



International Conference on

Teachers for Education for All in Africa: Collaborative action to address the teacher gap

Nairobi Safari Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya
19 to 20 January 2011

Concept Note

Introduction

Initiated by the International Task Force on Teachers for EFA and organized in conjunction with the Government of Kenya, the Conference will be held in Nairobi from 19 to 20 January 2011. This concept note is meant to provide all stakeholders of the Conference with:

i) a common understanding of the challenges, issues and objectives of this initiative; ii) a consistent and efficient framework for discussion and information sharing on the main agenda items; iii) guidance for consensus building in order to formulate commonly agreed and relevant conclusions and recommendations and to establish collaboration and partnership contracts, mechanisms or networks.

In view of this, this note gives details on the content and process of the Conference regarding:

- 1) Background information on the main constraints and challenges to be addressed;
- 2) The set objectives and the issues to be dealt with in order to achieve these objectives;
- 3) The methodological process of the proceedings and the expected outcomes;
- 4) The targeted stakeholders in terms of expected interactions and partnerships to be established for the follow-up of the Conference.

1) Background

Education for all is at the core of the basic human right to education enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 (Article 16). This right is inherent to the dignity of the human person, which makes it universal. But these principles become meaningless if the right to education cannot be effectively fulfilled. Therefore, the international community and the national Governments have committed themselves to their effective implementation as a moral, political and legal obligation.

This pledge was initially made at the World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990 through 5 objectives: i) universalizing access and promoting equity; ii) focusing on learning outcomes; iii) broadening the means and scope of basic education; iv) enhancing the environment for learning; v) strengthening partnerships.

The World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal (2000) reiterated the commitments to education through 6 objectives highlighting the need to take urgent measures, the timeline of their implementation and indicator requirements for measuring and monitoring progress: i) expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children; ii) ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality; iii) ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs; iv) achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults; v) eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality; vi) improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Finally, at the Millennium Summit held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, United States, in 2000 through 2 of the 8 Millennium Development Goals: i) achieve universal primary education; ii) promote gender equality and empower women, especially by eliminating gender disparity in education.

What assessment can be made of all these commitments?

For Jomtien, the review carried out in 2000 underscores:

- the progress made so far

i) nearly 82 million more children enrolled in primary schools, including 44 million girls; improved gender equality rates; literacy rate increased to 85% for men and 74% for women.

- but especially persistent challenges

i) 118 million school-age children without access to schooling; 880 million illiterate adults.

As regards the Dakar and New York commitments, the EFA Report 2010 shows a rapid increase in access to schooling (the number of children out of school dropped by 33 million) and progress towards gender parity in primary education (proportion of girls among out-of-school children decreasing from 58% to 54%). Despite this, if current trends are maintained, 56 million school-age children will not attend school in 2015, according to the report. Today, 71 million adolescents are not in school, 54% of out-of-school children are girls, 759 million adults remain illiterate (two thirds of them being women) and many young people leave school without being able to read and write.

In Sub-Saharan Africa where the EFA objectives are the least likely to be met despite significant progress since 1999, 15% of preschool children attend early childhood programs. 153 million children do not attend school, which represents 38% of the total population. 40% of young people who have gone to school cannot read and write.

These challenges on the way to Education for All relate not only to access and equity but also to the quality

and efficiency of learning, especially in primary education. If they are to be overcome, appropriate resources need to be made available, including the most critical of these resources: the teachers.

In most African countries, the lack of qualified teachers is a major constraint in the pursuit of EFA objectives. Among teachers in service, professionalism and motivation are often lacking. This results in poor education standards, low primary school completion rates and massive failure in school-based learning (with a rate close to 50% at the end of primary schooling, according to PASEC and SACMEQ). Employment and working conditions are usually mentioned as the main reasons for the poor performance of teachers and pupils although other factors contribute to this situation: lack of schoolbooks, insufficient work time, etc. This raises a great number of issues regarding recruitment, retention, training, professional development, status and career, deployment and management, the professional identity of teachers, the school and classroom environment (inputs and climate). These challenges and issues relating to teachers for EFA in Africa will be the main discussion items at the Nairobi Conference.

2) Objectives and agenda of the Conference

The objectives of the Conference are rooted in the terms of reference of the International Task Force on Teachers for Education for All as a global voluntary alliance of EFA partners joining their efforts to address the shortage of teachers. In order to address the capacity, policy and financing gaps, the Task Force aims to : i) ensure that international efforts are properly coordinated; ii) monitor global progress; iii) report to the next meeting of the High-Level Group on EFA.

