politically weak governments to hold the line on “civil service” wage demands. But in practice, the largest group of people paid by the public sector wage bill are teachers. The second largest group are health workers. An ActionAid study in 2006<sup>xii</sup> showed that out of a small sample of 41 countries with an IMF loan agreement, 18 had a ceiling on the wage bill.

To keep spending on wages within the ceiling, the easiest thing for a government to do is to freeze teachers’ wages and/or limit recruitment of any new teachers.

Following successful campaigning against the IMF’s use of wage bill ceilings in 2007, the IMF shifted its policy and said it would no longer use them as a routine condition. However, many Ministries of Finance impose strict caps themselves. This is in part because the IMF continues to advise or require very conservative inflation and deficit targets which make it difficult for governments to increase public spending, including spending on education. The result is the same: urgently needed new teachers cannot be recruited.

The IMF sometimes denies that this is their fault and claim that they “protect” education spending. But when the IMF say “protect” it is best to hear “freeze”. This is a problem for countries with growing populations or those that have recently removed user fees, making primary education free: millions more children are enrolling in school but they cannot employ new teachers. Conservative fiscal and monetary policies, whether coming from the IMF or from national governments, prevent education spending from expanding at the rate necessary to respond to this growth in enrolments.

An additional complication that countries face is that, in order to meet the IMF’s low inflation and deficit targets, governments find it difficult to absorb donor aid for education. The IMF believes that increasing spending on teacher salaries, even when new aid is made available, will cause inflation to rise. As such Ministries are

## What can you do?

### Box 3

To challenge macro-economic dogma, we need to build our own understanding – our own economic literacy. We also need to build strong national education coalitions that link NGOs, teacher unions, economics networks, human rights activists, etc. together. These education coalitions need to reach out to others working on health and HIV and women’s rights because the same macro-economic policies affect these other groups in the same way. Only by working together can we avoid being played off against one another.

#### For education activists it is useful for us to think of the 4 ‘S’s’:

- Increase the size of the national budget overall (by challenging restrictive macro-economic policies – and promoting more expansionary policies) ;
- Increase the share of the education budget in respect of other budgets (like defence). At least 20% should be spent on education. (see section 4.4);
- Increase the scrutiny of the budget – so we know where the money is going and where it ends up in practice, through budget tracking / monitoring. (see section 4.5); and
- Increase the sensitivity of the budget – so the national budget is gender-sensitive, reflects the national context and is sensitive to national priorities.
- Build your skills in understanding budgets

encouraged to ask donors for one-off items such as infrastructure, school equipment or textbooks, even when what they more urgently need is more trained teachers.

A root cause of all these problems is that, in its dealings with governments, the IMF focuses on achieving stability over a medium term timeframe of 3 to 5 years. They then hold governments to the targets that are set in these medium term plans through making six-monthly missions to review progress. This timeframe has a particularly negative effect for investment in education, which requires long term planning. The real benefits of investing in education come after ten years, when educated children enter the workforce, and over this timeframe education is one of the most productive economic investments a country can make. But over a 3 to 5 year period, spending on education seems to be pure consumption, like pouring money down a drain. The IMF's timeframes are short-sighted and undermine the case for spending on education.

Even where the IMF is not directly giving loans to a country, their power is considerable over macroeconomic thinking in Ministries of Finance and we need to challenge this way of thinking if we are to remove some of the largest constraints on education budgets. For more details on how to do this, see the briefing: "Why Can't Governments Hire More Teachers?"

## **4.2 Education financing: increasing scrutiny of the budget**

If we want to make the case for more investment in education we need to be sure that existing investment is being well spent, and expose situations where this is not the case. We also need to build people's understanding and their confidence to engage in debates around human rights and education budgets, whether at school level or in national parliaments. Not only do civil society organisations need to monitor and track education budgets, but they need to be involved in the entire budget process from the onset, in order to make it not only more democratic, but genuinely participatory

This is happening. Over the last decade, budget work has grown enormously in popularity as a tool for holding government to account at all levels – from the national to the grassroots. The move to political and financial decentralisation in many countries and the strength of pro-democracy and accountability movements have also focused attention on budgets. By empowering civil society to explore issues related to the education budget, opportunities can be created that allow local people to engage in the big questions of national economic policy.

Whilst the budget cycle is complex, opportunities exist for civil society to engage at different levels throughout the process. Civil society can work with the government to influence the decision-making process and final expenditure on education. It can examine whether this expenditure is disbursed as planned, whether it has the desired impact at school level, and the impact of the budget on different parts of the population.

Many organisations have supported work on education budgets in recent years, including the Commonwealth Education Fund (ActionAid, Oxfam and Save the Children), Transparency International and the GCE. There has been an accumulation of learning about what works and the development of some excellent resources to help education activists to monitor existing budgets and influence future budgets. This work has included activities such as:

- Analysing and demystifying the national education budget.
- Sharing user-friendly versions of the budget extensively.
- Training people in budget work at national level in various organisations.



- Training people at district and local level, including parents-teachers associations and school management committees.
- Tracking what happens to the budget in practice in different districts and schools.
- Consolidating/ analysing data from tracking exercises at national level.
- Exposing misuse of budgets and taking corrupt officials to court.
- Advocacy on the education budget (e.g. costing key reforms/ demanding changes).
- Taking an active role in education budget formulation processes locally or nationally.
- Building the capacity of parliamentary committees to scrutinise education budgets.
- Raising strategic questions on education financing with Ministries of Finance.

Each stage of the budget cycle contains potential challenges for civil society engagement. While budget-making during the formulation and enactment stages can be highly political, other parts of the budget cycle may be dominated by challenges related to restricted access to information and insufficient capacity to address budget issues effectively. Some of the challenges commonly faced are outlined below.

## Some examples of budget work in practice

### Box 4

In **Bangladesh**, civil society partners challenged claims made by the government that spending on education was increasing, by demonstrating instead that it was a declining trend. Their findings were widely cited by the media, putting intense pressure on the government to reverse this trend.

In **The Gambia** partners worked to increase parliamentarians' understanding of the education budget and build their capacity to analyse allocations to education. This has made it possible to influence members of the National Select Committee on Education and Training to approve pro-poor activities that meet the aims of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

Budget monitoring at the national level in **Malawi** led to the annual publication of an Education Budget Monitoring Study, an exercise focused on examining priority poverty expenditure areas. The study is circulated to the government, donors, civil society organisations and the parliament. Findings have been used as an advocacy tool and contributed to an increased budgetary allocation to the education sector.

**Mozambique** raised the awareness of school management committees (SMCs) with regards to budget allocations, particularly the Direct Support to Schools initiative.

The national coalition in **Nigeria** lobbied the government to institutionalise SMCs in primary and secondary schools across the country following successful pilots that showed SMCs played a key role in helping to ensure proper utilisation of the education budget.

In **Uganda**, children have been empowered to track expenditure and assess with the quality of education delivery by participating in school-based child monitoring committees. Children develop action plans for improving the school environment and present these to the SMC as well as at district and national level policy workshops.

As a result of budget tracking work in **Kenya**, more than 50 head teachers were exposed by the media for corruption on the purchase of school textbooks. The Minister of Education issued a directive demanding that all public primary schools display the school budget on the school notice board.

From the Commonwealth Education Fund report, 2008

### **UNDERSTAND THE POLITICAL, LEGAL AND ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT**

- Monitor the political landscape and shift advocacy strategies accordingly to maximise impact.
- Understand the budget's legal and institutional framework, and the timing of the budget cycle.

### **BUILD CAPACITY IN BUDGET ANALYSIS AND AWARENESS**

- Develop budget training expertise that can be directed at increasing the analytical and advocacy capacity of civil society organisations and legislatures.
- Invest in the capacity and confidence of civil society organisations to conduct budget work.
- Produce simple, user-friendly training tools that are accessible to grassroots groups.

### **ESTABLISH CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT, PARLIAMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY**

- Promote the potential benefits of budget work to government officials and head teachers.
- Establish collaborative relationships with other civil society organisations, to ensure that opportunities are created that draw on the capacities and expertise of others.
- Create a mutually beneficial relationship with the legislative arm of the government.
- Advance grassroots participation in budget work.

### **CONDUCT A VARIETY OF BUDGET WORK ACTIVITIES**

- Ensure that capacity building is followed up by activities that can be used for advocacy purposes.
- Link budget tracking and advocacy from local to national level so that grassroots voices are considered in decision-making.
- Support campaigns to secure the freedom of information where this affects the ability of civil society to carry out budget work.
- Focus on producing high quality, evidence-based research as a way to influence the budget process.

### **DISSEMINATE FINDINGS WIDELY**

- Distribute the results of budget analysis in a way that is diverse, targeted, and clear, encouraging other stakeholders to act on recommendations.
- Disseminate information in time to allow stakeholders to influence policy debates.
- Involve the media to maximise the visibility of research.
- Share examples of best practice widely.

## **Constraints to Budget Work**

### **DIFFICULTY ENTERING INTO THE BUDGET CYCLE**

It is often difficult for civil society to gain entry into the budget cycle. Post-budget analysis is generally easier to carry out, but this leaves little opportunity for lobbying. Where there is no legal framework providing a clear role for civil society in the budget process, there is rarely any scope for participation.

### **LIMITED ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

In many countries, the general absence of information on education budgets – particularly in accessible, non-technical forms – seriously hinders the efforts of national and local organizations to participate in any discussion on the distribution of education resources. Accessing data remains one of the major challenges in education budget work. Even where it is available at the national level it is invariably inaccessible at the local level, or vice versa. In countries such as Malawi, Nigeria and Zambia there is no legislative framework with regard to freedom of information. Often, where a legal framework exists, as in Mozambique, there is a gap between this and an ideal standard of transparency and participation. Some partners have dealt with this issue by obtaining education budget information from sympathetic officials in Ministries.

### **ABSENCE OF A NATIONAL PLATFORM**

Unless a wider platform is in place it is difficult to undertake constructive budget work as activities benefit from cross-agency collaboration and the legitimacy that comes from a well-established and nationally recognized platform.

### **LACK OF CIVIL SOCIETY CAPACITY**

At first many individuals and organizations feel overwhelmed in trying to understand education budgets. It is important to overcome the fear that people have of numbers and mathematics and to encourage people to constantly demystify information.

There are some excellent resources on tracking education budgets available from the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF) – see [www.commonwealtheducationfund.org](http://www.commonwealtheducationfund.org)

## **4.3 Education financing and tax**

### ***Why tax is important for financing education***

Taxation is the main source of finance for most governments. Taxes, more than donor aid and loans, pay for key social services such as education and health. Governments prefer to use tax revenue, rather than aid or loans, to cover the salaries of teachers, because it is relatively secure and predictable. They do not want to hire teachers with aid money and then find they cannot pay the salaries two or three years later, as making teachers redundant is politically very sensitive. So, the best way to get more money for more teachers is to expand the national tax base.

Paying taxes is not always popular, but it is important in any democratic country. People pay taxes in return for basic services. And in most countries around the world one of the first expectations of tax payers is that their government will invest in providing basic education. Indeed, it is part of the fundamental unwritten contract between citizens and the State: that tax money will be spent on providing public schools accessible to all children. If tax money is misused or if the quality of services such as schools is too poor, then citizens are more reluctant to contribute to the public purse. Involving people in tracking education budgets and monitoring the performance of schools plays an important role because it deepens the ways in which people can hold their government accountable. If there was no taxation, this would not make sense.

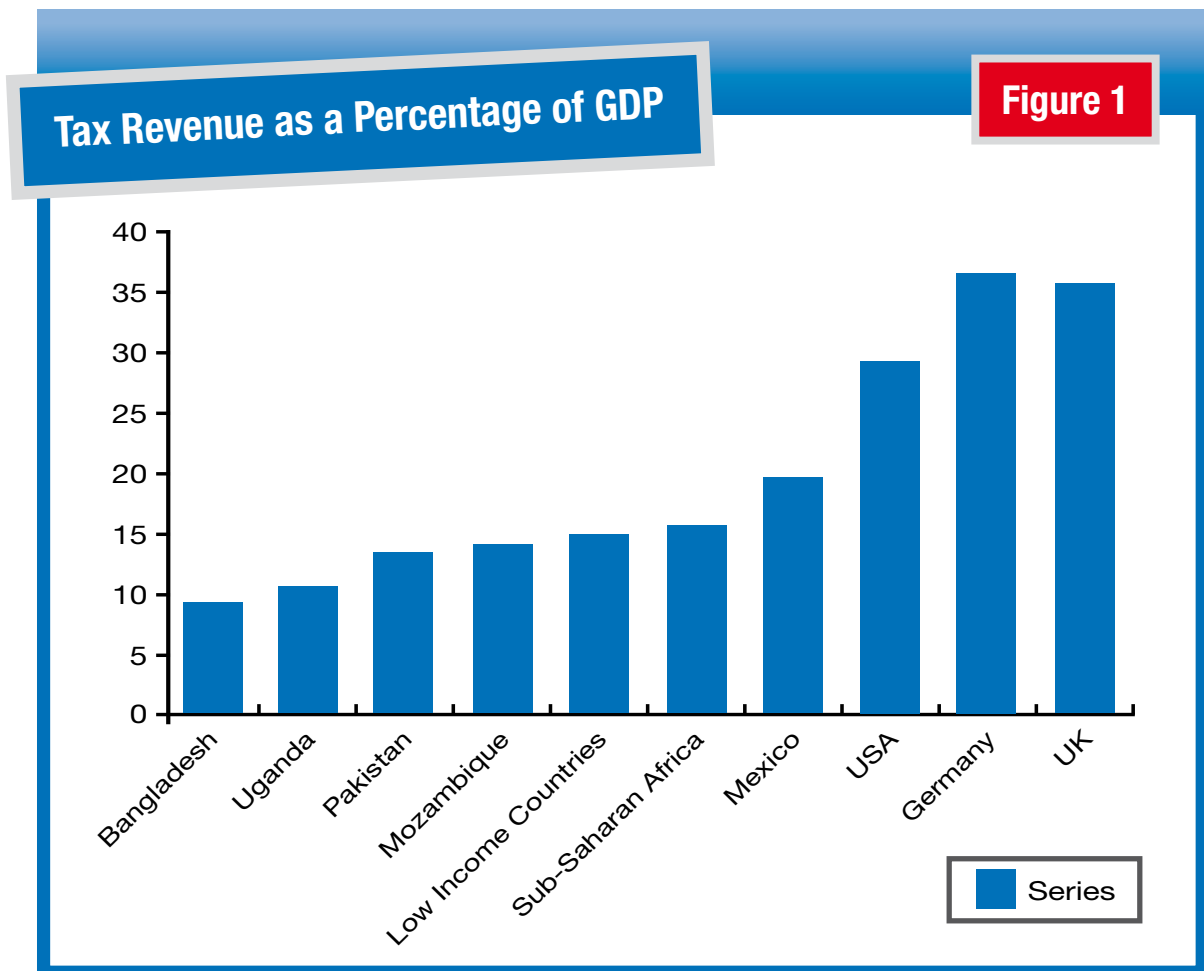
Taxes are also a way to redistribute income between the rich and the poor. A **“progressive”** tax system pushes the rich to pay a larger share of their income in taxes than the poor<sup>xiii</sup>. This is based on the principle that those with higher incomes are more able to pay taxes than those with lower incomes. In this way, high income earners make a larger contribution to financing public services, such as free primary education. But not all tax systems are fair; many can be **“regressive”**, whereby the poor pay a larger share of their income on taxes than the rich do. This leaves poorer families with less money to spend on basic goods and services, such as food, medicines and school supplies. Therefore, how governments raise taxes is also important.

Too often civil society has shied away from working on tax justice issues. Tax is seen as too technical and sometimes too political. But taxation funds the lion's share of the education budget, particularly the salaries of teachers, and so requires more attention if countries are to meet the Education for All Objectives by 2015.



## Is there enough tax revenue?

It is important to ask whether your government is collecting enough taxes to pay for education and other services. This may not be a popular question as few people like to pay taxes, but it is an important question to ask. One key measure is how much tax revenue is raised as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In many low income countries this is much lower than in richer countries. Whilst taxes are often over 35% of GDP in European countries, in low income countries tax revenues are often less than 15% of GDP. The table below gives a useful overview. It is worth knowing this statistic for your own country. If it is low then there is a strong case for improving tax collection and expanding the tax base in the country in order to increase education spending.



