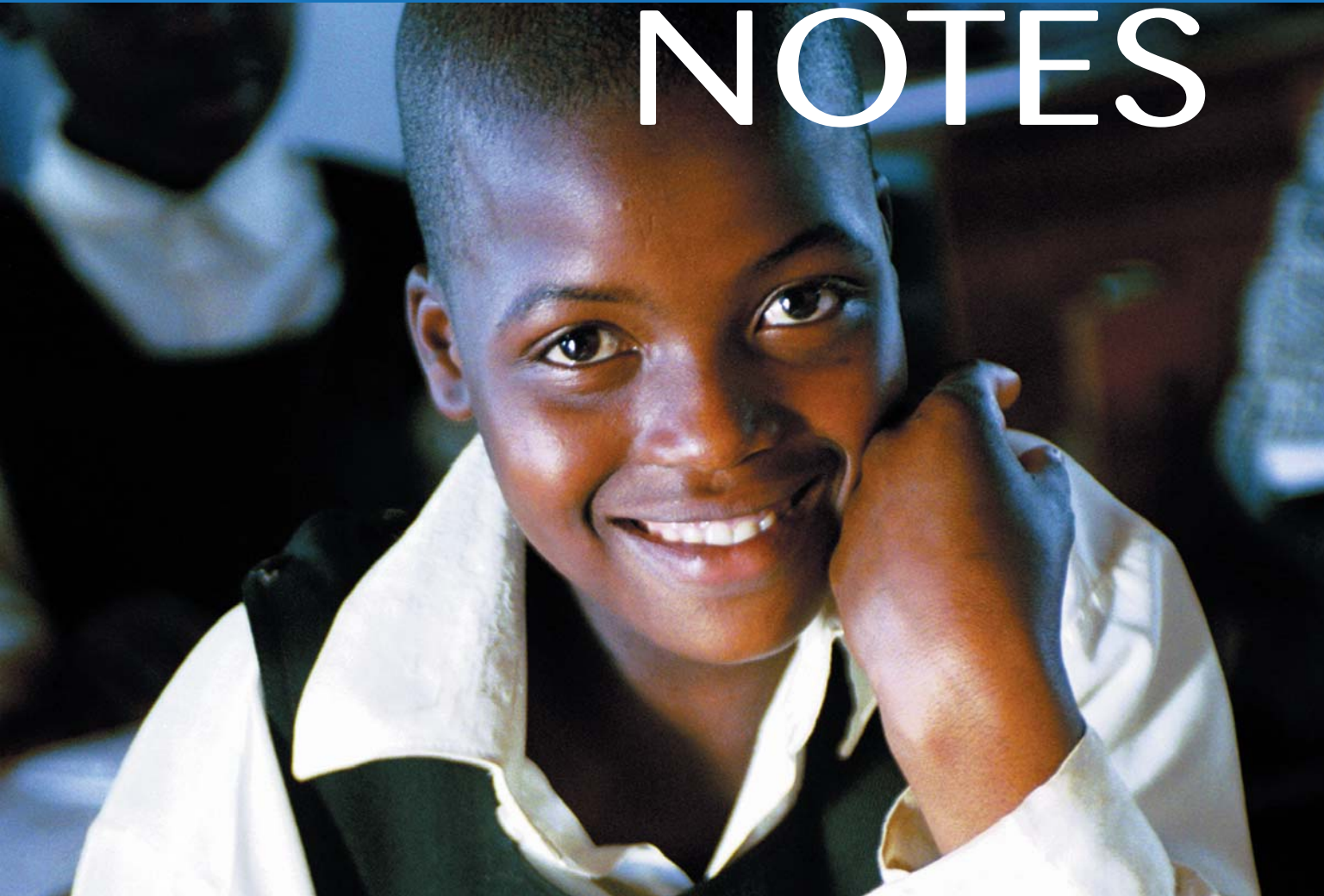


Education NOTES



Fast Track Initiative: Building a Global Compact for Education

Around the world, there are still over 100 million children out of school, including 58 million girls. Despite overwhelming evidence that education can halt the spread of AIDS, increase economic growth and break the cycle of poverty, donor support for education has only increased modestly since 2000, when world leaders unanimously endorsed Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2015.

The Education for All – “Fast Track Initiative” (FTI)

was launched in 2002 as a partnership between donor and developing countries to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of universal primary education. *FTI* is built on mutual commitments: 1) partner countries have agreed to give priority to primary education and to develop sound national education plans, and 2) donors have agreed to increase support in a transparent, coordinated manner.

FTI Promotes Education Policy Reform

To receive *FTI* endorsement, a country must have a poverty reduction strategy and a sound education sector plan:

A sound education sector plan should address constraints to accelerating universal primary education in the areas of policy, data, capacity and financing. It should align primary education priorities with those for pre-school, secondary, tertiary and non-formal education. Specific elements should include:

- a costed strategy for accelerated progress towards universal primary education;
- a strategy for addressing HIV/AIDS, gender equality and other key issues;
- national policy actions designed to improve education quality, equity, efficiency and fiscal sustainability;
- implementation capacity constraints and strategies to address them; and
- indication of how the country intends to carry out monitoring and evaluation and identify annual targets for measuring progress on key policies and outcomes, including those of the *FTI* indicative framework, as locally adapted.

Local donors at the country level endorse a country's education sector plan. Among the donors, one agrees

to act as the lead coordinating agency and takes responsibility for organizing the assessment of the country's program, utilizing the *FTI* appraisal guidelines and indicative framework, with the participation of all concerned donor agencies.

The lead coordinating agency takes responsibility for preparing a report of the assessment, with notification of endorsement and submits it to the Government, the country development partners and the *FTI* Secretariat.

