EFA as an Unfinished Agenda: Lessons for Educational Planning

Min Bista
Programme Specialist for Education
UNESCO Bangkok
APPEAL
How far or close are we in terms of meeting the EFA goals?
How is EFA understood at different levels?
How has EFA been translated into national policy and planning?
What is the international discourse on EFA acceleration?
What lessons can we draw for the planning of EFA?
Summarizing Global Progress on EFA (GMR 2012)

- Undeniable progress towards the six goals
- The world is NOT on track
- Faltering progress towards some goals
- Stagnation of the number of out-of-school children for the first time since 2000
- Disappointing progress on adult literacy
- The disparity challenge
- The quality ‘disaster’
### EFA Progress Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECCE</strong></td>
<td>46% increase between 1990 and 2010; Less than half of the world’s children attend pre–primary education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UPE</strong></td>
<td>The number of out–of–school children fell from 108 million in 1999 to 61 million in 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Life Skills/LLL</strong></td>
<td>Lower secondary GER in low income countries 52%; Out–of–school adolescents fell from 101 million in 1999 to 71 million in 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult literacy</strong></td>
<td>775 million adults who cannot read and write in 2010; adult literacy rate up from 76% in 1994 to 84% in 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td>68 countries in primary and 97 in secondary have not reached GPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality</strong></td>
<td>Out of 650 million children of primary school age, 250 million either do not reach grade 4 or, if they do, fail to attain minimum learning standards.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It's Time We Learned: How Education Failures Are Holding Our Children Back

250 Million of the 650 million primary school age children in the world haven't learned to read or count, whether they're in school or not.

120 Million Don't Make it to Grade 4

30% never make it to grade 4 in countries including Benin, Chad, Malawi and Nicaragua

75% haven't learned to read or count by Grade 4 in Benin, Chad, Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Nicaragua, Uganda and Zambia

130 Million in School Aren't Learning the Basics

Japan is the only country where 100% of children achieve a minimum level of learning

#TeachandLearn
Education Quality should not be limited to only a few.

The Centrality of Planning for EFA
ECCE
Life Skills and Lifelong Learning
Literacy
Gender Equality
Quality Education
UPE
MDG 2
MDG 3
EFA Goals
EFA Strategies

- Teacher Policies
- Civil Society Engagement
- Governance Reform
- Broad-based Participatory Mechanisms
- EFA Policies Linked to Development Strategies
- Inclusive Learning Environments
- Systematic Monitoring
- Gender Mainstreaming
- Harnessing ICTs
- Gender Mainstreaming
- Conflict and Natural Disasters

Strong National and International Commitment and EFA Planning and Increased Funding
Criteria for Judging the Credibility of National EFA Plans

- Beyond a technical exercise
- Participatory planning process
- Comprehensive covering all six EFA goals
- Linkage with national development plans
- Feasible
- Measurable indicators, targets and measures of good quality for each goal

No countries seriously committed to Education for All will be thwarted in their achievement of these goals by a lack of resources.
Understandings about EFA
How was it viewed by advanced countries?

- ‘One size fits all' framework while countries are at different stages of development
- Ideology of basic education
- Ignores interdependence of education sub-sectors
- Undermines balanced development of the sector
- Focus on educational challenges of LDCs; hence, an LDC agenda rather than a global education agenda
- Less challenging to some countries but impossible to others
### How was EFA defined by MDGs?

**EFA Goals** and **Education–MDGs as Parallel Education Agendas (Sobhi Tawil, 2013)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EFA Goals</th>
<th>Education–MDGs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Formal and non–formal education</td>
<td>• Formal education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Basic education</td>
<td>• Primary education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Children, youth and adults</td>
<td>• Children (school–age)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Universal agenda Relevant to all countries</td>
<td>• Focus on lower income countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All aspects of the quality of education</td>
<td>• School completion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How are EFA Goals Reflected in Global Partnerships/Initiatives (N=23)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>No. of partnerships working in the area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECCE</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPE</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning needs</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult literacy</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is the result of education–MDGs on EFA? (Reinforcement versus Narrowing)