Source: Figures from IMF, World Bank and OECD

Although governments in many poor countries do receive revenue from other sources, tax almost always remains the main source of revenue. Indeed in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America, tax revenue accounts for nearly 80 per cent of total revenue. Non-tax revenue includes aid, income from natural resource extraction and administrative fees and charges. Even in countries known as being highly dependent on aid, tax remains the largest source of revenue for the government. In Uganda, tax revenue accounted for 63 per cent of the government's 2008/2009 budget with just over 30 per cent of funds coming from donor aid. In Bangladesh, tax revenue accounts for 55 per cent of total government revenue. Foreign grants and loans account for about 14 per cent of the government's 2009 budget. Raising tax revenue is therefore absolutely

necessary if governments are to scale up their investments in education

### **Some challenges for raising taxes**

Many poor countries have difficulty in raising more taxes, not least because of a shortage of trained or experienced staff. There are often not enough people in formal employment to pay income tax and many businesses are so small that they do not pay company or corporation tax. The rich elite often pay relatively small amounts in tax, while benefiting from a disproportionate share of public spending. Poor countries also come under a lot of pressure to remove certain taxes and increase other types of taxes.

- **Removing trade barriers:** Under pressure from international institutions like the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the IMF, low income countries have removed many of their import and export duties. This was an important form of revenue for many countries and removing trade tariffs has left a hole in government budgets. Evidence shows that low income countries were only able to make up a third of the lost revenue through other forms of taxation<sup>xv</sup>. This has had a massive impact on the amount of money available to invest in education
- **Value-added tax:** Following IMF advice, countries have moved away from income and corporate taxes towards indirect taxation in the form of value-added tax (VAT). In many countries VAT has helped to increase revenue levels, but it has not been enough to offset the removal of trade barriers. VAT is often chosen because it is relatively easy to collect, but it can be a very regressive tax unless basic food and other key items are exempted. A recent survey of 18 sub-Saharan African countries with an IMF agreement shows that the IMF has systematically pushed for a decrease in corporate taxes and

## **How do you influence tax policy?**

### **Box 6**

The revenue authority and the Ministry of Finance are responsible for setting national tax policies. They determine the structure of the tax system, whether it is progressive or regressive, and the mix of tax policies used to capture additional revenue. If we are to meet the EFA goals by 2015 efforts to reform national and international tax systems must be stepped up. It is imperative that civil society, national governments, donors and the international community:

- Recognize the central role that tax plays in the mobilization of domestic resources for education.
- Hold governments to account not only for how they spend tax revenue, but how they collect it and who from. Public education can be a powerful tool against inequality, but only if it is funded through a progressive and fair tax system.
- Increase aid to support revenue collection in low income countries that will then lay the foundation for sustainable domestic education financing in the long-term.
- Push for international accounting standards to include country-by-country reporting so that all multinational corporations report their profits, losses, and taxes paid in every country where they operate, and specifically in your country.
- Do a national study on your national taxation system and the links to education to stimulate public debate.
- Call for stronger international cooperation on tax through a global automatic tax information exchange system.

There are a number of civil society organisations already advocating for tax justice. If you want to find out more go to:

**Tax Justice Network** <http://www.taxjustice.net>

**International Budget Project – A Guide to Tax Work for NGOs**  
<http://www.internationalbudget.org/GuideTax-Work.pdf>

[www.actionaid.org.uk/outlandish](http://www.actionaid.org.uk/outlandish)





trade tariffs alongside an expansion of VAT<sup>xvi</sup>. Yet evidence from a sample of 26 African countries shows that those countries that increased their tax revenue did so by using a combination of taxes, including trade and corporate taxes – contrary to IMF advice.<sup>xvii</sup>

- **Tax incentives:** In order to attract foreign direct investment, governments offer tax breaks or tax holidays to foreign companies. In Malawi and Sierra Leone, tax breaks granted in foreign mining contracts will cost the governments US\$16.8m and US\$8m a year respectively in foregone tax revenue.<sup>xviii</sup>
- **Tax avoidance and evasion:** It is estimated that developing countries lost between \$858.6 billion and \$1.06 trillion through illicit capital flows in 2006 alone.<sup>xix</sup> About 60 percent of these flows were through multinational corporations. Every year, developing countries lose an estimated \$160 billion in revenue as a result of tax evasion by multinational corporations.<sup>xx</sup> Through complex tax avoidance strategies and outright evasion, companies are able to shift their profits to tax havens. It is almost impossible to stop this without a change in international accounting standards to force companies to disclose their profits, losses and the taxes they pay in every country where they operate. The tax revenue lost through corporate tax evasion alone is ten times the amount needed to reach universal primary education globally by 2015 - estimated at \$16 billion per year.

The reluctance to reform tax systems makes the charging of user fees for public services an easy way out for many governments. But changing user fees, whether for access to schools, hospitals or other services, is effectively the most regressive form of taxation of all.

## 4.4 Education financing: can donors fill the gaps?

### *Aid and education: the big picture*

Now, more than ever, there is a need to increase predictable long-term aid for basic education and to ensure that it can be spent on the core running costs of education, particularly on teachers. Most low income countries face serious problems due to the global financial crisis and lack the means to spend their way out of trouble in the way that many rich countries are. According to UNESCO<sup>xxi</sup>, almost half of these countries are already struggling to make the required progress towards meeting the EFA goals. Yet education budgets are expected to be under pressure as lower economic growth leads to reduced revenues. So, even if a country decides to increase the share of the national budget for education, in reality if GDP growth is weaker, the national budget is smaller and the real amount available for education will be less. Good quality aid will be urgently needed to compensate for these shortfalls and ensure that the fragile progress towards EFA is protected and further progress is possible.

The prospects for an increase in aid to basic education are mixed. Basic education aid levels, having grown in the early part of the decade, appear to have stagnated at between \$4 billion and \$5 billion.<sup>xxii</sup> And now analysts are predicting that total aid could fall in the context of the crisis. For example, even if the European Union (EU) were to meet its target of giving 0.56 percent of Gross National Income (GNI) in aid by 2015, the total amount mobilised would now be \$4.6 billion less in real terms than at the time this was agreed.

### Ten critical questions on aid to education

#### Box 7

**Here are some key questions to ask which will help you find out about the state of aid to education in your country:**

1. Does my country have an education plan that is endorsed by the FTI?
2. Is there an education sector plan that is supported by most donors active in the country?
3. Who are the main donors to education and how much do they give?
4. How do these donors give this money, to projects or as sector budget support?
5. How much aid is “tied” to technical support or goods coming from the donor country?
6. Have aid flows to education decreased or increased year on year since 2000?
7. Do the different donors talk to each other / work closely in a donor education consortium?
8. Which is the “lead donor” – the one who convenes others and leads in relations with the Ministry of Education?
9. Do donors have an ongoing dialogue on education with national civil society?
10. Do donors have privileged access to information on education from the government? Do they keep this to themselves or share it?

The answers to these questions should not be hard to find and should help you make some judgements about whether donors are behaving in line with their promises! Most donors have signed up to the Paris Aid Effectiveness Guidelines, repeated recently in Accra, which suggest that donors should harmonise their efforts behind government plans, reducing the “transaction costs” for governments and ensuring that governments are in the driving seat. In the field of education, on paper, the FTI is a progressive form of aid, with 30 donors working together to support a single national education plan developed by government in consultation with civil society. But there are some serious concerns whether the practice of FTI lives up to rhetoric.

This makes the prospects of reaching the total external financing requirement of \$16 billion per year seem increasingly remote. The EFA Fast Track Initiative, set up in 2002, was supposed to address this problem, delivering on the promise made in Dakar that any country with a viable plan for achieving education for all would not be allowed to fail for lack of resources. Thirty bilateral and multilateral donors have joined FTI but to date only \$1 billion has been mobilised and the disbursement of these funds has been very slow, largely owing to World Bank conditions.



Moreover, the aid that is available has not historically been oriented towards assisting countries to increase recurrent expenditures such as hiring and retaining teachers. Teacher salaries typically account for 70-90 percent of education expenditure, which must be fully budgeted for at least over the medium-term. Yet aid to basic education allocates a much lower percentage than this. For aid to be included towards this total, it needs to be predictable, long-term and available to the core running costs of education, typically through either general budget support or sector budget support. However most donor countries are not providing the type of commitment required to do this.

GCE analysis suggests that only around 17 percent of total aid to basic education is available for teacher salaries, a paltry contribution towards this major expenditure item for governments.<sup>xxiii</sup> To date very few donors have actually contributed to teacher salaries, for example through providing predictable sector budget



support. Despite widespread rhetoric for action on the 18 million teacher shortage identified by UNESCO, hardly any donors have set targets for what they are going to contribute to closing the gap. If total domestic funding to education decreases due to slower economic growth as is predicted, then an arrangement to enable external funds to contribute to recurrent costs would become even more urgent.

At the same time, there is hope from some quarters. US President Obama has indicated commitment to creating a Global Fund for Education with an initial US contribution of \$2 billion. Now advocates must seize this opportunity and ensure that it is delivered as part of a high-quality multilateral effort, backing government plans. The proposal also opens up a unique opportunity to leverage much-needed change in the international financing architecture for education. A new Global Fund for Education could ensure that predictable, long-term aid is available for the core running costs of education including teachers. Any such fund should build on the EFA Fast Track Initiative and not be a parallel or competitor fund, but there is a need to massively scale up existing efforts. All major donors, especially the G8, should get behind a Global Fund for Education, meeting their fair share of the financing gap within two years.

**Ghana's experience with the EFA Fast-Track Initiative**

**Box 8**

Ghana was endorsed for inclusion in the EFA-FTI Catalytic Trust Fund in 2004. As with other countries, donors participating in the FTI have been slow to follow-up on their commitments to countries with 'credible' education plans. By 2008 the Ministry of Education had received a total of US\$19m from the Fund. The infusion of the funds has contributed to some improvements in enrolment and gender parity:

level		2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	% Increase
Primary	enrolment	3,077,489	3,239,462	3,473,229	13%
	NER	59.1%	69.2%	81.1%	37%
	GPI	0.93	0.95	0.96	3%

The national target of attaining a 35/1 PTR (Pupil Teacher Ratio) has been achieved, and though teacher supply has been stabilized, the challenge of equitable deployment of teachers still persists. Strategies to improve this include efforts to attract qualified teachers to underserved areas, upgrading Teacher training colleges to Diploma awarding institutions and training of untrained teachers by distance learning. However, there still remain major financing gaps which retard government's efforts in providing necessary inputs such as school infrastructure and trained personnel for quality education delivery, especially to rural communities. For example, the percentage of trained teachers in primary schools has decreased from 73.9% in 2003/04 to only 59.4% in 2007/08, according to the Government's Preliminary Report for the Education Sector Annual Review 2008. The situation is further worsened by the imposition of admission quotas on teacher training colleges, restricting their trainee numbers due to the lack of funds for payment of in-college allowances. Consequently, learning outcomes have not improved against expectation, and 800,000 children are still out of school due partly to this lack of adequate resources.

## 4.5 Debt Servicing and Education

For many years there have been concerns that low income countries have to pay a large amount of their national budget towards debt servicing, reducing the amount of funding available to invest in education. It is important to look at this issue in each country to determine whether paying back debts is continuing to undermine spending on education. It is also useful to understand whether agreements to cancel debts have truly contributed to increasing investment in education.

### Debt service vs education spending as % of GNI in selected countries

Burundi	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total debt service (% of GNI)	3	4	4	5	14	5	4	4
Public education expenditure, % of GNI	3	4	4	5	5	5	..	..
The Gambia								
Total debt service (% of GNI)	5	4	4	6	10	7	7	6
Public education expenditure, % of GNI	3	..	3	2	2	..	..	..
Kenya								
Total debt service (% of GNI)	5	4	4	4	2	3	2	2
Public education expenditure, % of GNI	5	5	6	7	7	7	7	..
Senegal								
Total debt service (% of GNI)	5	4	4	4	4	2	2	2
Public education expenditure, % of GNI	3	3	3	4	4	5	5	..
Sierra Leone								
Total debt service (% of GNI)	8	12	1	2	2	1	2	1
Public education expenditure, % of GNI	5	5	5	5	4	4	..	..
India								
Total debt service (% of GNI)	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	3
Public education expenditure, % of GNI	4	..	..	4	3	3	..	..
Pakistan								
Total debt service (% of GNI)	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	2
Public education expenditure, % of GNI	2	..	..	2	2	2	3	3

Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators and EdStat Online, retrieved July 2009



Looking at the table above, a few things can be highlighted. Firstly, generally speaking, debt service ratios to GNI have been decreasing in most (though not all) countries, while spending on education has increased. This is a sign that debt relief has allowed more resources to be directed to education. Secondly, while debt relief schemes have had a positive impact, countries still devote important portions of their national income to debt service, often to levels comparable and even higher than what they spend on education. Many countries also have not yet met the EFA-recommended average of 6% of GDP<sup>5</sup> and instead are still paying back large amounts of debt - The Gambia being a prime example as it still pays many times the amount devoted to education in debt service.

## 4.6 Education financing and teachers

Quality teachers are essential to quality education, but this self-evident requirement is being undermined. Indeed, many governments are undertaking large-scale recruitment of non-professional, para-professional or contract teachers. Neo-liberal policies pursued by Ministries of Finance, often under pressure from the IMF, leave Ministries of Education with few alternatives as unnecessarily tight constraints are placed on public spending, often including excessively tight limits on public sector pay.<sup>xxiv</sup> Governments are faced with a direct contradiction. They are under international pressure to expand primary school enrolments, but at the same time they are under even more powerful pressure to limit public spending and avoid employment of more teachers. The result is predictable, with governments:

- imposing wage freezes; or
- imposing recruitment freezes (and accepting large class sizes); or
- introducing contract-teachers (who can be hired and fired at will); or
- bringing non-professionals<sup>6</sup> into the workforce (with low qualifications and low salaries).

In many cases these policies are being actively advocated (sometimes officially, sometimes unofficially) by donors, most notably the World Bank. The Fast Track Initiative's unjustified guideline on teacher salary levels contributes to pressure on some governments to consider low cost alternatives to qualified teachers.



Unfortunately many NGOs in their noble intention to improve access and retention in remote areas are implicated in these policies, running non-formal education centres or community schools and recruiting contract or para teachers. Governments, under financial pressure, and encouraged by the World Bank, have seized on these examples to justify recruiting non-professionals into the formal education system. In some cases this is done on a massive scale. For example, at least 500,000 non-professional teachers have been recruited in India in recent years.

### This situation has led to:

- Distrust between unions and NGOs, which still persists in spite of growing cooperation in national education coalitions and the Global Action Week.
- The creation of a parallel and informal labour market that undermines the status of professional teachers.
- The fragmentation of the teaching population and consequent weakening of the capacity of teacher unions to engage in effective collective bargaining at national level.
- The spread of low quality and unregulated private schools targeting poor parents, operating at

very low cost paying non-professional teachers very low wages.

- Deterioration in the quality of education and the integrity of the public education system.

These sensitive issues need to be addressed directly and resolved if we want to build really strong national coalitions and campaigns. This is crucial, because it is becoming increasingly clear that national governments will not deliver on their promises and commitments unless there is a strong, coordinated domestic constituency that can hold them accountable. The stakes are high and the challenges are great. The ideal of education as an equalising force in society is coming under direct threat. People are encouraged to give up all hope of building a unitary public education system that guarantees quality education for all. Faced with this, those who still believe in quality public education need to stand together and build new alliances.

This is why Education International and ActionAid International have taken a strong stand, arguing that NGOs should not and cannot viably take on a service delivery role, absolving governments of their central responsibility to deliver on the right to education. Together we want to encourage others to join us in making a vocal stand in defence of quality public education, building stronger platforms and coalitions at national and international levels to oppose policies such as the use of non-professionals, and to challenge the root cause of these policies that lie in inadequate financing for education.

### **Challenging the use of non-professional teachers**

In April 2006 Adrian Verspoor, a World Bank education stalwart, made two highly dangerous claims to a major international conference convened by ADEA in Gabon. One claim, which he said was based on research (which he did not substantiate), was that there was no link between teacher training and learning outcomes. The second claim was that in Africa there were no

## **The case of para-teachers in India**

### **Box 9**

India provides a good example of how the implementation of IMF policies can lead to the hiring of para-teachers. After the launch of the World Bank supported 'District Primary Education Programme' in the 1990s, India has witnessed a phenomenal rise in the number of para-teachers from primary to senior secondary schools. The most recent figures from the Ministry of Human Resource Development record that more than 220,000 para-teachers were engaged in full time/ regular schools during the period from 1994-1999. In Andhra Pradesh – 35,000; Assam – 2,332; Gujarat – 26,485; Himachal Pradesh – 10,961; Kerala – 385; Madhya Pradesh – 1,18,000; Orissa – 380; West Bengal – 8,065; Uttar Pradesh – 19,758; Rajasthan – 18,269. Given that this practice is now firmly entrenched in almost every state of the country, the present count is likely to be substantially higher. Unofficial estimates put it in excess of 500,000.