In view of this, a series of activities will be carried out using a systemic approach:

- Collection and sharing of information, experiences and good practices ;
- Dissemination of analytical work relevant to policy-making;
- Advocacy and policy dialogue;
- Resource mobilization;
- Support to national capacity building for demand-based policy-making, planning and management.

In this context and considering the situation prevailing in Africa, the objectives of the Conference can be formulated as follows:

1. Raise awareness and mobilize to the need to provide an adequate number of trained teachers to achieve the objectives of EFA and quality education for all;
2. Facilitate South-South-North dialogue and sharing of experience, knowledge and lessons learned on efficient and/or promising policies and practices to overcome challenges and constraints;
3. Provide stakeholders with an opportunity to exchange experience in policy and strategic options enabling adequate and sustainable funding for teacher recruitment, initial and in-service training, deployment and retention;
4. Identify ways and means to enhance communication, alliances and collaborative action at national, regional and international level in order to meet the needs for trained teachers;
5. Reach a consensus on recommendations for the follow-up of the Conference outcomes at national, regional and continental level;
6. Make recommendations to be submitted at the next EFA High-Level Group meeting in March 2011.

To meet these objectives, stakeholders are invited to engage in an in-depth reflection on the main issues relating to the provision of teachers towards EFA in Africa, including:

- i) identified needs in the context of a teacher shortage for EFA;
- ii) the cost and financing problems involved;
- iii) required strategies to improve availability of competent and motivated teachers;

- iv) experiences in the use of assistant and non-civil servant teachers;
- v) teacher provision and gender;
- vi) educators for early childhood care and development; and
- vii) the development of partnerships and collaborative actions to effectively address the shortage of teachers for EFA.

Needs for teachers

To achieve universal primary education, Sub-Saharan Africa will have to recruit another 2.5 million teachers, including 1.3 million to replace retirements, etc. From these projections it is estimated that between 2008 and 2015 over 300 000 additional teachers will need to be deployed every year. This effort will not be shared equally by all countries but many African governments will have to recruit between 4 and 18% additional teachers on a yearly basis. It should be noted that globally, out of the 99 countries that do not have enough teachers, 35 are in Africa and, more importantly, 20 African countries, out of 29 globally, experience a severe shortage. Addressing this challenge raises many issues: the capacity to evaluate the number of teachers needed and to formulate responsive policies, adequate financing, recruitment on the basis of objective and relevant criteria, availability of candidates, institutions and human resources for initial training, equitable and efficient deployment, etc. This requires a holistic approach that takes into account the links and interactions between primary education and the other levels of the education system crucial for developing a balanced approach to the whole sector. Post-primary levels also provided the prospective primary school teachers and their training.

Cost and financing issues

The EFA Report 2010 indicates a global shortfall of 16 billion US dollars per year for universal primary schooling in 2015. Clearly, teacher costs account for the major part of this amount and this portion is usually not taken into account by international donors. Low-income countries affected by a conflict account for 41% of the global financing gap and Sub-Saharan Africa for two thirds of this shortfall, amounting to 10.6 billion US dollars.

As shown by recent progress towards EFA in Africa, the rapid increase in school enrolment results from a rise in public expenditure allocated to education (29 % in real terms between 2000 and 2005). This was mainly due to a more vigorous economic growth but also to a greater share of the GDP allocated to education, especially basic education. According to the EFA Report 2010, the poorest countries could fill part of the gap valued at 7 billion US dollars by prioritizing educational needs. However, they cannot objectively cover all EFA costs without assistance from donor countries. A six-fold increase in donor funding towards basic education (estimated at 2.7 billion US dollars in 2007) would be required. However, as it is unlikely that such a dramatic increase is politically and technically feasible, it is even more important than ever to put more effort in maximizing the effectiveness and impact of aid by ensuring greater predictability, efficiency and national ownership for the benefiting countries.

In this regard, the EFA Fast Track Initiative (FTI) has carried out a reform in response to the recommendations of the mid-term evaluation of the Initiative to enhance resource mobilization and to broaden the donor base, to improve decision-making and mutual accountability, as well as to enhance the efficiency of fund management and disbursement.

The goal of increasing resources also requires the development of more cost-effective policies and strategies as regards the use of funds, as well as of innovative sources of funding which can complement traditional ones.

At national level, efficient mobilization and use of resources also raise issues relating to teacher costs and more efficient recruitment, promotion, management and deployment options.