Box 1. Major Donors

Globally, the Fast Track Initiative encompasses all major donors for education—more than 30 bilateral, regional and international agencies and development banks including: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and USA. Multilateral partners include: AfDB, ADB, IADB, UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO and the World Bank.

FTI Promotes Aid Effectiveness

Country Ownership. The *FTI* donor partners help countries to develop their own strategies to achieve universal completion of quality primary education. The *FTI* process is part of the development of comprehensive sector strategies built on broad-based consultation and medium term operational plans and budgets. *FTI* partners have created the Education Program Development Trust Fund (EPDF) to strengthen leadership capacity and program quality.

Alignment. *FTI* donor partners are committed to aligning their support to the development and

Box 2. Partner Country Example: Nicaragua

Nicaragua has been on the forefront in the effort to establish a results-oriented framework for the education sector and is securing a commitment from donors regarding aid alignment and harmonization. Local donors have endorsed Nicaragua's four-year Common Work Program (CWP), which establishes clear performance benchmarks for the education sector.

Box 3. Partner Country Example: Niger

Over the past four years, donors in Niger have aligned their priorities and interventions in support of the government's national education plan, including financial management systems.

implementation of a national education strategy integrated into country-wide development priorities. This provides a platform for donor coordination and a framework for the adoption of one set of monitoring indicators and one process for performance assessment.

Harmonization. Donors increasingly use shared arrangements for aid, technical and analytical work, and field missions. The *FTI* helps governments and donors to co-ordinate their efforts. The *FTI* endorsement process encourages harmonization through use of the Appraisal Guidelines, developed for joint evaluation of a country's education strategy. It includes an evidence-based Indicative Framework, which enables all donors and government to agree on the same measures for monitoring progress and helps with management by results.

The practical objective of the endorsement is an agreement between all donors and the government on how best to achieve EFA. Local donor agencies in *FTI* countries finance common programs and arrange joint missions, share information and consultants' reports and ask for fewer separate meetings with governments. In some countries, *FTI* partners are leading the way with new harmonization instruments like partnership agreements and Memoranda of Understanding between governments and agencies.

Monitoring & Evaluation

The *FTI* Indicative Framework provides a set of indicators which partner countries are asked to use to monitor progress towards Universal Primary Completion (UPC). They include resource mobilization, student flows, number of teachers and teacher/student ratio and enrollment. Countries may decide to add their own benchmarks and indicators.

The monitoring of *FTI* targets and outcomes, donor financing flows and progress in aid coordination and harmonization is built into the existing review process at the country level. Sector reviews are conducted regularly by the recipient country and its donor partners in a spirit of peer reviewing and learning. The results of each joint sector review are to be communicated to the *FTI* Secretariat in order to track progress and to foster cross-country sharing of lessons and good practice.

FTI Trust Funds

There are two *FTI* Trust Funds. The Catalytic Fund and the Education Program Development Fund (EPDF) were established to provide short-term financial and technical support to help close the gap for countries with too few donors and to help those countries lacking capacity to develop sound education strategies. The Catalytic Fund provides transitional short-term

Box 4. Partner Country Example: Yemen

In Yemen, the initial \$10 million from the *FTI* Catalytic Fund will be used to increase the quality of education and the enrollment of girls (age 6-14), especially in rural areas, where only 30% currently attend school. This includes hiring female teachers, building a rural training institute, and providing teacher housing. Contracts are underway for building 86 new schools; student kits to encourage enrollment are being distributed; and 14,000 teachers have been newly trained.

Box 5. Partner Country Example: Guyana

In Guyana, one of the first countries to receive endorsement by *FTI*, the Government has said it will need approximately \$3.5 million per year, over thirteen years, to achieve the education MDG. To date, the Catalytic Fund has distributed an initial \$4 million and committed to another \$4 million. \$4 million per year will make a huge difference in the lives of school children in Guyana. The resources should enable the country to increase completion rates of grade 6 from 65% to 100% in the remote areas and from 88% to 100% in the coastland by 2015. The money should also improve quality by supporting an increase in the percentage of teachers with adequate training in remote areas from 32% to 74% and from 53% to 68% in the coastland.

funding of two to three years as countries seek more sustainable support through regular bilateral and multi-lateral channels. The EPDF helps countries to prepare and implement a sound education plan. It can also support all low-income countries in sharing their knowledge and experience on education and how to reach the goal of UPC. These funds are administered by the World Bank, under the direction of a Strategy Committee consisting of representatives of the participating donors.

Expansion of FTI

FTI is open to all low-income countries demonstrating serious intent toward achieving universal primary completion. As of June 2005, 15 countries have had their education plans endorsed and are receiving support from *FTI*: Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Gambia,

Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Madagascar, Mauritania, Moldova, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Vietnam and Yemen.

An additional 25 countries could potentially receive support from *FTI* over the next year, but successful expansion of *FTI* will require greater financial commitments by donors and greater action toward reform by recipient nations. Donors are contributing an estimated \$350 million in 2005 to these countries, leaving a financing gap of approximately \$250 million this year. If all 25 countries that will potentially have education plans in 2005 are endorsed, an additional \$2 billion will be required. At minimum, an average of \$2.3 billion in external financing per year through 2015 will be needed to support 38 countries in *FTI*.

More information on the EFA-Fast Track Initiative is available online at www.worldbank.org/education/efafti.

This note series is intended to summarize lessons learned and key policy findings on the World Bank's work in education. The views expressed in these notes are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the World Bank. For additional copies of Education Notes, please contact the Education Advisory Service by email at eservice@worldbank.org or visit the web site: <http://www.worldbank.org/education/>

Author: FTI Secretariat, 2005

Photographer: Trevor Samson, 2002