The recruitment procedures and service conditions of these teachers (variously known as 'Shiksha Karmi', 'Guruji' 'Vidya Sahayak', 'Shikhan Sevaks', 'Vidya Volunteers' 'Sahyoginis', 'community teachers', 'Voluntary teachers' etc.) vary considerably across the states, as does the underlying rationale stated. In some states, such schemes were seen as interim or exceptional measures, whereas in others they are long-term policy. Madhya Pradesh comes in the latter category, where the regular teacher cadre is disappearing. Gradually, the exception appears to become the 'norm' all over the country. Often such a move is justified in financial terms as for one regular teacher's salary, 3 to 5 para-teachers can be appointed, and the governments' liability does not extend beyond salary.

However, there are now a large number of field studies that suggest that such schemes have little merit. As well as creating 'dualism' within the public provisioning, the damage to educational quality has been huge. World Bank reports are completely contradictory to these field studies and view Madhya Pradesh as providing "the most promising developments in primary education where communities have been allowed to hire informal teachers at much lower wages than possible in the civil service with much better performance in terms of attendance as well as educational outcomes". From "Contradicting Commitments", GCE 2005

differences in learning outcomes when children were in classes of anything up to 60. The policy message to Ministers was clear: close down teacher training colleges, employ non-professionals and cram more children into each classroom. This is surely a recipe for disaster.

No official World Bank publication would be so explicit but Verspoor's presentation to Ministers indicates a mind-set in parts of the institution that needs to be challenged if we are not to exacerbate an already problematic situation where 20% of primary teachers in Africa, and 30% in South Asia are untrained, most of them in rural schools.<sup>xxv</sup> The active promotion of non-professional teachers as a solution is at its most vigorous and intensive in francophone West Africa and South Asia, but there are similar approaches emerging in East and Central Africa and Latin America. This trend is likely to spread to many more countries in the coming years unless a very strong stand is taken. The EFA Fast Track Initiative is part of the problem here, both for having recommended a wage level for teachers set at 3.5% of GDP per capita (which has no credible basis) and then for encouraging countries to calculate average teacher salaries in a two-tier system: for "civil service teachers" and "contract teachers".

It is shocking that there has not been much systematic research on the impact of non-professional teachers on learning outcomes. The World Bank has been deliberately selective in highlighting research that proves

## The de-professionalisation of teachers in Senegal

### Box 10

"Being a teacher used to be such a prestigious job in Senegal. In every village the teacher was one of the most respected people. Now the system considers anybody ready to be a teacher." (Teacher Union representative)

In Senegal, in theory all teachers are trained but the length of the training has been decreasing, going from 4 years to only 6 months. In the 1990s, following falls in enrolment rates because of a lack of teachers, the system of 'volunteers' was introduced, in which teachers without a professional diploma were hired to fill the gap. Today this system has been institutionalised and is now the only route to teaching. 'Volunteers' do receive a basic 6 months training, but are paid about half the pay of those who are full civil servant teachers. After 2 years of volunteering they are allowed to take an exam to become civil servants, but every year only a limited number of volunteers are allowed to take the exam. These contract or non-professional teachers now make up 53% of all primary school teachers.

In addition to volunteers, there are also teachers in the system that have received little or no training, and are recruited arbitrarily through what is called the 'quota sécuritaire'. Once the regular new teacher spaces have been allocated, the gaps are filled with individuals who did not go through the formal hiring process. Some of them follow part of the 6 months training while others are parachuted into classrooms without any training. Many education actors consider this system highly politicised and corrupt. Following the dissemination of the ILOPS project research results among a wide-range of education actors, including the Minister of Education, the Government has announced that it will eliminate this way of hiring teachers. Following up on this statement will be an important task of education partners in Senegal.

Partners in the project noted that this de-professionalisation of teachers is likely to have long-term, negative impact on the education system and learning outcomes. A district education official pondered during the analysis workshop: "We have been noting how a good teacher needs to have a sense of mission and purpose towards his pupils. But do we know what kind of effect the deprofessionalisation of teachers can have on that necessary dedication? If anyone can be a teacher, how can the profession be respected? And if we don't value the teaching profession, how can we convince our kids that education is valuable?"

Taken from ActionAid (2009) "Great Expectations, Little Support: Primary School Teachers in Malawi, Senegal, Burundi and Uganda", following the Improving Learning Outcomes in Primary Schools (ILOPS) Project.

what they want to see, ignoring other research that shows, for example that the teaching of para-teachers tend to be dull<sup>xxvi</sup>, or research that shows civil service teachers systematically performing better than contract teachers (Vegas and De Laat).<sup>xxvii</sup> In 2008, ActionAid conducted participatory surveys with teacher unions and Ministry of Education officials in Malawi, Burundi, Senegal and Uganda in order to understand the situation of teachers in these 4 countries. The research found that there is a serious crisis of low motivation of teachers, and that in countries like Senegal, where the use of non-professional teachers has been widespread (they now form more than 50% of all primary school teachers), the entire profession has been de-valued. More research of this kind is needed - which looks at the effect of the spread of non-professionals and contract teachers on the overall education system and teaching profession.

Education International, ActionAid and some other NGOs are deeply concerned about this situation and have initiated a dialogue with the World Bank and others including ADEA and UNESCO. However, some World Bank people are actively arguing for the benefits of non-professionals and there has not been a strong coordinated stand against this. For a collective voice to be clearly heard it is important for unions and NGOs in different countries to develop a comprehensive position on this key issue. A blanket “no” to non-professionals is unlikely to be effective. Teacher Unions and NGOs need to consider the following, relating these to existing standards set by the International Labour Organisation (ILO):

- What happens when user fees are abolished and enrolment rises suddenly? Or what happens post-conflict when the education system needs to be rebuilt and there is a shortage of teachers? We need to agree what measures are acceptable in such emergency contexts to get a new cadre of people into schools, and define minimum standards even then.
- How is the transition from such situations to full professionalisation best managed? What are reasonable timeframes and procedures?
- What are the rights (including union rights) of non-professional teachers during transition periods?
- How do we deal with situations where decentralisation means communities are employing non-professional teachers for local schools (i.e. it is not part of a central government scheme even if government policy is partly to blame)?
- What happens when there is a real need to bring new groups of people into the teaching profession, for example women or people from certain minority groups? What are acceptable changes to entry requirements to motivate new groups to join the teaching profession?
- What changes are acceptable in response to HIV & AIDS in respect of approaches to the recruitment and training of teachers?
- What are the parameters within which parents and local people can be brought into schools as teaching assistants? How can we ensure that positive inputs don't turn into a negative impact on the professional status of teachers?

Teacher unions and progressive NGOs can develop strong and clear positions on these questions, adapted to their national context. They can also play a key role in reaching out to many others, including other NGOs, governments, bilateral and multilateral agencies to sign up to a code of good practice. Unless action is taken on this question, the spread of non-professional teachers will have a devastating impact on the teaching profession as a whole. As para-teachers organize themselves into separate associations rather than unions, existing teacher unions will find their bargaining power diminished so they can no longer negotiate liveable wages, fair contracts and decent working conditions. Everyone stands to lose from this, especially schoolchildren.

The following **recommendations** emerged from a meeting held by ActionAid and Education International in



South Africa in 2006, and may serve as a useful reference point for national discussions:

- There should be no more recruitment of non-professional teachers. It is a violation of children's right to quality education and leads to discrimination against poor children!
- Government should be the employers of all teachers in the public education system, with salaries set through national processes of collective bargaining.
- Governments should undertake workforce planning from now to 2015 to determine the number of teachers needed year on year to get all children into school in acceptable class sizes. A practice of ten-year comprehensive demographic-based education planning should also always be maintained. Governments should then invest in significantly expanding teacher training facilities to ensure that sufficient numbers of professional teachers are trained.
- In situations of unexpected or rapid expansion (e.g. following the abolition of user fees), governments should first bring into the workforce any unemployed trained teachers or retired professional teachers and seek to attract back into frontline teaching any trained teachers who are otherwise employed. If there is a remaining gap then, in consultation with teacher unions, emergency measures may be taken to bring in a temporary new cadre, who should be given accelerated opportunities for full professionalisation within a maximum of five years. Emergency measures may also be needed in situations of conflict but there should be explicit plans for time-bound transition agreed from the start.
- Clear agreements should be established on the minimum standards for pre-service teacher training, with reference to ILO / UNESCO standards. There is a need to improve the quality of present teacher training provision and develop regulatory mechanisms to ensure all facilities deliver quality training.
- National teacher unions should actively encourage existing non-professional teachers to become members.
- Existing non-professional teachers should be integrated into the professional workforce. They should

be given access to quality distance education courses, backed up with face-to face formal courses in vacations and school-level mentoring and support, leading to public examinations which must be achieved within a maximum five-year timeframe.

- There should be an end to single-teacher schools. Progress should be rapidly made towards having one teacher per grade, at least one classroom per grade, adequate sanitation facilities, and a balance of female and male teachers.
- All teachers should have access to good quality professional development courses and ongoing training.

## 4.7 Twenty questions for checking your knowledge

Hopefully in light of this section and your previous knowledge and experience you should have some answers to the following questions. If you are not sure how you would answer these you may want to do a little more background work. These questions can also be used as the basis for an interactive training session, posing the questions to participants to draw out their knowledge, and always having some broad answers available yourself.

1	What are the main things that the Ministry of Education should consider in developing its annual budget? What is the biggest part of the budget?
2	What are accepted international benchmarks for government spending on education? Does your government meet this?
3	Who are the main actors in developing the national education budget? Who has most power in making final decisions about the education budget?
4	What is the IMF? Who controls the IMF? Why does the IMF have power over countries where it does not set loan conditions? Why do Ministries of Finance listen to them?
5	What are the classic elements included in the IMF's macroeconomic framework? What is the IMF's biggest golden rule?
6	How does an overwhelming focus on low inflation affect education spending? What happens when you have inflation at 10% but are pressured to reduce it to 5%? What is the sacrifice ratio?
7	Is there a strong evidence basis for driving inflation under 5%? In opposing this are we advocating for high inflation?
8	How does a low deficit target impact on education?
9	What is the public sector wage bill? Who are the largest groups paid out of this? What happens when a cap is imposed on this?
10	Hasn't the IMF recently decided to remove wage bills caps? Will this make a difference?
11	Over what timeframe do governments plan? How does this affect education?
12	Who are the bilateral donors and the multilateral donors? Who is the most powerful?
13	What is the World Bank? Who controls it? Why do other donors accept the World Bank hegemony?
15	Isn't UNESCO supposed to lead on EFA? Why doesn't it?
16	What are all the donors supposed to do according to Dakar Framework? What should they do according to the Paris Aid Effectiveness agenda?
17	What is the Fast Track Initiative? Does it fit the Paris Aid Effectiveness agenda? What is the role of the World Bank in the FTI? Can the FTI be saved / reformed?
18	What can we learn from the global financial crisis? What opportunities are there?
19	Who should we hold to account for all this mess?
20	We say that we need to increase the '4 S's'. What are these?





5

frequently  
asked  
questions

## 5. Frequently asked questions

These can be useful to re-cap or give quick responses to issues raised around education financing.

### **Can a government in a poor country afford to educate all its children?**

It depends. The Dakar promise was based on the understanding that poor countries would do their utmost to achieve EFA and would be assisted by donors in this case. Some have not demonstrated willingness to allocate enough of their own resources to education and fall short of the 20% / 6% targets. But an increasingly large number of poor countries have increased their budgetary allocation to the recommended level of 20%, but find still themselves short of the cash required to reach all children, youth and illiterate adults. This is likely to result from a complex combination of factors: too much of the education spending may be benefiting urban middle class men (for example, heavy spending to subsidise universities versus inadequate spending on rural primary schools and women's literacy programmes); some of the education budget may be wasted through corruption, or through high repetition rates; macroeconomic policies may unnecessarily restrict government borrowing and spending as a whole; or low tax revenues may also reduce the size of government's budget "pie". Lack of tax revenue can in turn be related to weak and corrupt tax administration; low economic growth (not enough individuals and companies earning enough income to be taxed); attempts to attract foreign investment by offering lots of tax concessions to overseas investors; or tax evasion and tax avoidance by companies. A combination of aid, improving the effectiveness and poverty-impact of existing education spending, a stronger tax system, and more flexible macroeconomic frameworks, together with political will on the part of government, can and should enable countries to finance EFA.

### **Government schools are overwhelmed and of poor quality. Isn't the answer to support more NGO run community schools and more private schools?**

No country has ever achieved universal access to basic education other than through sustained efforts by national governments. Private schools will only ever benefit a modest percentage of children whose parents can afford to pay. NGO run schools are not sustainable. They can even undermine the rights of children from poor families as the NGOs absolve the government of their responsibility, and yet NGOs cannot sustain centres indefinitely without handing them over to government. The impact of efforts made by anyone else is a drop in the ocean compared to the impact that can be made by serious government effort.

### **So should we campaign against private schools?**

In some contexts this may make sense, but often we are compromised as middle class NGO and government workers may send their own children to private schools. It is often better to focus our attention on making government schools work, increasing their accountability and improving their quality so that middle class parents are progressively more confident to send their children to government schools. In some cases it makes sense to challenge aberrations such as where public money is subsidising private education (e.g. through tax breaks).

### **With millions of children still excluded from school should we prioritise increasing access or improving the quality of existing schools? We can't afford to do both.**

There should be no need for choosing between improving access and improving quality. If sufficient priority and budget allocation is made and government manages resources well, then significant progress can be made on both fronts.

### **What is the best way to improve the quality of education?**

Where there are large class sizes, of over 100 children per teacher, then little learning can take place, so bringing down class sizes is fundamental. A ratio of 40 children per teacher is widely considered to be the maximum level for quality education. Ideally class sizes should be smaller than this. This means more teachers. But the quality of teachers is perhaps the key factor in improving the quality of learning. Teachers need to be trained and have access to continued professional development. Making schools accountable is also key to improving quality, and this can be a balance between being accountable to the local community and being accountable to local and national government. There are many other factors but these are a good starting point for any debate on quality.

### **Isn't the biggest problem the mismanagement of existing budgets? How can you argue for more money when existing budgets are poorly spent and there is widespread corruption?**

There may be corruption in education systems (Transparency International have documented some useful examples of how this can happen) and it is important to expose this. One major priority is for civil society organisations to track education budgets so as to know what money is supposed to arrive in each district and in each school. Building the capacity of SMCs/PTAs (School Management Committees/Parents Teachers Associations) can really help, as can the posting of school budgets on notice-boards. Civil society organisations (CSOs) should be the first to condemn scams such as ghost teachers on payrolls and should be willing to support taking corrupt officials and head-teachers to court. The more independent scrutiny there is of the budget, the more we can make the case that new investments in education will reach where they are needed and will make a difference. But it is important to argue at the same time both for measures to stop corruption and for more budget allocation, where governments are falling short of accepted norms for spending on education.

### **What are the accepted international norms for government spending on education?**

It is widely accepted that governments should spend at least 20% of national budgets on education and at least 6% of GDP should be invested in education. These should be regarded as minima.

### **If national governments have the prime responsibility why are we blaming the IMF? Doesn't this let governments off the hook?**

Our central focus should be on national governments, especially parliaments and Ministries of Finance. Often they come under massive pressure from the IMF or from investors and private sector interests (domestic and foreign) to keep public spending low in order to reduce their fiscal deficit and/or control inflation, or to keep company tax rates low as a trade-off for attracting investment. The pressure of national citizens, parliamentarians and media can make a real difference to the equation. They will be emboldened if there is public, media and parliamentary pressure. CSOs need to play a role in showing that there are alternatives and that investment in public services, especially education, is key to growth and prosperity. We must never let governments off the hook!