Strategies for the provision of competent and motivated teachers

Teachers' professionalism develops itself in a continuum that strengthens basic professional skills and reflective practice fostering adaptation to different contexts and innovation. In this respect, initial training, which is exclusively predictive, is the only form of training that is systematically provided to African teachers, while in-service training is often neglected in terms of programs, budgets and human and institutional resources. Yet opportunities in professional support to teachers are becoming increasingly diverse: outreach support (leadership, school council, sponsoring, coaching), learning communities, local teacher resource centers, open and distance learning, including through information and communication technologies (ICT) and digital resources. Pupil learning assessments clearly show that initial training in its current form fails to make a difference, pointing to the need to use different criteria when considering teacher profiles.

Professional skill should go hand in hand with motivation: firstly, because skill depends on the organization in place (possibility) and the enabling environment (capability), secondly, because lack of skill is certainly a demotivating factor as it is clear that pupils' learning successes have an essential positive impact on the motivation of the teacher, in a similar way as the recognition and appreciation s/he receives from the State and society.

Several context-specific incentives may be needed to enhance the motivation and retention of teachers: recognition of merit, career promotion, bonuses or allowances, honorary distinctions, material benefits, etc.

Experiences in the use of assistant and non-civil servant teachers

Faced with the objective limitations imposed by budget constraints, several African countries, especially the French-speaking ones, have used voluntary, contract and community teachers that are usually or have become the majority in the teaching force. The fact that this policy is particularly widespread in French-speaking countries is due to historical salary differences in relation to GDP wages being 8.5 times GDP per capita in French-speaking and 4 times GDP per capita in English-speaking countries. These emergency and/or short-term solutions are meant to facilitate the countries' progress towards universal primary education, salary expenditure being matched to available resources. Trade-offs and compromise under these measures between financial sustainability, social acceptance and educational efficiency are still subject to debate and readjustments.

Positive trends as regards contract teachers, as noted by the Bamako +5 Conference (Mali, 27 au 29 October 2009), include higher academic standards at recruitment level, extension of vocational training, salary increases, gradual integration into public service, etc. But the difficult shift from short-term emergency solutions to long-term measures require a better understanding of the situation and future needs, including by setting up quantitative and qualitative data collection and processing systems on these teachers and the number of trained teachers required for EFA in order to improve assessment of the situation and needs, policy-making, planning, deployment, management, support, etc.

In view of this, the holistic and multi-dimensional tool produced under the UNESCO Teacher Training Initiative for Sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA) could prove a significant contribution. In any case, the transition requires a search for ways of improving the situation: building initial and in-service training capacities, enhancing professional identity (e.g. stable status, code of ethics, union rights and professional associations), setting up professional achievement recognition and certification systems, creating a systemic and community support environment that is more motivating, etc.

Teacher provision and gender

In Sub-Saharan Africa, female staff members dominate in pre-school education (+70%) but are a minority at the other levels of the system, according to the EFA Report 2008. In primary education, they account for 45% of teachers and are mainly confined to early schooling classes. Yet it is generally recognized that women teachers' presence increases enrolment and retention, even success rates, for girls as they act as role models and are reported to have a better pupil-teacher relationship with them.

While research findings on the relationship between teacher gender and school results remain controversial, it seems likely that *"you not only teach what you know, you also teach what you are"*, especially with school-age children. Moreover, recruiting more women teachers may be considered as a contributing factor to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) relating to gender equality and women empowerment.

Many issues regarding gender in the teacher profession need to be discussed, such as: the relationship between higher numbers of female teachers and the boy/girl parity objective, the positive discrimination strategies supporting pro-female teacher recruitment, assignment of female teachers to primary classes, teacher gender and educational success.

Early childhood educators

The importance of investing in early childhood development has been largely demonstrated. Several studies have underlined its impact on educational success and, beyond that, on economic and social benefits. Analysis of preschool systems, which are a significant component of early childhood programs, shows that Africa lags far behind other parts of the world. There are innovative and promising initiatives in several African countries but uncertainties remain about how to scale them up to national level.

This raises financing issues, especially educator recruitment, training and costs. Several questions need to be addressed here:

- What pre-schooling models are objectively sustainable in terms of cost and relevance in Africa?
- How can these endogenous models be designed and what educator profiles could be developed?
- What approaches should be followed for recruitment, training, deployment, remuneration?
- What should be the importance and role of community involvement in these issues?
- What other partnerships could be established to ensure success?

Partnerships

The Task Force on Teachers for Education for All is a voluntary international alliance of EFA partners working together to address the teacher gap. It aims at complementing existing structures by facilitating coordination and advocacy for teachers at global level, creating links between networks and contributing to dissemination of successful policies and practices. It should cooperate widely with existing African partnerships and networks specifically dedicated to teachers for EFA. In particular, the Task Force might contribute to disseminate more widely to interested stakeholders both inside and outside Africa the activities and outcomes of these African initiatives. It should also encourage the development of further partnerships and networks.

