

Gender and Development Network: Girls' Education in International Development Working Group: Post-2015 position paper

Despite all the achievements seen so far on poverty reduction and education, since the Millennium development goals, girls and women still remain amongst the most vulnerable and discriminated against. This is particularly exacerbated by poverty and location. If recent trends continue in sub-Saharan Africa the richest boys will achieve universal primary completion in 2021, but the poorest girls will not catch up until 2086. The education goal within the post-2015 framework must take this into account; girls and women must no longer be left behind. Further, education and the inclusion of girls and women must not be seen in isolation, being intrinsically linked to other goals, such as the elimination of early marriage, sanitation infrastructure, stopping violence against women and girls and sexual and reproductive health.

The GADN Girls' Education Working Group has as its purpose to share, develop and promote knowledge and learning of programming and policy for girls' education rights in international development contexts. The group has written this paper in response to the UN's High Level Panel (HLP) report on the Post-2015 agenda. Its objectives are:

- 1) To examine and critique the suggested education goals through the lens of girls' educational needs;
- 2) To put forward suggested amended goals;
- 3) To clearly narrate these goals and suggest specific targets and indicators;
- 4) To explain how girls' education links to other Post-2015 goals.

GADN has previously published positions on gender equality and women's empowerment in the post-2015 framework, including the need for a strong and well-resourced standalone goal on women's empowerment and gender equality, together with the mainstreaming of transformative gender targets across the framework. This paper is designed to complement these with a particular focus on Education. See www.gadnetwork.org.uk for further information.

High Level Panel: Suggested Post-2015 Education Goals

- Increase by x% the proportion of children able to access and complete pre-primary education.
- Ensure every child, regardless of circumstance completes primary education able to read, write and count well enough to meet minimum learning standards.
- Ensure every child, regardless of circumstance, has access to lower secondary education and to increase the proportion of adolescents who achieve recognised and measureable learning outcomes to x%.
- Increase the number of young and adult women and men with the skills, including technical and vocational, needed for work by x%.

Proposed framework

The suggested goals, targets and indicators go some way to address several gaps in the MDG framework, such as learning outcomes, widening the education remit beyond the formal primary sector and introducing a more inclusive language through targeting every child, regardless of circumstance. However, we feel that the goals need to go further to ensure the achievement of equitable, quality and accountable education for all. We would therefore suggest the following framework:

Goal

Ensure universal access and completion of quality pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education, and lifelong learning, regardless of gender, poverty, disability, location, ethnicity and specifically reaching out to the most marginalised.

Targets and Indicators

1. Ensure that every child, regardless of gender, poverty, disability, location, ethnicity, and specifically reaching out to the most marginalised, access and complete quality pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education in a safe, secure and conducive learning environment.
 - a. All countries ensure that policies and procedures are in place to deal with cases of abuse and violence in schools and on the way to and from school;
 - b. All countries have and implement a comprehensive teacher policy that ensures sufficient and equitable distribution of teachers that responds to national targets of pupil: teacher ratio;
 - c. All countries have measures in place to achieve equal percentage of male and female teachers in pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education or move towards this goal
 - d. All countries address child protection issues that are barriers to education such as child marriage, gender-based violence and child labour;
 - e. % increase in decent learning conditions (i.e. school infrastructure, sanitation, learning resources) accessed by all pre-primary, primary and lower secondary pupils.

2. Ensure that education accessed is gender-sensitive and responsive and that learners are capable of gaining the knowledge and skills that are relevant to leading a healthy, safe, productive and fulfilled life in a changing society.
 - a. All countries have a strong and relevant curriculum which is sensitive to the needs of all sectors of society; and includes sexual health and reproductive rights education
 - b. All countries have and implement a teacher training policy that ensures quality, gender-sensitive and responsive initial teacher training and continuous professional development

3. Ensure all young people and adults, regardless of gender, poverty, disability, location, ethnicity, and specifically reaching out to the most marginalised, can acquire

skills needed to obtain decent jobs and lead fulfilling lives, through equitable access to appropriate training, including via second-chance programmes.

- a. % increase in the number of countries who have and implement a vocational education framework that provides relevant training and is regarded as an equal to academic routes;
 - b. % increase in development, access and completion of second-chance education programmes ensuring those who have missed out on education due to conflict, migration, gender, disability etc are able to complete a basic education course that is the prerequisite for further training and personal development;
 - c. All countries ensure that vocational training and second-chance education programmes are integrated into a wider economic and social development strategic framework developed across agencies, including the private sector and that is personalised to reflect the specific needs of individuals.
4. Ensure that no country is prevented from achieving education goals by a lack of finance with governments, aid donors and the private sector working collaboratively to guarantee a minimum budget allocation to education.
- a. Every country ensures that a minimum of 20% of the national budget is allocated to education and that specific measures are taken to ensure that a significant proportion of this reaches the hardest to reach;
 - b. Higher income countries, aid donors and private sector work ensure their aid supports the most marginalised, and work collaboratively with lower income countries to ensure that education budget deficits are reduced and in the long term eliminated. For example through effective tax
5. Ensure that education governance at all levels is transparent and participative and results in strong accountability mechanisms and responsive national level education policy.
- a. All countries have and implement equitable youth participation frameworks, especially reaching out to the most marginalised, in the development and monitoring and evaluation of all levels of local and national level education policy;
 - b. All countries implement education policy that actively seeks to include equitable teacher participation at development and monitoring and evaluation levels;
 - c. % increase in the number of public fora at local, regional and national level where education policy and development are shared and discussed.

As a pre-requisite to these goals, there must be specific attention paid to high quality, robust and meaningful data. This data needs to capture and track those who currently are not being counted i.e. those who are most disadvantaged by factors such as gender, poverty, disability, location, conflict or ethnicity. Although the GAD network is aware of the limitations of this data, we would like to highlight the need to invest in greater support to building this resource base. It also needs to combine both scaled quantitative and qualitative indicators, and to take into account contextual factors that may play an important part in achieving educational outcomes. In order for this to be achievable, a separate funding stream must be made available.

This position paper was developed by the GADN Girl's Education in International Development working group. It does not necessarily represent the views of all of the contributing agencies.

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The Gender & Development Network (GADN) brings together expert NGOs, consultants, academics and individuals committed to working on gender, development and women's rights issues. Our vision is of a world where social justice and gender equality prevail and where all women and girls are able to realise their rights free from discrimination. Our goal is to ensure that international development policy and practice promotes gender equality and women's and girls' rights. Our role is to support our members by sharing information and expertise, to undertake and disseminate research, and to provide expert advice and comment on government policies and projects.

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Working groups

GADN brings together members working on thematic issues through working groups. The GAD Network Girls' Education Working Group has as its purpose to share, develop and promote knowledge and learning of programming and policy for girls' education rights in international development contexts.

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