### **Our government spends most of its money on defence. Surely the lack of spending on education is their own fault?**

Yes. Governments always have budgetary choices to make. Even here though, macroeconomic policies can make an impact. If monetary and fiscal policy is too tight, the overall size of the government budget may be too small to finance all of the nation's priorities. If the overall budget were larger, there may be space for more balanced investment. If monetary and fiscal policy is too lax, an ever-growing burden of public debt and high inflation may choke economic growth, so that government has less and less income to tax. We should remember that we want to increase the 4 Ss – increase the size of the budget overall, increase the share of the budget for education, increase the scrutiny of the budget and increase the sensitivity of the budget.



### **Why doesn't our Minister of Finance like spending on education?**

No Minister of Finance would ever say openly that they don't support spending on education. They are likely instead to say they have nothing to do with education and that their only concern is macroeconomic stability. If pushed they may say that they value education and seek to protect education budgets. Usually "protect" means "freeze" or "not cut", and this is dangerous at a time when the education system is expanding, with more children in school and an urgent need for new teachers. It is fair to assume that Ministries of Finance don't want to be malicious towards education. They just don't think about it much and don't believe their other policies are having a negative impact. It is a particular problem that most macroeconomic models are focused on 3 to 5 years as this means that Ministries of Finance never factor in the long term economic returns to education. We can change this! It should of course be noted that not all Finance Ministers are the same – and some are genuinely supportive of investment in education!

### **Surely macroeconomic stability is important?**

Of course! None of us are arguing for instability. But the dominant view of what is stable is very short-sighted and represents a very extreme view which is not backed up by the economics literature<sup>xxviii</sup>.

### **Surely inflation is bad and should be kept down? Don't the poor suffer most from inflation?**

Yes inflation can be very damaging but there is no evidence that constantly driving inflation under 5% is necessary for stability. If there is a trade off between significantly increasing spending on education to recruit thousands of new teachers, and having inflation rise by 1%, then it may be a sound judgment to increase spending. Indeed, poor people may benefit more from having better services than having inflation reduced by 1%. The important thing is that governments should be free to discuss these trade-offs and do so transparently, and their decisions should not be determined by conditions imposed on them from outside.

### **I still don't get it. How does the insistence on low inflation mean less money for education?**

If a government has to focus all its attention on hitting a target for very low inflation, whether that target is set by the Minister of Finance or by the IMF as a condition linked to a loan, then they have to be very wary of any increase in spending, particularly on salaries. If teachers get paid more or there are more teachers, there will



be more money in the economy chasing the same amount of goods so this will lead to pressure for price rises (until producers produce more goods).

**So what about low deficit targets? Surely that just makes sense? You can't spend more than you earn.**

Of course in the long term governments need to balance their budgets. But in the short term it can make sense to spend more today if that spending is a good investment for the future. Spending on education is about the best possible investment in the future of a country so it can make sense to spend into deficit if you are investing strategically in education.

**Isn't concern with the public sector wage bill sensible when we have a bloated government bureaucracy? Someone has to stop the government from spending so much on itself.**

There are cases where central governments spend excessively and wastefully and this should be scrutinized and challenged. But the largest group paid out of the public sector wage bill is teachers and the second largest group is health workers. When there is an externally imposed ceiling on the wage bill it is teachers and health workers who suffer first. It is not an effective tool for reforming government bureaucracy or excesses in the civil service.

**But surely every country must put some ceiling on its public sector wage bill?**

Yes, there is nothing wrong with setting a target for public sector wage bill spending. It is a responsible thing to do. The question is, who sets the target and how? It should be the national government NOT the IMF that sets this. And the government should set the target based on the number of teachers, health workers etc., that are needed to achieve national development goals. It is wrong if a ceiling is set before a proper analysis of needs. And it is wrong if a projection or target becomes an absolute ceiling which ignores changing realities on the ground (e.g. to respond to surges of enrolment in schools).

**Why does anyone pay attention to the IMF? Why doesn't our government just ignore them?**

The IMF is one of the most powerful organisations in the world; some would say the most powerful. Central to its power is that it gives countries a credit rating which lets investors know whether they are a safe place



to invest. If you get a bad credit rating then you are unlikely to attract foreign investment or aid. If you do not agree with the IMF's view of the world and you deviate from their advice then they are likely to score you badly and your economy will suffer, especially if you are a small country. Larger countries are more likely to be able to ignore the IMF's advice and get away with it. Few rich countries listen to the IMF. The US government has the largest deficit of any country. Latin American countries are increasingly ignoring the IMF's advice as did many of the Pacific Rim tiger economies during their rapid economic growth. But most smaller, poorer countries are frightened to challenge the hegemonic power of the IMF.

### **What can be done?**

Civil society organisations have an important role to play in opening up this decision-making process and putting pressure on governments to consider the trade-offs when choosing restrictive rather than expansionary macroeconomic policies. We should demand greater transparency every time that IMF missions come to the country (usually every six months) and we should expose the ideological nature of their policy prescriptions. We need to build our own economic literacy and build strong coalitions that link education activists to others (e.g. on health, HIV, women's rights). We should also help to build the understanding of parliamentarians and the media. Strong demands from all of us can force governments to consider alternative macroeconomic policies which could lead to significant increases in spending for education and other development goals. Our central focus must be on our own national government and specifically on the Ministry of Finance, making the case for investment in education as powerfully as possible. Unless we can change the present dynamic, and hold governments democratically accountable for the macroeconomic choices they make, the MDGs and EFA goals will remain a distant dream.





**6**

**ten key points  
on education  
financing**

## 6. Ten key points on education financing

1. To ensure the achievement of education for all, national governments should be spending at least 6% of their GDP and 20% of their national budgets on education. Any government that fails to reach these levels of spending should be challenged.
2. The most important source of funding for education is from national taxation. Education advocates need to support progressive taxation policies that will provide sustainable funding in the longer term.
3. The international community has repeatedly promised to fill any resource gaps where national governments have credible plans to achieve EFA and are investing their own resources. At least \$16 billion in international aid is needed each year to fill this gap but present aid falls far short of this. Pressure should be placed on all Northern governments to pay their fair share of this resource gap and to provide aid in a predictable and harmonised form.
4. Trained teachers are the single most important ingredient to ensure all children receive a quality education. About 18 million professional teachers need to be recruited globally by 2015 to ensure that all children are in classes of a manageable size (no more than 40 children per teacher). There is particular urgency for the recruitment of new teachers in countries where enrolment in primary schools has surged in recent years owing to the abolition of user fees or rapidly growing populations. In many countries there is a particular need to employ more female teachers as this directly impacts on the number of girls that enrol, attend and succeed in school.
5. It is the government's obligation to hire and train the number of teachers needed to provide quality education. Teachers are paid out of a line item in the national budget called the public sector wage bill, which also pays for doctors, nurses and other civil servants. Setting the size of that wage bill is one of the most important economic decisions a national government can make.
6. In many low income countries, the setting of the public sector wage bill is determined less by national governments and more by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) who impose a set of restrictive macroeconomic targets that governments feel compelled to agree to.
7. Until recently, the IMF directly imposed public sector wage bill caps or ceilings in about half of the countries with which it had agreements. This was a direct block on the ability of governments to employ more teachers. Following successful campaigning, the IMF now says it will no longer use wage bill caps as a routine condition. This needs to be tracked in practice. It is a step forward, but it is not enough.
8. Where the IMF has removed wage-bill conditionalities, Ministries of Finance are still often forced to impose their own tight restrictions on the wage bill in order to comply with other IMF conditions. Most notably, low inflation targets and low deficit targets imposed by the IMF prevent governments from increasing spending on education. So, whilst the explicit caps have been removed, the IMF policies are still blocking progress on education.



9. One fundamental problem is that the IMF reinforces a tendency for governments to focus on short to medium term planning (over 3 to 5 years with 6 monthly reviews). In this timeframe, spending on education looks like pure consumption: like pouring money down a drain. If you take a longer term view then spending on education is a sound investment. Indeed it is one of the most productive investments a country can make, yielding significant growth and economic development. Ministries of Finance need to plan for long term national development and should factor into their short and medium term plans, the long term benefits of investment in education.
  
10. National governments and particularly Ministries of Finance should place the achievement of national education and development goals at the centre of all their economic planning. This should include proper workforce planning so that there are sufficient numbers of trained teachers to bring down class sizes. Civil society organisations, parliamentarians, the media and others should demand transparent discussion on education budgets and should put pressure on governments to resist the ideologically driven restrictive macroeconomic policies that the IMF seeks to impose.







# Part B

what you need to do  
on education financing



7

developing your  
education financing  
**campaign**

## 7. Developing your education financing campaign

### 7.1 Getting started

Often education activists think that engaging in education financing and macro-economics is very difficult. It is hard to find the right partners, information on the issue is often not available and if it is, it is difficult to find people with relevant expertise to make sense of the complex data in finance documents. But our experience in recent years has shown that it is possible to build effective campaigns on education financing, and that it is essential to do so if we are serious about achieving EFA.

The bottom line is that without more money that is better spent, we will not achieve the EFA goals in many countries, and it is national campaigns that are the key to making the difference. Whilst international actors like the IMF and World Bank are powerful and largely unaccountable, we can make a massive difference by focusing attention on Ministries of Finance, parliamentarians and the media. We do not all need to become professional economists. Rather we can become para-economists, demystifying education financing so that it makes sense to everyone. If we work together, linking the expertise that exists with teacher unions, NGOs and other actors, we can build formidable campaigns that have a real impact. If we form the right partnerships we can learn together, developing a clear understanding of the issues and building consensus and ownership step by step.

The very first step then is to find others within your own and like-minded organisations who are interested in taking on this work. Share the materials in this pack with these people and organise some discussion groups / seminars to explore the issues raised. There is no need to rush. Together you can map out other education actors in the country who may be interested to work with you, and once you have a critical mass of people, convene a national workshop to share your ideas and plan how to move forward together. It is important that this is not dependent on just one or two people or agencies. Try to build understanding and consensus with as many people as you can as you go along. If needed, seek some support for capacity building, either from within your own country or by contacting ActionAid, Education International, the Global Campaign for Education or any other organization which can offer you the relevant expertise. There are experienced trainers available to help you build your understanding and facilitate strategic planning.

It helps enormously to develop a national evidence base, pulling together key documents and data. Section 9 of this toolkit provides some guidelines on the data you may wish to collect, and questions you may want to ask to key stakeholders. Ideally such research should be done collaboratively using a participatory approach, not just commissioned from a consultant, as in this way you can really build your understanding and expertise. It is crucial to build a campaign that is based on the specific situation of your own country, one that uses international evidence and documents, but only as a starting point. For example, countries have different relationships with the IMF, and different type of agreements and therefore levels of influence exist. In some countries there is no currently active IMF loan, in which case advocacy activities targeted at the IMF would not be as relevant and useful as in countries when the organisation has arguably a more direct influence on policy-making. Sometimes regional organisations are more influential than the IMF and sometimes national



governments independently pursue extremely conservative policies which undermine the space for spending on education. You must build your campaign based on your own distinct national context with credible information and evidence.

There is a lot that can be done even without building a specific campaign. However, if you want to secure substantial change, a focused campaign on education financing can make a real difference. This section explores some basics about campaigning, providing suggestions and tools for those who want to pursue this path. Many of you may already be familiar with how to build a campaign, and we urge you to draw on your own experience of what works in your context. We hope that these suggestions may help you along the path.

### **What is a campaign?**

- It consists of different strategies aimed at securing positive changes of policies and practices at local, provincial, national and/ or international levels.
- It involves working with other people and organisations to make a difference.
- It is about speaking up, drawing attention to an important issue, and directing decision-makers towards a solution.
- It involves putting a problem on the agenda, providing a solution to that problem and building mass popular support for action to solve the problem.

### **Key principles of a successful campaign**

**FOCUS:** Setting specific objectives, concentrating energy and resources, and undertaking research and analysis to decide your focus

**CLARITY:** Having clear objectives and strategy

**CREDIBILITY:** A message based on reliable information coming from a credible source

**RELEVANCE:** Having a connection to the people you need to involve or to target. Proposing clear solutions or alternatives to the problem you want to solve.

**TIMING:** Finding the best time or opportunity to launch any action.

**COMMITMENT:** Keeping the people in the campaign on alert until the end, when the situation is changed.

### **Basic questions to ask when developing a strategy**

1. What do you want to change? (identifying the problem, formulating your goal and objectives)
2. Who has the power to make that change? (undertaking power analysis)
3. With whom can you work to bring about change? (mapping stakeholders and key actors)
4. What will convince them to make the change? (tactics and communication strategy)
5. What should you do to convince them? (action plan)

## **The importance of campaign strategy**

**Box 11**

“One of the most common mistakes campaigners make is to fall into the activity trap. One goes straight from good intentions into full activity mode – with or without activity plans. The result is often misused resources, frustration and, ultimately, failure ... by pausing a little and doing some homework on strategy, campaigners can have a much better chance of channeling their resources towards the outcomes they are after.”

From “Campaigning for freedom of expression, A handbook for advocates.” International Freedom of Expression Exchange.

## 7.2 Developing your campaign goal

Your campaign goal is the thing which all the members of the coalition will unite behind, which sets out the change you ultimately wish to see in a clear, concise and practical way. The core members of the campaign coalition will need to define and agree on the wording of the goal together, to ensure unanimous support, and it can then be used to attract the support and buy-in of other actors.

These are some goals that have been identified for campaigns on education financing. Yours will be distinct to your country but these may help you consider how to frame your goal.

- The government allocates and spends at least 20% of the national budget to education by 2011.
- All barriers to teacher recruitment are removed by 2011 so that the minimum pupil teacher ratio is met.
- At the end of the campaign, civil society organizations are strong and relevant advocates for education financing.

**Once a goal has been defined it can be helpful to subject it, and yourselves as a group, to a quick analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. For example:**

<h3>Strengths</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expertise in advocacy work</li> <li>• Knowledge of the local environment</li> <li>• Teacher unions are very conversant with the issue</li> <li>• Some CSOs members of the group are already engaged on education budget work</li> </ul>	<h3>Weaknesses</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weak collaboration / lack of coordination among CSO actors</li> <li>• Teacher unions are divided</li> <li>• Lack of financial resources for campaigning</li> <li>• Lack of expertise in macroeconomics</li> <li>• Leadership problems among CSOs</li> </ul>
<h3>Opportunities</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existence of a CSO platform</li> <li>• Political will exists for provision of quality education</li> <li>• Existence of over 50,000 unabsorbed qualified and trained teachers</li> <li>• Existence of data to contradict MoF's stand on education financing</li> <li>• A vocal parliamentary education committee</li> <li>• National election year</li> <li>• Existence of laws/</li> <li>• National constitutions acknowledge right to education</li> </ul>	<h3>Threats</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caps on teacher employment wages</li> <li>• Short term financing frameworks</li> <li>• Preference for debt servicing over spending</li> <li>• Migration of qualified teachers</li> <li>• Low quality of education</li> <li>• Public not informed of the issue</li> </ul>

*From the ActionAid strategic campaigning on education workshop, 2006*



Issues\ criteria	Will it lead to positive change?	Chance of success?	Can it be dealt with by advocacy?	Timeliness?	Score
Lack of priority to education (present spending falls short of 20% of GNP)					
Restrictive macroeconomic conditions imposed by the IMF					
Lack of CSO capacity on education financing					
Lack of civil society space in government negotiations with IMF					

From the ActionAid strategic campaigning on education workshop, 2006

## Example of Problem tree

Figure 2

CAUSES	PROBLEM (the trunk): LACK OF INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION	EFFECT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Cap on teacher recruitment</li> <li>o Lack of adequate financial resources</li> <li>o Budget deficit</li> <li>o Debt servicing</li> <li>o Unfavourable terms of trade</li> <li>o Lack of tax base</li> <li>o Lack of priority for education</li> <li>o High poverty rate</li> <li>o Lack of transparency in IMF/Govt negotiations</li> <li>o Conflict of interest of govt officials</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Teacher migration</li> <li>o Shortage of teachers</li> <li>o Recruitment of para teachers</li> <li>o Poor quality teaching and learning</li> <li>o Reduced enrolment</li> <li>o Increased drop outs</li> <li>o High rate of illiteracy</li> <li>o Poor human resource</li> <li>o Low learning outcomes</li> </ul>

From the ActionAid strategic campaigning on education workshop, 2006



## 7.3 Identifying who can make the difference

One of the first instincts of people who campaign on macroeconomics and strategic financing issues is to blame the IMF in Washington, but then they rapidly feel powerless to take action to change this as the IMF is so monolithic. It is important to identify those who have power at different levels and to determine where you can realistically influence the power structures.

### Your advocacy targets

#### Box 12

It can be helpful to categorize each actor as **direct or indirect targets**.