Relevant partnerships should involve people willing to take part or contribute to the success of policies, strategies and actions aimed at addressing the shortage of teachers in order to meet the EFA objectives in Africa: national governments, teachers' unions, parent-teacher associations, regional and international organizations, civil society organizations, communities, private sector.

The stakeholder dialogue at the Conference should give the opportunity to build agreements, partnerships and

networks in view of obtaining the required support. Discussions will focus, mainly but not exclusively, on the following issues:

What partnerships are needed at local, national, regional, continental and international level?

Based on what platforms?

How can such partnerships be established and who should be involved?

What efficient operating mechanisms or arrangements should be set up for these partnerships?

How to build on existing structures or initiatives to maximise their impact and avoid duplication of efforts?

3) Methodological process and expected outputs

The Conference proceedings follow a change-driven approach. The methodological process is based on the identification and analysis of policies and experiences relying on efficient and innovative knowledge to successfully address the shortage of teachers for EFA in Africa. The lessons learnt from this knowledge are then integrated in a forward-looking peer reflexion to elaborate collectively on the policy and strategy orientations for change as well as on the conditions for their successful implementation. This should lead to the formulation of commonly agreed recommendations and arrangements for the implementation and follow-up of the outcomes of the Conference.

As far as the working agenda is concerned, this process will include 5 stages.

Stage 1

During the opening and introduction session, expectations from the relevant institutions will be outlined as well as the themes, orientations and objectives of the Conference. This corresponds to plenary session n° 1.

Stage 2

Background information will be presented to put into perspective the theme of the Conference: the shortage of teachers for EFA in Africa. The statistical data and analyses presented will enable to measure and understand the projects being undertaken and the major gaps as well as their financial, policy and capacity implications. This stage is covered by plenary session n° 2.

Stage 3

Approaches, policies, strategies and practices focused on addressing the shortage of teachers for EFA will be presented and reviewed. The objective is to share experiences in successful policy options, conditions and factors in Africa and elsewhere in order to learn essential lessons. Plenary sessions n° 3, 4 and 5 will be devoted to this stage.

Stage 4

Based on the lessons learned, peer development work will be carried out in parallel sessions focused on addressing critical areas of teacher shortages for EFA in Africa. The objective will be to identify in each of the explored areas the main challenges that need to be overcome as well as promising policy options and strategies in order to make specific recommendations.

Stage 5

Stage 5 will include the presentation and discussion of the outcomes and recommendations of the Conference based on the results of the work done in parallel sessions as well as the presentation of the draft final

statement before its reading and approval at the closing session.

The expected outcomes of the Conference are derived from its objectives:

- i) strengthening of wider cooperation of the Teachers Task Force with existing or to be created multi-sector partnerships and networks to address the shortage of teachers for EFA in Africa;
- ii) a statement summarizing the main commonly agreed conclusions and recommendations to be submitted to the 2011 EFA High-Level Group meeting
- iii) contributions to other African meetings, including the next ADEA Triennial in 2011; and
- iv) an analytical report reflecting the main lessons and innovative knowledge derived from the Conference discussions and deliberations.

4) Conference stakeholders

Policy-makers, researchers and other partners from various backgrounds and levels are invited to this Conference to engage in a productive dialogue and establish partnerships in order to jointly address the teacher gap for EFA in Africa. Interactions between these stakeholders officially or voluntarily involved in an exchange of experiences and views should lead to the development of policies, strategies and alliances providing efficient solutions to the shortage of teachers.

Participants will include:

- National governments from inside and outside Africa; Ministers of Education, Economy and Finance, Human resources and Infrastructures and experts in these areas; UNESCO permanent delegations and national commissions;
- Teachers' unions and professional organizations: international education, regional and international professional organizations, national trade unions;
- African regional bodies and development agencies: African Union Commission, African Development Bank
- African civil society organizations: parent-teacher federations, African NGO coalitions for EFA (ANCEFA) and other organizations ;
- External technical and financial partners: international organizations, Ministries of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, bilateral development agencies, international foundations, international NGOs;
- International organizations, specialized institutions and research networks: UNESCO and regional and sub-regional offices in Africa, CONFEMEN, ADEA, universities and research centers, teacher training institutes.

This list is not exhaustive and participation is open to any organization willing and able to contribute efficiently to the objective of providing Africa with an adequate number of trained teachers in order to achieve quality education for all.