- Progressive narrowing of EFA focus, scope and relevance
- The totality of six EFA goals ignored
- EFA as UPE
How was EFA translated into national policy and planning?
### Characteristics of Policies and their Implications for Implementation
(Peter Cleaves 1980)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Less problematic</th>
<th>More Problematic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Simple technical features</td>
<td>• Complex technical features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Marginal changes from status quo</td>
<td>• Comprehensive changes from status quo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One actor target</td>
<td>• Multi–actor target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One–goal objective</td>
<td>• Multi–goal objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clearly stated goals</td>
<td>• Ambiguous or unclear goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Short duration</td>
<td>• Long duration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Analysis

- Lack of equal political support for all six EFA goals, leading to policy evaporation
- UPE as the dominant policy discourse and the priority Goal among the 6 goals (Invisibilization of other goals)
- Rushed/limited diagnosis (often use of external consultants) of the sub-sector or sector
- EFA plans not integrated into development frameworks
- Poor capacity to generate and assess policy options
- National policies providing vague discourses and declarations of intents and outlines of priorities rather than clear policy directions
- Policy borrowing rather than contextualizing it, understanding it and learning about it
Planning predominantly a technical/bureaucratic process
EFA plans perceived as donor-driven documents prepared for the mobilization of resources
Parallel planning mechanisms and processes
EFA planning not accompanied by a systematic attempt to develop planning capacity
Inadequate articulation of strategic priorities and concrete strategies (e.g., EFA strategies)
Planning for access, with less attention to equity and quality considerations
- Chronic data problem (disaggregated)
- Gaps between objectives, planned actions, targets and budgetary allocations
- Lack of cooperation among key ministries
- Problem of local ownership and understanding
3. Implementation

- Plan implementation a top-down process
- Weak institutional capacity
- Lack of transparent and accountable governance systems (corruption, leakage)
- Communication failure
- Difficulty translating macro targets into meaningful activities at lower administrative levels
- Human, physical and financial resource constraints
- Gaps between ‘goal-setters’ and ‘goal-getters’
- Complicated administrative and financial procedures
- Disbursement and last minute syndrome
4. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Implementation as the ‘black box’: beyond control, beyond understanding
- Little or no prospect for identifying deviations and taking corrective actions in the absence of functioning M&E system
- Reviews of externally funded projects (development projects) only
- Ambiguity in assessing success or goal achievement due to lack of baselines and benchmarks
- Undue reliance on input indicators
- Impact assessments/evaluations rarely undertaken
What is the international discourse on EFA acceleration?
The Last Big Push for EFA: Actions Recommended by GEM (2012)

- Special efforts to reach the hardest-to-reach groups
- System-wide reforms to tackle the barriers
- Inclusive education policies
- Ensure schools are provided with qualified teachers
- Allocate at least 6% of GNP or 20% of public expenditure to education
- Replicate or scale up successful initiatives
Global Partnership for Education (GPE): a multilateral partnership comprising 60 developing countries, donor governments, international organizations, the private sector, teachers, civil society/NGO groups, formerly known as EFA–FTI, supports countries through its multilateral GPE fund

Global Education First Initiative of the UN Secretary-General (Every child in school, improve learning, foster global citizenship)

EFA Acceleration Framework, an initiative launched in Africa to support countries that are far from achieving EFA (countries are preparing acceleration plan)

World Bank–IMF Learning for All Ministerial Meeting (E–9 Countries)
Key Thrusts of EFA Acceleration

- Address the bottlenecks and systemic ‘blockages’
- Better targeting
- Resource mobilization/innovative financing
- Alternative arrangements/approaches to delivering educational services
- Strong partnerships at all levels with all actors, including the private sector
- Strong monitoring
- Better coordination
- Scaling up innovative/proven practices
- Systemwide reform and better planning
Goal: Formation of human resources for national development

Objective: Provision of quality education for all

Means: Building blocks

Efficiency and effectiveness of determining factors

- Access
- Quality

With Equity
**Means:**
Building blocks

**Policy and Planning**
- Education Policy
- Planning
- Financing
- Human Resource Management
- ICT
- Governance
- Alternative Learning Opportunities

**School / Classroom Factors**
- Environment
- Curriculum
- Pedagogy
- Classroom Assessment
- Instructional Materials
- School Leadership

**Monitoring and Evaluation**
- Examination System
- Review Processes
- Accountability

**Partnerships**
- Domestic
- International
- Private Sector

And many others ...
What lessons can we draw for the planning of new EFA?
Thank you!