**Direct targets** are usually the key policy makers, elected officials and senior government officials with the authority to take specific action on the advocacy objective.

**Indirect targets** are those who influence the key decision makers and have the power to shape public opinion, such as the media. Reaching these indirect targets may be as important as reaching the primary decision makers.

At a national level this will often be the government in power, and within that the Ministry of Finance, but every country is different. The Central Bank may be key, the President's office or a business association with disproportionate influence over the government's economic policy. The National Assembly when rightly briefed on the issue can be very strong actor of change, as can media networks, opinion leaders, IMF and World Bank representatives, foreign embassies, budget support group, intergovernmental organisations, community leaders, etc. For a power analysis to be useful, especially in the south, the individuals within the institutions are as important if not more important than the institution itself

It can help to make an inventory of individuals, institutions or organizations that have the power either to effect or obstruct the desired change. It is helpful to do this power analysis in a group making cards for each actor – perhaps with cards of different sizes so that you can visualise their power - and moving the cards around to show the inter-connections.

(For an example, see the targets and partnership chart on page 60). There can be a second level of hidden power analysis ... who has influence over the first layer?

## 7.4 Building partnerships, alliances and networks

If we want to make the case for education heard clearly, we need strong, broad-based coalitions. More and more people are recognising this and acting on it. Since the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, perhaps the most important change in the field of education has been the emergence of national, regional and global campaigns on education. Ten years ago, civil society organisations rarely came together in common platforms to assert the right to education. Now there are GCE-recognised coalitions or campaigns in 65 countries and activists on education regularly come together in another 50 countries for joint actions (for example the GCE Global Action Week each April). Indeed, the coordination of civil society action on education around the world is probably more extensive and more organised than in any other sector or on any other issue.

**Some history helps to explain this. In September 1999, four organisations came together in Brussels to form the Global Campaign for Education:**

- Education International – the international federation of teacher unions who were campaigning on quality public education;
- ActionAid - which was running the Elimu campaign to democratise decision-making on education in Africa, Asia and Latin America;
- Oxfam – which was running Education Now – a campaign on education financing;

- Global March against Child Labour – who were linking the abolition of child labour to the universalisation of education.

The Global Campaign for Education was initially conceived as a short term campaign to put pressure on the global community in 2000 around the failure to achieve education for all. Everyone recognised the potential gains from working together, even though there were clear tensions on certain issues. The unions still perceived NGOs to be responsible for running non-formal education centres, contributing to privatisation of education and undermining the professional status of teachers. At several points the meeting could have fallen apart. But a core statement was agreed and areas of dispute were set to one side.



The initial agenda of the Global Campaign for Education was simple. The first priority was to get recognition of the crisis in education, challenging the complacency of UNESCO and the World Bank as well as governments. But when the GCE started to talk of a global crisis in education, UNESCO's immediate response was to enquire, "what crisis?", and suggest that the GCE was being irresponsible in raising such a suggestion. The second priority was to build a coherent set of positions between the NGOs and teacher unions. This was done progressively in the following months through extensive e-mail consultation which led to the development of **nine baseline positions** for the World Education Forum held in Dakar to review progress on EFA. These positions proved influential, and joint lobbying by the GCE led to the emergence of a strong Framework for Action from Dakar in April 2000. This could have been the end of GCE – but a collective reflection at the end of Dakar led to a pledge to continue the GCE in order to hold the international community to account for implementing this framework. In every campaign there will be such moments: do you achieve a goal and then fold the campaign, or do you critically reflect and re-align? The key is for partners, together, to have space for collective reflection.

The creation of the GCE was followed by the creation of regional campaigns like ANCEFA (the Africa Network Campaign on EFA), which emerged after Dakar, and by the emergence of other regional alliances such as ASPBAE (Asia and South Pacific Bureau of Basic and Adult Education – which previously only focused on

adult education) and CLADE (Latin American Campaign on the Right to Education) . The momentum also led to the creation of many more national coalitions and campaigns, creating a common national platform for diverse actors such as teacher unions, NGOs, community and faith based organisations, parent groups, parliamentarians, child labour activists, the women's movement, people's organisations etc. But central to the success of these coalitions is a partnership between teacher unions and NGOs.

**These coalitions have taken on diverse roles, for example:**

- Raising the profile of education goals at a national level;
- Demystifying education budgets and tracking what happens to budgets in practice;
- Compiling learning about what works in getting different excluded groups into school;
- Working with parliamentary caucuses or cross-party groups to deepen domestic accountability;
- Influencing government policies and practices;
- Promoting public and media debate;
- Strengthening the involvement of citizens in education at local and district level;
- Undertaking strategic research and collating evidence;
- Running specific campaigns e.g. for the abolition of user fees;
- Participating in consultation processes e.g. for Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers or education sector reforms;
- Lobbying key donors and UN agencies to provide more effective and better coordinated aid.

If we are to achieve progress on education for all and hit the targets set for 2015, these broad-based education coalitions will play a very important role. Particularly, to influence big issues around education financing, we will always need to work with others. Indeed, if we want to see substantial change to the investments made by national governments and the international community, the broader the alliances

## Building alliances

### Box 13

A coalition of people or organisations doing advocacy work can achieve more together than individually. However, coalitions take time and energy to develop and maintain because they involve building relationships of trust between people and keeping people constantly informed and involved. Many advocates find this the most difficult part of their work, and yet the most rewarding, both professionally and personally.

Coalitions can be short or long term, formal or informal. For example, in the short term they can take advantage of gatherings such as meetings, conferences and workshops to promote an issue and gather signatures for petitions. Alternatively, campaigns and actions can be built and undertaken over several years. When engaging on education financing, you may need to mobilise people from outside of the traditional EFA coalitions to ensure that it is a strong, nationwide campaign.

Forming a coalition to undertake advocacy work is not the same as being part of a network, which can also be useful to share information between organisations.

There can sometimes be an overlap between allies and 'indirect targets', those who are sympathetic to your advocacy objective and also have influence over influential people, but need some initial influencing to persuade them to support the change that needs to be made.



the better. This may involve linking with those who have expertise in other sectors – in public finance or debt work, in health or HIV, in legal or human rights work – as there are strong inter-connections on all fronts with making progress on education.<sup>xxix</sup>

## **Mapping your allies**

We need many actors to work together to engage with the national budget process and to focus attention on where the real decision-making power lies: the Ministry of Finance. Regarding education financing, while teacher unions and ActionAid partners are likely to be natural allies in this work it is important to list down and reach out to other potential allies on these issues. Perhaps most obviously the national education coalition will be interested, but consider also key national or local NGOs, academics, campaign groups, debt or child labour activists, faith-based groups, human rights agencies, the women's movement, people's organisations, government officials, current or ex-ministers and parliamentarians, media outlets or journalists. Reach out as far as you can to identify your allies.

### **Specifically it is important to ask yourselves:**

- Who else is already working on education financing and what are they doing?
- Who else should we include because of their potential positive impact on education financing?
- Who are the “strategic allies” (with whom you share common values and a long-term basis for united work), or “tactical allies” (who may only be reliable allies for the duration of the campaign or a particular aspect of the issue)?

### **You can also go further and for each key ally ask:**

- What will they gain by joining your alliance?
- What can they offer to the work on education financing? What is their expertise or strength (e.g. mobilisation, national coverage, data collection, knowledge of education financing, previous work on education budget, resources, etc)?
- What are their limitations (e.g. lack of capacity on education and macro-economics, no follow up mechanism, etc)?



## Engaging parliamentarians in Bangladesh

Box 14

Finding sympathetic parliamentarians can make a big difference to your campaigning. In Bangladesh the People's Empowerment Trust (PET) convened a parliamentary caucus on education, starting in 2004. Despite the initial reservations of some MPs about the need for the caucus, it rapidly established itself and today plays a crucial role in keeping education on the agenda. It does this by functioning as a multi-party representative forum, unhindered by political party affiliations, in a country where party loyalties often prevent proper debate. Members of the caucus are free to raise issues and hold government institutions accountable even if they are members of the governing party.

PET has conducted workshops for members of the education caucus on a range of issues such as: their role as MPs in the caucus and parliament; the national education policy; the Poverty Reduction Strategy and education; disability and education and understanding quality issues in the education sector. Caucus members have also been supported to visit other national parliaments to learn how their caucuses operate.

The caucus used research by one group (The Innovators) to show that national education expenditure was only 2.3% of GDP in 2003, while international standards recommended a figure of 6%. This effort contributed to a small but important increase in education expenditure to 2.7% in 2004/05. The caucus and the Ministry of Education have also taken steps to introduce legislation in parliament to amend the Constitution to recognize education as a fundamental right, rather than a principle. This would make the right to education justiciable.

The education caucus also holds regular parliamentary hearings, providing a platform for children and parents to express their education concerns, thus enabling poor, disadvantaged, minority or disabled children and their families to contribute to policy debates. These platforms have led some government officials to take immediate actions to rectify situations

**ActionAid Bangladesh**

### *Recognising the advantages and challenges of partnership*

Most activists recognise the advantages of a strong partnership as: synergy, power in numbers, multiplying resources, more legitimacy and credibility, greater effectiveness and impact, wider coverage and stronger common goals. However there are also challenges which must be recognised, such as sustaining commitment, balancing individual /coalition identity, addressing power imbalances and distortions, dealing with underlying competitiveness, building real understanding and trust, maintaining democratic processes or being fully transparent and equally accountable to all members. It can help to address these if we reflect on what each partner or member of a coalition or campaign brings to the table.

## Sample matrix to reflect on our skills and experience

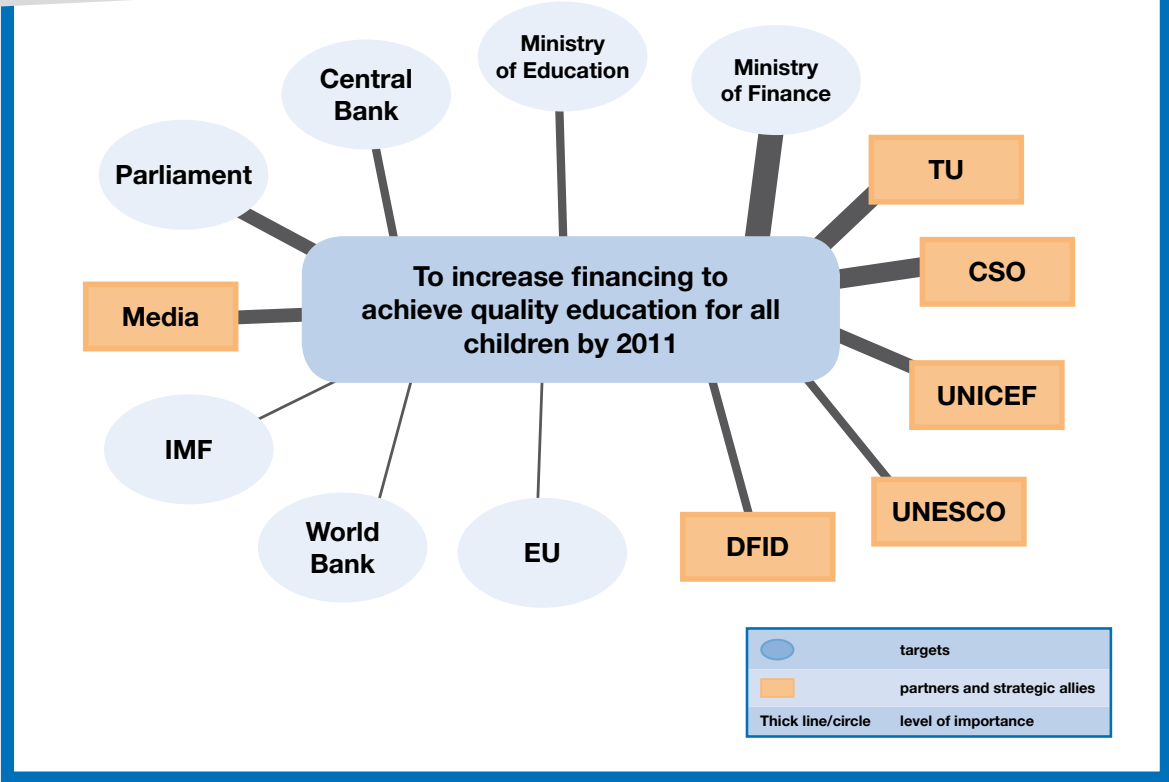
**Figure 3**

	Research & policy analysis	National coverage	Participatory methods	Gender culture sensitivity	Fundraising	Documentation
Teacher Union						
Education Coalition						
Debt network						
Media network						
ActionAid						
Human rights organisation						
Other						

*Adapted from ILOP project workshop in Uganda and strategic campaign on education Financing workshop in Malawi- 2008*

## Sample targets and partners chart

**Figure 4**



*Chart developed by participants at the 2006 AA strategic campaigning on education workshop.*

## 7.5 Planning your campaign

### Setting your objectives

An objective is a short-term target that contributes towards achieving your long-term aim or goal. Objectives usually describe the outcome or end result of your activities. They should be as SMART as possible, that is: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound.

**Some examples of objectives include:**

- i) By the end of the campaign, civil organizations have been able to propose quality alternatives and influence government decisions
- ii) To make the government recruit 10, 000 qualified and trained teachers –male and female- for the next school term.

### Defining your tactics and strategies

Once you are clear about your different objectives which will help you to achieve your goal, you will need to identify the appropriate strategies for reaching those objectives. The key question here is: what can you do to convince people of your arguments?

Your tactics will be different depending not only on your specific objective, but also on the audience you are trying to reach. The challenge is to identify the advocacy tools and techniques that will be most effective in reaching the different targets. For example:

- Which tactic will you use to deal with MPs? The media? Local World Bank representatives? Local government? etc
- Who are the right coalition partners to reach the target?
- What kinds of communications materials do the target audience use, access or respect?

### Envisioning the change

#### Box 15

Your objectives may be about:

- **A change in policy**, practice or law: e.g. the abolition of school fees; the MoE being more involved in budget allocation process with the MoF.
- **A change in institutions**: e.g. governance reforms.
- **A change in behaviour and attitudes**: e.g. the involvement of more parents in school budget processes.
- **A change in the stakeholders**: e.g. the recruitment of more female teachers.

Ideally, a well-defined campaign objective must answer the following questions:

- What are the expected changes?
- How much will things change?
- When will this happen?
- Which effects do we intend to generate campaign targets and stakeholders?



**Below are some different types of tactics which can support your objectives:**

**Awareness-raising:**

- Put the issue on the national agenda through information, capacity building of key actors and general public.
- Build the capacity of civil society organizations and teacher unions on macro-economics.
- Giving relevant training to the media networks (for example, on macroeconomics and education, budget allocation process, school fees or government engagement on education) will have a huge impact on your campaign because they are key in building general public awareness.
- Involve the beneficiaries: children, parents, teacher unions, and community based organizations.
- Use accessible language and materials.
- Make use of influential persons and opinion leaders.

**Networking and alliance building:**

- Involve key partners from the beginning and throughout (in the planning workshop, for capacity building, dissemination of the report, etc.).
- Strengthen the national education coalition through capacity building, coordination of activities, and better use of each organization's expertise.
- Provide regular updates and briefings to keep the momentum going.
- Enlarge the coalition to include economists, debt groups, human rights associations etc.
- Use the teacher unions, parents and teachers intensively.

**Policy and power analysis:**

- Map out decision-making powers between different government and external actors, including the IMF, Ministry of Finance, Central Bank, Ministry of Education and National Assembly.
- Identify key targets including your allies and opponents.
- Identify opponents.
- Develop your strategy to access targets.





## Mobilisation

For a successful mobilisation, you need to answer the following two questions:

1. What types of popular actions make your government react
2. What are the issues around which communities rally ... or what makes people tick?

Your job as a campaigner or an activist is to link your issue to the things that make people tick, to rally them around that issue and propose an action that actually make the government react

Please keep in mind that mobilisation does not necessarily mean physical gathering

- Put on coordinated and decentralized public events.
- Raise the profile of member civil society organisations through capacity building.
- Find the right entry point with other organizations.
- Break down the activities (letter writing, postcards, petition writing, online petitions etc) at all levels.
- Promote the voices of grassroots organizations, creating ways for people to act for themselves and facilitating people's participation in their own advocacy causes, as all the citizens are aware of the impact of education.
- Create big events around the Global Week of Action, Human Rights day, parliament opening session, constitution day and other relevant national or international opportunities.

### Action research and data collection (see also the section on building evidence)

- Collect data and case studies to build evidence of the need for policy change.
- Monitor the impact of the advocacy work, using checklists.
- Share information among partners ...and externally.
- Publish frequent policy briefs on the issues.

## The dos and don'ts of advocacy

### Box 16

**DO be informed.** Read newsletters and legislative/ policy alerts carefully. Know both sides of the issues. Know when a bill is in committee, when the IMF representative will be in town, who is arranging their itinerary etc.

**DO start early.** Pay attention to issues and proposals early in the process and you'll have a better chance of affecting the outcome.

**DO be concise.** The more simply and clearly your position can be explained, the better chance you have of getting people to listen and respond.

**DO be specific.** Know exactly what you want the target institution or individual to do. E.g. do you want him/her to draft legislation? Propose an amendment? Vote for a bill?

**DO be honest.** Don't exaggerate to make a point or answer a question if you're not sure of the facts. Every issue has at least two sides--be honest about admitting the pros and cons of your issue.

**DO give personal examples.** This puts the issues in memorable, human terms.

**DO practice.** Try explaining your position to friends and family before you meet with a legislator or testify before a committee.

**DO be courteous,** but firm and confident.

**DON'T make threats.** Telling policy makers that they have to do what you want or you won't vote for them will only turn people off.

**DON'T argue.** If it is clear that the person won't support your position, just give the facts and ask him or her to consider your viewpoint. You want to keep the lines of communication open for discussing future issues.

**DON'T GIVE UP!!!!**

Adapted from the Legislative Advocacy Handbook of the Alliance for the Mentally Ill of Wisconsin



### Media work

- Provide media training and briefings before the campaign launch.
- Identify the best moments for key activities in your national calendar, building on milestones such as elections, the Global Action Week, Human Rights day, World Teachers' Day, International Literacy Day, etc.
- Produce a communication toolkit for journalists.
- Identify the top media and their audiences, and build strong relationships with the top journalists and editors.
- Identify and train spokespersons for the campaign.
- Use right case study or data for the right audience at the right moment.
- Involve your communications coordinator in the whole process.

### *Developing a critical path*

As part of the action planning, to help plan the activities towards a specific objective, you can identify the main milestones between the current and desired situations and set these out as a critical path for change. This will provide your coalition with a valuable tool to assess progress and adjust plans and strategies as necessary as the campaign goes on.

## Defining your campaign timeline

For an effective campaign it is important to sequence your activities and events so that they build on one another and build to key moments and opportunities where cumulative pressure may make a difference. To do this you need to lay out your plans along a specified timeline, and review this at regular intervals. A good place to start is to find out when the six monthly IMF missions come to your country. These present a great campaigning opportunity and a chance to interest the media. You may also want to look at key moments in the

### Example of a critical path

Figure 5

**Objective: Recruitment of 50,000 trained teachers by 2011**



- A. Stakeholder coalition for education financing/ the recruitment of qualified teachers for EFA is established.
- B. A research report on national education financing is released by the coalition which is allowed to make a presentation at national assembly with live broadcasting on national TV and radio.
- C. Coalition empowered by MPs to engage with government on education financing and the budgetary process.
- D. Budget processes opened to CSOs and legislators to enable their input and action.
- E. In 2010, education budget allocation is reviewed and improved and MOF releases funds for the recruitment of 45, 000 teachers by the Ministry of Education.



budget or electoral cycle and any special events in the Ministry of Education. These give you some hooks for influencing policies, thinking or proceedings, based on which you can define the appropriate activities. These activities should always have a critical line running through them – so they are cumulative and purposeful!!

## 7. 6 Getting your campaign message across

### *Defining your campaign messages*

Your advocacy message is a summary of the change you want to bring. It should capture what you want to achieve, why and how. It should include the reasons why you feel the change is important and the

### Example timeline

**Figure 6**

Figure eight: Example timeline

DATE	External event	Activity	Responsibility
		Briefing on the issue among key education actors	
		Building consensus / trust among key CSOs and teacher unions	
		Capacity building of key partners on education and macroeconomics	
		Briefing the media network	
		Strategic campaign training for core partners	
		Campaign planning workshop with key partners to develop an action plan Allocation of tasks	
	African child	Collate education data	
	MoE launch new policy	Collate macroeconomic data	
	IMF mission	Wider partnership building workshop	
		Interviews with key actors	
	World teacher's day	Interviews with key actors	
	Parliament approves budget	Capacity building workshop	
	International children's day		
	Human rights day	Launch national report	
	IMF mission	Mass lobby outside MoF	
	Parliament approves budget	In-depth capacity building	
		Media campaign	
		Parliamentary campaign	
	National elections	Public call to all parties / influencing manifestos	
	IMF missions		

action you would like the audience to take in response. It should also take into account what will work - what will touch the targets, move people and attract the media? It should have a core message which is your “primary message” and at the same time have “supporting messages” tailored to different audiences depending on your assessment of what they are ready to hear. Make sure your core message is sharp and clear – and it really helps to have good slogans! You could get some communications experts to help you come up with slogans in national and local languages to spread your message far and wide. It is best to have distinctively national slogan!

## Making noise

Box 17

When asked about what they learned from their policy work, one advocate says “the key ingredient to successful policy advocacy was to “make lots of noise”: have a clear message and mandate, and repeat it forcefully at every possible meeting and forum. To do this successfully, she adds, you must be open to participating in a range of different spaces, reinforcing your point of view whenever the government is willing to listen. You must also ensure that the community is involved in monitoring the implementation of the policy so that the programs and processes will be sustained.”

**Below are some samples of messages:**

1. FINANCE OUR RIGHT TO EQUAL EDUCATION! (FREE)
2. FIGHT FOR INVESTMENT IN THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION (FIRE)
3. MORE TRAINED TEACHERS ARE NEEDED NOW!
4. EDUCATION BEATS POVERTY
5. INVEST IN GROWTH – INVEST IN EDUCATION!
6. STOP IMF CONDITIONALITIES
7. IT’S OUR COUNTRY: DON’T LET THE IMF SET OUR POLICIES!
8. NO MORE DECISIONS BEHIND CLOSED DOORS ... TIME TO OPEN UP!
9. CLOSED MINDS BEHIND CLOSED DOORS CLOSE SCHOOLS... TIME FOR OPEN MINDS, OPEN DOORS AND OPEN SCHOOLS!!!

**It can be useful to consider the following in your communication on education finance issues:**

- **HAVE A CLEAR IDEA**  
What you wish to communicate, why, to whom and how.
- **BE REPETITIVE**  
Messages are not absorbed overnight. Be persistent.
- **BE CONSISTENT**  
Deliver the same message in different ways, using different words and actions so that it does not become boring. Adapt the message to the audience.
- **BE SIMPLE, FOCUSED, CONCISE**  
A simple message can be more compelling and persuasive and has great power.
- **USE CLEAR, INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE**  
Use everyday language and no jargon. Avoid technical terms. Especially in the case of education financing, there tends to be a belief that only economists can deal with it. Make sure that a school boy, a farmer, an SMC member, a teacher, can understand and deliver the message on education financing.
- **A HUMAN FACE**  
Wherever possible, give the issue a human and local face. Make it personal through testimonies, interviews, case studies etc.

- **THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE**

Choose the most effective medium to deliver the message. Use the organisation or person who will be most credible and mobilise the most support.

- **TIME AND PLACE**

Be opportunistic in choosing the best time and place to communicate your message.

Though we are linking education to macro-economics, there is a need for simplicity as in any other campaign. It is important to spread the message to as many people as possible all over the country. In your team, take care in adapting your message to the audience and in using language people can understand.

## **Developing your communication strategy**

### **The resource pack**

This pack has been compiled by ActionAid and Education International, to help stimulate campaigning on education financing in as many countries as possible. We hope that this can inspire you to develop your own resource pack - with your partners- that includes:

- The national strategy that you develop
- A map of your targets and allies
- Some core communication materials: leaflets, posters, postcards, slogans, stickers etc and the media/ communication kit that you produce
- Your core evidence base: a national study with data, statistics, interviews etc
- A policy brief illustrating your agenda for policy change
- Some powerful case studies that illustrate the need for the campaign and the desired changes
- Some newspaper cuttings, letters to government etc showing the outcomes of previous campaign actions

It can also be useful to develop a wider set of resources from similar campaigns in other countries and to keep up to date with international resources on education finance issues.

To communicate your campaign and spread the messages country wide, be sure that the materials are relevant to all the target and partners.

### **Have you prepared materials for?**

- The targets of your campaign and influencing: the media, MPs etc

## **Mind your language**

### **Box 18**

#### **Vocabulary**

The vocabulary must be limited to the range that your stakeholders can understand. Otherwise you might as well be talking in a foreign language!

#### **Jargon**

It is so easy to pick up the jargon of your organisation or discipline, but if your target audience does not come from the same environment, the jargon is not only not understood, but annoying.

#### **Ambiguity**

Be careful that you say what you mean, not simply what you mean to say. Extra care is essential when there are different cultures giving differing meanings to some words and sayings.

#### **Keep it Short and Simple**

Keep it Short and Simple (KISS), and avoid long, rambling speech. Otherwise there is the danger of the audience stopping listening or even falling asleep, especially when dealing with macro-economics.

#### **Unusual words**

Are you using an unusual or technical word because it is the best, only, correct, or most appropriate word, or are you simply using it for effect? Is the audience likely to understand it?

- The launch
- Students, parents and other stakeholders
- Meetings with donors, the government and other key targets

**The following websites may be useful for your national campaigning materials:**

- **[www.actionaid.org](http://www.actionaid.org)** (for seeing what latest resources are being developed on education financing and other related issues)
- **[www.ei-ie.org](http://www.ei-ie.org)** (for linking with teacher unions around the world and solidarity actions)
- **[www.campaignforeducation.org](http://www.campaignforeducation.org)** (for links to other national campaigns and global actions, and information on current policy debates)
- **[www.right-to-education.org](http://www.right-to-education.org)** (for information on legal rights, it includes what every national constitution says about education and a section on case law)
- **[www.commonwealtheducationfund.org](http://www.commonwealtheducationfund.org)** (for practical advocacy resources on coalition building, budget tracking etc.)
- **[www.brettonwoodsproject.org](http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org)** (for keeping up to date with changes at the World Bank and IMF)
- Your national government website

## 7.7 Action planning

At some point in the process of conceiving your campaign strategy, you will need to write down your action plan, which will be reviewed and revised at regular intervals throughout the campaign. Your action plan guides the day-to-day activities of your campaign, the process of operationalising your strategic goals. There are several reasons for doing an action plan:

- To consolidate your plans, matching activities to aims and objectives.
- To get the relevant approval and release of funds and resources.
- To act as your road map.



- To communicate your plans to other stakeholders and ensure their participation.
- To act as a reference point for evaluating your campaign and ensuring transparency and accountability.

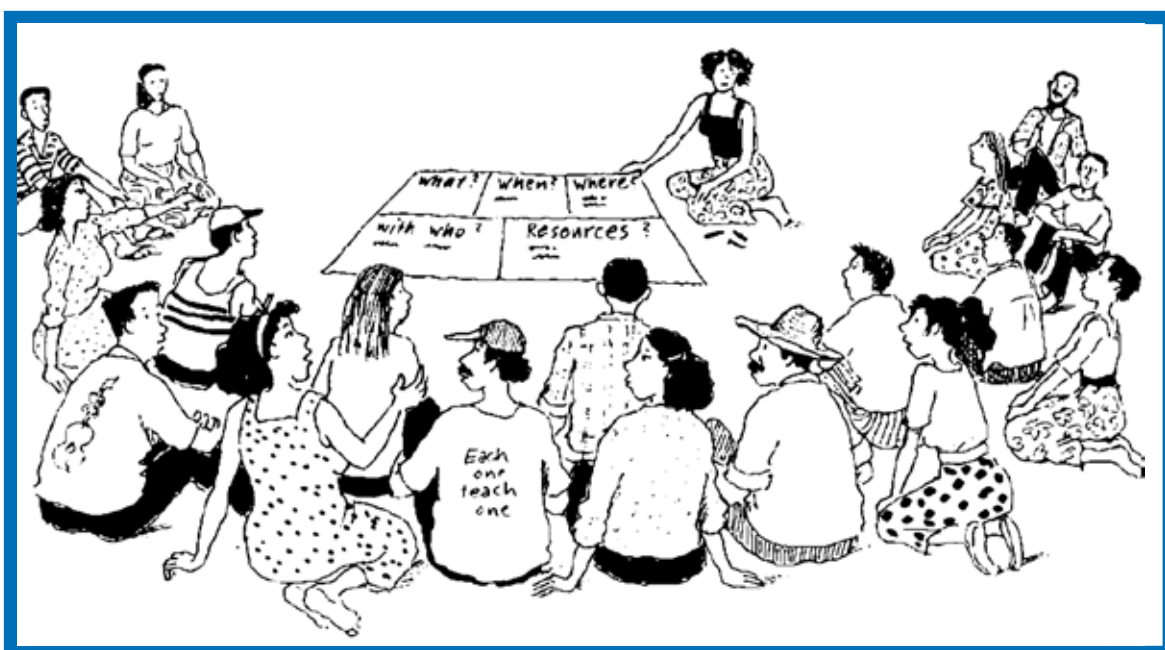
**An operational plan for national work on education financing might include the following common elements:**

- The campaign goal
- The campaign objectives
- A description of what must be achieved (the expected outputs or end-results)
- For whom or to whom? (the stakeholders and targets)
- How? The steps and the methods (the tactics and the techniques)
- The activities and the tasks to reach the objectives;
- When? The timeframe for the campaign actions, outputs and outcomes
- Who? Those responsible for the delivery of the activities
- With what? The required inputs and human and financial resources
- The expected outcomes as “success indicators” and their means of verification

A table like the one below can help to capture all of the relevant information and should be on the wall of your office during the whole period of the campaign giving you an overview of the progress at a glance.

The following is a fairly random list of possible actions that you could consider. The challenge is to define the critical path and connection between them, and agree on a time frame, and that will be different for each country and context!

- Collating data and statistics for a national study (see template in next section)
- Interviewing key actors and stakeholders (see template in next section)





- Publishing and launching a national report
- Building a broader coalition
- Running capacity building and orientation workshops for yourselves (first!), your allies, parliamentarians, government officials
- Organising a national action planning workshop for the campaign

## Example of an action planning template

Figure 7

Objec- tives	strategy	Targets	Activities	Allies/part- ners	Resources budget	Who is responsible	Delivery date	Outcomes as success indicators

- Tracking education budgets
- Influencing the annual cycle of budget formulation processes
- Influencing election processes and party manifestos
- Initiating a media campaign when the IMF mission comes to the country
- Organising mass public events such as rallies, concerts or demonstrations
- Setting up lobbying or information meetings with political leaders, MPs, education committees, opinion leaders, etc
- Starting a petition or letter-writing campaign to the IMF or MoF
- Picketing outside government offices or at airports during meetings with the IMF
- Organising joint one-day strikes or protests by teachers, parents and children to draw attention to the under-investment in education
- Producing regular policy briefs and newsletters
- Arranging academic seminars with alternative economists or hosting international panels
- Documenting case studies or making videos to show the impact of the lack of education financing on the ground
- Bringing rural children to cities to help lobbying
- Demonstrating solutions (what can happen to schools where there are sufficient resources) and undertaking action research
- Promoting popular mobile campaigns or street theatre to raise awareness of the issues across the country
- Holding public tribunals or citizen's juries on the case for the government accepting or rejecting the advice of the IMF
- Producing a school report card on the government / Finance Minister / IMF



- Campaigning on the Internet, blogging, setting up mass e-mail petitions etc
- Producing popular campaigning materials – stickers, baseball caps, banners – with key messages
- Involving celebrities – musicians, sports-people etc (for example footballers, given the strategic partnership of the Global campaign for Education in the build up to the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa)
- Seizing the opportunity of symbolic days such as October 5th Teacher’s day, or September 8th International Literacy Day, December 10th Human rights day
- Producing a communication toolkit for journalists
- Identifying and training key spokespersons who can communicate complex ideas around education financing in simple and effective language (preferably with people from different background - teacher unions / NGOs / academics / girls etc).
- Advocating for the review of existing laws
- Inviting the IMF to a public debate.
- Organising symbolic protests to highlight the lack of transparency in MoF / IMF meetings.
- Raising the importance of parliamentary oversight of education budgets in parliamentary sub-committees / cross-party caucuses - or calling for a special parliamentary commission on the impact of macroeconomic policies on education goals
- Creating regular forums / platforms for dialogue on education finance issues
- Tracking changes in policy and practice and publishing these widely (loudly welcoming reform when it comes so that change by government is acknowledged)
- Working with donor education consortia and FTI planning and disbursement structures to raise the in-country donors’ awareness of how macroeconomic policy may undermine their aid and build their confidence to intervene

## What is important in monitoring & evaluation?

Box 19

**Inputs** you have made (time, resources, staff).

**Outputs** of the activities or “products” which you have developed (meetings held, visits made, reports produced etc).

**Outcomes** of your actions and interactions that may lead to the desired changes in policy and /or practice. “What has changed or is different as a result of an activity”?

**Indicators** are measurable or tangible signs that something has been done. When monitoring and evaluating, we need to agree on our definitions of success, i.e., the signs that will show us whether the situation is improving as we hoped or not. Therefore, for example, an increase in the number of qualified teachers recruited and sent to the teacher training centres can be an indicator of an improved education budget or a change in education budget allocation.

**Means of verification** are the ways in which you will be able to tell whether you have achieved your indicator for success. In the example given, the officially published list of student passes is a means of verifying your “success”.

## 7. 8 Monitoring and evaluating the success of your campaign

The process of monitoring and evaluation requires yardsticks to measure against; hence you need to have set clear objectives for your advocacy work at the outset. Well-written aims and SMART objectives often make it obvious what kinds of evidence (indicators) are needed. If your objectives are vague and unspecific, it is almost impossible to monitor or evaluate your progress. While you are defining your objectives you should at the same time be thinking of ways of measuring success in achievement.

You need then to define your indicators for ‘success’ for all your objectives (including any capacity building objectives) during the planning phase and incorporate them into your advocacy or campaign plan. Indicators should be drawn up for all aspects of the work: inputs, outputs, outcomes and as much as possible, impact.

Ongoing monitoring of basic levels of activity (i.e. inputs and outputs) should be carried out on a regular basis – this is important for accountability. Keep monitoring systems simple and straightforward, so that they will be adhered to. Remember to note any relevant changes in the external environment at the same time. Build in review points to your plan, so that you stop and assess how the work is going at regular intervals, to allow you to shift focus, re-plan and redirect resources where necessary, rather than waiting for an evaluation at the end of the campaign when it may be too late to respond to the lessons learned.

Ongoing monitoring and mid term evaluation give you the opportunity to keep up the momentum in the group, recognize and celebrate success, identify threats or failures and correct them. It will help you maintain coordination and interest among the platform members as everybody is interested if regularly updated. This part of your action plan should be considered as important as any other part of your strategy.

Try to record changes and impact where possible, even though they are more difficult to tackle. If there is no 'hard' quantitative data available for measuring outcomes and impact, record whatever evidence is available as systematically as possible, as it can still be valid: presenting a reasoned argument for the likely or plausible impact, based on what has been achieved to date, is often all that can be done.

### ***Challenges in monitoring and evaluating advocacy***

A great deal of NGO monitoring and evaluation – not just of advocacy work – tends to focus on inputs and outputs, with less attention given to the more challenging but ultimately more important outcomes and impact. There are also challenges in how to attribute change: can we be sure that it was our advocacy or campaigning that led to any changes? It can help to have a strong narrative and quotes from key people to show that the campaign played a key role, but it is also important to recognise the complex and interconnected nature of real social and political change.





8

building your  
national evidence  
base

## 8. Building your national evidence base

This section is designed to help you do a quick study of the situation of education financing in your country, which will provide an evidence base for your campaigning. It will help you gather the evidence about the impact of the financial crisis on education spending, as well as recent developments around the public sector wage bill and its impact on teachers.

In 2007, ActionAid published a report “Confronting the Contradictions” that challenged the IMF’s use of public sector wage bill caps, showing how these prevented countries from employing urgently needed teachers.<sup>xxx</sup> Together with other reports, this was influential in making the IMF change this policy in September 2007. Whereas previously the IMF was using wage bill caps as a routine condition attached to its loans, these caps have now been removed in most countries. However, this has not immediately meant that governments can employ more teachers. In many cases the actual levels of the wage bills have not increased, and in some cases they are even decreasing. This is because governments end up imposing their own tight caps in order to fit within the constraints created by other macroeconomic policies imposed by the IMF, such as low inflation and deficit targets. The GCE report “Education on the Brink”, included in this pack, elaborates on these policies further.<sup>xxxi</sup>

In order to build an evidence base for a national campaign it is helpful to do an up-to-date country study, perhaps building on previous work you or others have done on education financing. This can be developed through the 4 steps outlined in this section:

1. Collect education and legal data
2. Collect macroeconomic data
3. Interview some key respondents
4. Draw out some recommendations with your allies

**Underlying each of these steps you are seeking information that includes:**

- 1) **The status of the wage bill ceiling:** Is there still a wage bill ceiling? If so, who sets it, for what reasons, and what is the current level. Is it legal?
- 2) **The number of teachers recruited and needed:** How many teachers are currently employed in the public sector? How many more need to be recruited each

### Basing your advocacy on good evidence

#### Box 20

“While passion, commitment and a sense of justice are critical components of any advocacy effort, the value of doing your research should not be underestimated. ... Gathering and analyzing the facts of a situation can reveal gendered dimensions of the issue, responsible parties, allies and opponents, advocacy opportunities, and appropriate remedies. This information is critical, because it carries an empirical weight that is much more difficult to dismiss out of hand than impassioned argument, particularly when the courts are involved. Solid evidence for your claims is also important in establishing and maintaining legitimacy with the public. Fact-finding and other evidentiary procedures are also important ways in which to help foster movement-building. Indeed, many activists reiterated that the exercise of fact-finding, while necessary for the facts they generated, was also sometimes just as important for the opportunity it provided to build a common agenda and foster greater cohesion and teamwork.”

**An anonymous advocate**

year to meet the goals of universal primary education by 2015? How many teachers are unqualified and/or contract or community teachers in schools?

- 3) **The impact of the wage bill ceiling on teacher recruitment and the quality of primary education:** Analysis of how wage bill caps influence and constrain the hiring of trained (female and male) teachers; An evaluation of the impact on girls' and boys' access to schools and completion of the full primary education cycle.
- 4) **The underlying macroeconomic policies guiding wage ceilings:** How do single-digit rates of inflation and fiscal deficit, high debt repayment and budget ceilings influence the level of the cap placed on the wage bill?
- 5) **Government's commitment to education in the context of the world economic downturn:** Are they maintaining and expanding spending on education and teachers?
- 6) The impact of regional economic convergence agreements on national macroeconomic policy

The data collected will feed your national campaign on education financing.

## STEP 1: Collecting key data on education

In order to help you build an evidence base it is useful to collect some key data on education in one place. The tables below are suggestions for formats that will help you do this. You may have some of this data already. Any information you don't have should be available in the Education Sector Support Plan in the Education Ministry or in the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), available through the Finance Ministry. The full wage bill estimate to meet 2015 goals can be calculated from the information available in the MTEF and Education Sector Plans and Budget Statements. You can find the number of teachers needed to achieve Universal Primary Completion (UPC) from the above Ministries and the Ministry of Public Service if something like that exists. **Be sure to give full citations to show where you obtained the information and include this at the bottom of the table as shown below.** The sources currently cited are indications of where you might possibly find this information. You should use both international statistics (from UNESCO Global Monitoring Reports for example) and national statistics obtained directly from your Government, to compare them and/or fill any gaps.

Collect information for as many years as you can, going as far back as 2000 if possible, and until the most recent year available (add the rows to the tables). The last row in each table is to note the trend for each indicator: is it increasing, decreasing, stable, unstable (showing a large difference from year to year)?

TABLE 1: Overview of primary education								
YEAR	Gross Enrolment Rates (girl/boy)	Net Enrolment Rates (g/b)	Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR)	UPC Target PTR	Repetition rates (g/b)	Drop out rates (g/b)	Primary Completion Rates (g/b)	Transition Rates to Secondary (g/b)
2000								
...								
2009								
Trend								

**Possible Sources:** Ministry of Education, UNESCO latest Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO Institute for Statistics data centre ([http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=143&IF\\_Language=eng](http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=143&IF_Language=eng))



**TABLE 2: Education financing**

YEAR	Education spending as % of National Budget	Education spending as % of National Budget	Total basic education spending in local currency or constant US\$	% of education spending covered by tax revenue	Total aid to education per primary school-age child (in constant US\$)
2000					
....					
2009					
Trend					

**Possible Sources:** Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance/Budget office, UNESCO latest Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO Institute for Statistics data centre ([http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=143&IF\\_Language=eng](http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=143&IF_Language=eng))

**TABLE 3: Funding shortfall for primary and secondary education**

YEAR	Estimated Cost of Achieving UPC by 2015	Primary Education Budget	Funding Gap for Primary Education Budget

**Possible Sources:** the Government's Education for All national plan (in some case it has been approved by the Fast-Track Initiative and should be available online at <http://www.education-fast-track.org/content.asp?CatId=218&ContentType=Partners&sortBy=Title&x=7&y=7>, if not, on the Ministry of Education website, or ask the Ministry of Education directly.

**TABLE 4: Funding shortfall for teachers**

YEAR	Total number of teachers (f/m)	% of untrained teachers (f/m)	% of contract and/or community teachers (f/m)	Annual teaching force growth rate	Number of Teachers Needed to Achieve UPC by 2015 (incl. rates of attrition)	Public sector wage bill (% of GDP)	Teacher Wage Bill as % of annual GDP	% of teacher wage bill covered by tax revenue	Annual teacher wage bill needed to meet UPC (% of GDP)	Is there a specific ceiling on how many teachers can be hired? (if so, indicate the total number)
2000										
....										
2009										
Trend										

**Source:** Ministry of Education, IMF Article IV documents (statistical tables), UNESCO latest Global Monitoring report, UNESCO BREDIA 'Teacher Challenge in Africa' (<http://www.poledakar.org/spip.php?article291>)



<b>TABLE 5: Teaching force</b>		
	<b>Education policy:</b> what does it say about each of these issues?	<b>Policy in practice:</b> what's really going on?
What does the policy say about minimum levels of qualification of teachers in primary school?		
Does the policy establish/acknowledge/accept the existence of untrained teachers/other categories of teachers?		
How are civil servant teachers recruited into the profession?		
How are contract or community teachers recruited?		
What salary structures exist for teachers? Based on what criteria (seniority)?		
Are there different pay scales for trained vs. untrained, contract vs. civil servant/permanent teachers?		
Has there been a change in policy regarding teacher training programmes in recent years i.e. a decrease or increase in the number of years of training teachers?		

**Possible sources:** Teacher union / national commission for teachers / Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Public Service

<b>TABLE 6: Teacher training capacity</b>	
YEAR	Total Number of graduates from Teaching Colleges
2000	
....	
2009	
Trend	

**Possible Sources:** Ministry of Education

**Analyse the data by asking the following key questions:**

1. Is the government hiring and training enough teachers year to year to meet the goal for Universal Primary Completion by 2015?
2. Is the current level of the wage bill holding back the recruitment of teachers?
3. Is the government keeping up its commitment to education spending?
4. Is the government using untrained and/or contract/community teachers to save costs?
5. Has your country signed and/or ratified regional and international treaties (ICESR, CRC, African Charter, etc)?
6. Is there any provision in constitution, laws and policies on the right to education and non discrimination



## STEP 2: Collecting relevant macroeconomic data

Macroeconomic targets limit overall government expenditure on education, particularly on the wage bill, because teachers make up the largest part of the education budget. Ultimately the ceilings are placed to ensure governments maintain single-digit inflation rates and low fiscal deficit levels. Another important indicator determining the fiscal deficit level and inflation targets is the level of international reserves. The IMF reviews and updates these figures twice a year, so it is important to document changes to macroeconomic targets at the time of each review. Your current Poverty Reduction Growth Strategies (PRGF) or Policy Support Instrument (PSI) and Letter of Intent (LOI) will indicate the macroeconomic targets and wage bill levels. To find these ask your Finance Ministry and also check on the IMF's web page (<http://www.imf.org/external/country/index.htm>)

**TABLE 7: Tracking changes in the wage bill level**

	Indicator	2008 1st Review	2008 2nd Review	2009 1st Review	2009 2nd Review	Comments/ analysis
<b>Wage bill ceilings</b> 1. Is the wage bill ceiling a conditionality under the IMF arrangement? 2. Has there been an increase in the wage bill?	<b>What:</b> Wage bill as percentage of GDP ('salaries' under current expenditure) <b>Where:</b> To be found in the statistical tables, under Central Government Operations					



TABLE 8: Tracking changes in IMF macroeconomic policies						
	Indicator	2008 1st Review	2008 2nd Review	2009 1st Review	2009 2nd Review	Comments/analysis
<p><b>Inflation</b></p> <p>1. Is the inflation target getting tighter and remaining in the single digits?</p> <p>2. Does the IMF present any explanation of why the inflation target should be pushed lower?</p>	<p><b>What:</b> Inflation target rate (consumer prices – end of period)</p> <p><b>Where:</b> First statistical table entitled 'Selected Economic Indicators' Note both the projections from the tables and key parts in the narrative section.</p>					
<p><b>Foreign Currency Reserves</b></p> <p>3. Has the target for reserves increased?</p> <p>4. What impact does this have on the ability to absorb aid fully and to spend it fully?</p>	<p><b>What:</b> Gross official reserves target (in months of imports)</p> <p><b>Where:</b> First table entitled 'Selected Economic Indicators' Note both the projections from the tables and key parts in the narrative section.</p>					
<p><b>Fiscal Deficit</b></p> <p>5. Is the fiscal deficit decreasing?</p> <p>6. What rationale does the IMF give to further decrease fiscal deficit levels?</p>	<p><b>What:</b> Fiscal deficit target (overall fiscal balance including grants as % GDP)</p> <p><b>Where:</b> First table entitled 'Selected Economic Indicators' Note both the projections from the tables and key parts in the narrative section.</p>					

**Analyse the data by answering these key questions:**

1. Why are inflation, fiscal deficit, reserves and the wage bill ceiling set at these levels?
2. Is there a ceiling on the public sector wage bill, either from an IMF arrangement, or from another Government planning document? Is there room to expand it?
3. Is the government's contribution through tax revenue increasing?

**TABLE 9: Evaluating IMF flexibility and the impact on teachers**

Table 9 brings together the data collected in previous tables and synthesizes the analysis by answering our key questions: if there has been an increase in the wage bill ceiling, has this allowed the government to hire more teachers? If not, why not?

YEAR	Number of teachers	Teacher force growth rate	PTR	Ed. as % of budget	% of wage bill covered by taxes	Aid to ed. US\$	Wage bill as % of GDP	Inflation rate Target Actual	Fiscal deficit Target/ Actual	Reserves (in months of imports)
2005										
2010										
Trend										

- 1) As civil society, you may also want to develop other key tables, for example to map out existing tax policy in the country: what percentage of tax income comes from different forms of taxation and how has this changed over time? What % of the tax base is from progressive / regressive forms of taxation?
- 2) Civil society advocates may also have to increase their knowledge and understanding of the regional economic institutions, how decisions are made, what type of policies are prescribed, and what is the relationship with their national governments and their level of influence

### STEP 3: Conducting key interviews

Having collected and analysed some basic data on the situation nationally it is useful to conduct some interviews with key players such as the Finance Ministry, Central Bank, Education Ministry, Ministry of Public Services (sometimes this is separate from Education and handles public sector staffing), the IMF and donors. Summarise these responses and note the name and position of the person with whom you spoke. The table below outlines the sort of people you should aim to interview in each place and a suggested range of topics. This is followed by some sample questions to guide your interviews.



Ministry/ Agency	Officers	Topics to Discuss
Central Bank	General Manager of Economic Services	The negotiations process for IMF conditions and the reasons behind the macroeconomic targets. The evidence for these policies and alternative policies.
Ministry of Finance	The Minister of Finance or The Permanent Secretary/ Deputy Permanent Secretary	MoF priorities and overall responsibility. External influences.
	The Budget Director	How the budget is determined and how it is allocated to the different sectors. Why some sectors get more funding than others.
	The Commissioner for Macroeconomics Department	The negotiations process for IMF conditions and the reasons behind the macroeconomic targets. The evidence for these policies and alternative policies. How macroeconomic ceilings are calculated and how macroeconomic policy is translated into fiscal policy.
	Revenue Authority	How much tax revenue goes towards the wage bill, and teachers' salaries more specifically.
	Aid Department	Expectations for donor aid and how it is processed in the budget.
	The Commissioner for Social Services Department	How the budget allocations to their sectors are going.
	The Education Desk Officer	How budget allocations and priorities for education are defined by the MoF.
Ministry of Public Service	The Commissioner for Civic Service Planning (This function may be separate or may be carried out in the MoE)	How they prioritise spending on teachers (and any special measures for hiring female teachers). How they figure on the wage bill, and how they are affected by ceilings. Government planning for the MDGs and how they expect to meet these goals under the current budget.
Ministry of Education (try to meet with the Ministry of Women's Affairs as well)	Minister for Education or The Permanent Secretary	Priorities, especially for UPC, girls' education and teachers. How MoF constraints affect education.
	The Commissioner for Education Planning	Priorities of the MoE, the medium term budget and how teachers figure in these allocations. Policy on para-teachers.
	The Education Planning officer who manages the MTEF	The cost of reaching the MDGs and the implications of the current budget. The wage bill cap and what it means for the sector. The ratio of female/male teachers, how many para-teachers there are, what their policy is to train them. The negotiations process for macroeconomic policies and whether they are involved. (If they do not do cost projections try to find who does).
	Director of Teacher Training, staffing structures and teacher recruitment	As above and also the capacity to train more teachers if they could be paid for. The recruitment, need and capacity for female and male teachers. The current training offered for para-teachers (female and male) and whether it will expand?
IMF	Head of IMF Mission	The negotiation process for macroeconomic policies, the evidence for these policies, room for negotiation and alignment with MDGs, and alternatives.
Donor Agencies	The Education Officers from each main sector/ budget support donor	The future of their funding and if it will cover teacher salaries. What do they think about para-teachers and training efforts and the need for female teachers? What do they think about IMF conditions? Would they consider challenging the IMF on these conditions as has been done in Mozambique?
	The World Bank rep.	As above, and also their policy on para-teachers and training and the wage bill.
Civil Society	Education Coalition leader and key partner organisations	Their perspective on UPC, teachers and implications of current government policies on teachers and para professionals. What is their advocacy stance?
	Teacher unions	The number of teachers needed, any special measures needed for female teachers, their perspective on para-teachers, and their perspective on Government and IMF policies and wage bill caps.
	Organisations working on International Financial Institutions (IFIs)	Their work and whether it covers education and to sensitise them on the wage bill issue and teachers problems.

The questions below will need to be adapted to your context, based on the data that you collect in steps 1 and 2 – but these give a useful template for you in preparing for interviews. Many of the same questions will be relevant for different people in different ministries.

QUESTIONS	INTERVIEWEE
1) What is the timeframe for the current IMF agreement (PRFG or PSI) in place? How is the country “performing” according to you?	Finance
	IMF
	Donors
2) What are the key macroeconomic targets and conditions? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current inflation rate and target rate? Is there pressure to reduce the inflation?</li> <li>• Current fiscal deficit level and target rate of decrease (or surplus)?</li> <li>• Current ceiling on the Net Domestic Asset (NDA)?</li> <li>• Current floor of the Net International Reserves (NIR)?</li> </ul>	Finance
	IMF
	Donors
3) How were these targets decided? Who was involved in the decision-making process? Were the Education, Health, and Women’s Affairs Ministries involved?	Finance
	IMF
	Education
	Donors
	Teacher union
4) What is the reason for setting these targets at these particular levels?	Finance
	IMF
	Donors
	Education
5) When the targets were decided, did you consider a variety of options for each target, or was there only one option considered or presented to you? Are you aware of the vast number of economists who challenge low levels of inflation, fiscal deficit, NDA ceilings and NIR floors?	Finance
	IMF
	Donors
6) Are there priority sectors that you try to protect (from a decrease in the budget) when budget cuts are made? Is education a priority sector?	Finance
	IMF
	Donors
7) Are the MDG and EFA goals considered when setting macro framework/wage bill caps? Is the gender disparity in educational achievement considered?	Finance
	IMF
	Donors
	Education/Ministry of Public Service
	Teacher unions

8) How do you anticipate the government will meet the MDGs within the current macro framework, including the wage bill? Will there be enough effort for ensuring that all girls and boys are completing primary school by 2015?	Finance
	IMF
	Donors
	Education/Ministry of Public Service
	Teacher unions
9) What other options are available to the government to meet its commitments? If donor aid is not forthcoming, what are the alternatives?	Finance
	Revenue Authority
	IMF
	Donors
	Education
	Teacher unions
10) How important is tax revenue in financing the education budget and teachers' salaries?	Finance
	Revenue Authority
	IMF
	Donors
	Education
	Teacher unions
11) How can the government increase tax revenue to pay for more teachers?	Finance
	Revenue Authority
	IMF
	Donors
	Education
	Teacher unions
12) Is there a wage bill cap in place? Who sets the ceiling and under what consideration?	Finance
	Education/Ministry of Public Service
	Teacher union
	IMF
	Donors
13) When was this introduced and who proposed the idea?	Finance
	IMF
	Donors
14) What is the reason for having this cap/ceiling? What reasons were presented to the social sectors? Do you think these caps are effective in controlling government expenditure? Was the impact on recruiting and retaining female teachers considered?	Finance
	IMF
	Education/Ministry of Public Service
	Teacher union
	Donors

15) How was the level of the cap/ceiling calculated? What is the rationale for this calculation? What is the "correct level" and why?	Finance/Ministry of Public Service
	IMF
	Donors
16) Who led/was involved in the process of calculating and finally determining the level of the wage bill? Did the Education Ministry, Teacher Union etc. have an opportunity to contribute to this process and if so how?	Finance
	Education/Ministry of Public Service
	Teacher union
	IMF
	Donors
17) What does the ceiling or wage bill target mean for the recruitment of teachers, especially female teachers? What will you do to recruit more teachers, especially females, to meet your goals? (E.g. are you going to hire para professional/ untrained teachers, use double shifts, employ on short term contracts?)	Finance
	Education/Ministry of Public Service
	Teacher union
	IMF
	Donors
18) Could the government hire more teachers under this ceiling? If the government hires more teachers is it forced to cut back on personnel in other sectors? Does it have to cut back on special measures to bring more female teachers on board?	Finance
	Education/Ministry of Public Service
	Teacher union
	IMF
19) What are the provisions for teacher training? Are there untrained or under-trained teachers in the system? How many female and male teachers are being trained each year? How many more need to be trained? How much will this cost?	Finance
	Education/Ministry of Public Service
	Teacher unions
	Donors
20) How many female and male contract and/or community teachers are there? Do you see this as a credible way to staff classrooms? How are they recruited and trained? Are there plans to offer more training so they can become professional teachers?	Finance
	Education/Ministry of Public Services
	Teacher unions
	Donors
21) If there were more donor funding pledged for the education sector, would the cap be adjusted in light of this? What is the predictability of donor aid for education and could it be spent on teachers' salaries? Is there any donor funding available for teachers (for example through sector or general budget support) ?	Finance
	Education
	Teacher union
	IMF
22) If the caps were removed or the ceiling lifted could the government hire more trained teachers? Have Ministry of Education or teacher unions ever put pressure on Finance to remove the cap or lift the ceiling?	Donors
	Finance
	Education/Ministry of Public Service
	Teacher union
	IMF



23) What would happen if you breached the cap/ceiling and spent more on teachers for example? What would be the macroeconomic impact of breaching the cap/ceiling? Would there be any other consequences?	Donors
	Finance
	Education/Ministry of Public Service
	IMF
24) Who would be supportive of removing the caps or lifting the ceiling (i.e. education donors, Ministry of Health, Teacher Union etc.)?	Donors
	Finance
	Education/Ministry of Public Service
	Teacher union

NB: Always keep good notes of every interview. A direct quote from some of these interviewees can be very powerful in your national campaign!

## STEP 4: Collating, sharing and action!

Once you have collected all the information and interviewed key people, think about your next steps. First of all, it can be helpful to collate what you have into a single report or study which can be circulated to others who are interested or perhaps even published. In case you need some international feedback on a draft report, you can send a copy to **ActionAid, Education International** or the **Global Campaign for Education** at any point. It is important that your report concludes with clear recommendations. See “Education on the Brink” or “Confronting the Contradictions” for some ideas.

What you do next will depend on your national campaign strategy and action plan. You may want to hold a national workshop or seminar or have a big media launch of your report. You may want to use the report to inform or lobby parliamentarians or as the basis for meetings with government officials. Or you may choose initially to use the report for capacity building of a wider group of people.

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  - <sup>2</sup> See [www.right-to-education.org](http://www.right-to-education.org) for a comprehensive database of education rights in constitutions.
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  - <sup>4</sup> See for example: Underhill, K et al 2007 "Sexual abstinence only programmes to prevent HIV infection in high income countries: systematic review", British medical Journal, July 2007
  - <sup>5</sup> GDP is a slightly different figure than GNI but in most cases, the proportion of education spending is the same using whichever indicator
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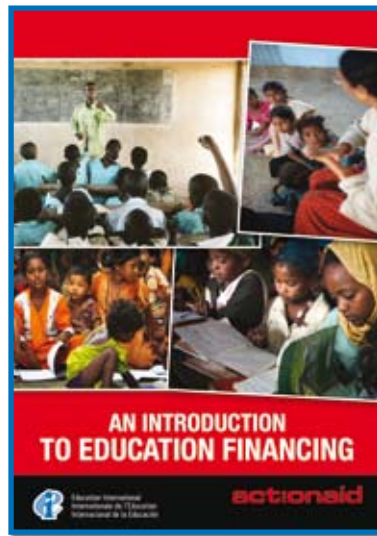




# Artwork

## Brochure

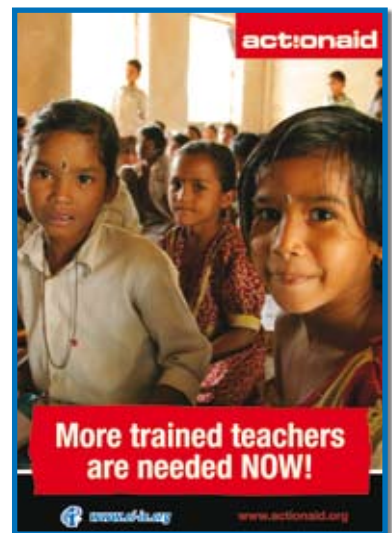
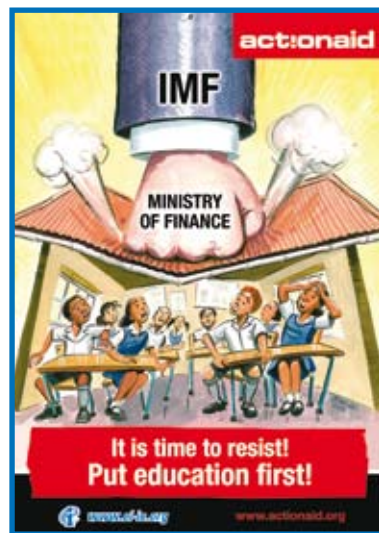
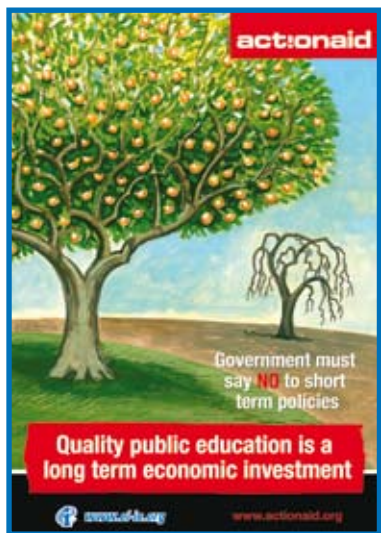
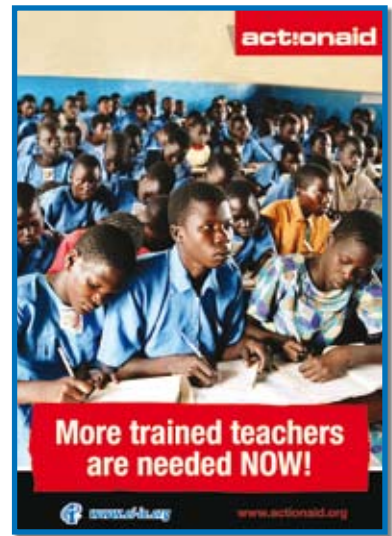
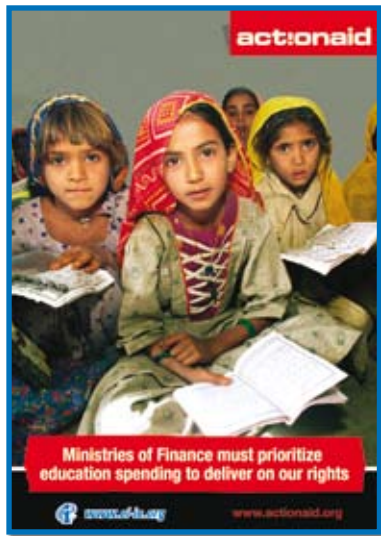
## Leaflet



## Bookmarks



# Posters



# Toolkit Cd



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<b>Headquarters</b>	
PostNet suite #248, Private Bag X31 Saxonwold 2132, Johannesburg, South Africa	5 boulevard du Roi Albert II, 1210 Brussels, Belgium
Telephone : +27 (0) 11 731 4500 Fax: +27 (0) 11 880 8082 Email :mail@actionaid.org ; www.actionaid.org	Telephone: +32 (0)2 22 40 611 Fax: +32 (0)2 22 40 606 email: headoffice@ei-ie.org ; www.ei-ie.org
<b>Regional offices</b>	
<p><b>Africa</b> 4th Floor AACC Building, Waiyaki Way, Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya Tel: +254 20 4451041/2, 3 or 254 20 4440458/69 Fax:00 254 20 4450089 Email: admin@actionaidafrika.org</p> <p><b>Asia</b> 13th Floor, Regent House Building, 183 Rajamri Road, Lumpini, Pathumwan, Bangkok 10330 Tel: +66 2 651 9066/67/68/69 Fax +66 2 651 9070 Email: mail@actionaidasia.org</p> <p><b>Americas</b> Rua Street Morais e Vale 111 – 3rd Floor, Centro, Rio de Janeiro, 20021-260 Tel: + 21 2189 4600, 4666 Fax +21 2189 4629 Email:</p> <p><b>Europe</b> European Union Office, Rue du Commerce 41, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium Tel : +32 (0) 2 502 4028, Fax +32 (0) 2 502 62 03 Email brussels@actionaid.org</p>	<p><b>Africa</b> Education International, 24 Tambo Street, East Legon, DTD 216, Madina, Accra, Republic of Ghana. Tel: +233 21 501 200, Fax: +233 21 506 681 email: eirafoffice@ei-ie.org</p> <p><b>Asia-Pacific Regional Office</b> Education International, 53-B Jalan Telawi Tiga, Bangsar Baru, 59100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Tel: +60 32 28 42 140, Fax: +60 32 28 47 395 email: eiap@eduint.com.my</p> <p><b>North America-Caribbean Regional Office</b> Education International, PO Box BB16, Babonneau, St.Lucia Tel: +1 75 84 50 52 47, Fax: +1 75 84 50 67 48 email: albertv@candw.lc</p> <p><b>Pan European Structure</b> Pan Europe Structure, 5 boulevard du Roi Albert II, 1210 Brussels, Belgium Tel: +32 (0)2 22 40 611, Fax: +32 (0)2 22 40 606 email: paneurope@ei-ie.org</p>





**Toolkit CD**

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### **ActionAid International**

Postnet Suite 248

Private Bag X31

Saxonwold 2132

Johannesburg

South Africa

Tel: +27 11 731 4500

Fax: +27 11 880 8082

Email: [internationaleducationteam@actionaid.org](mailto:internationaleducationteam@actionaid.org)

Email: [mail.jhb@actionaid.org](mailto:mail.jhb@actionaid.org)

[www.actionaid.org](http://www.actionaid.org)

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### **Education International**

Internationale de l'Éducation

Internacional de la Educación

5 boulevard du Roi Albert II, 1210 Brussels, Belgium

Tel: +32 (0)2 22 40 611

Fax: +32 (0)2 22 40 606

General enquiry: [headoffice@ei-ie.org](mailto:headoffice@ei-ie.org)

Public relations: [info@ei-ie.org](mailto:info@ei-ie.org)

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