

The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity
6 West 48th Street, 12th Floor
New York, NY 10036
United States

26 May 2016

Dear Commissioner

We write on behalf of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and Education International (EI) to submit the following considerations to the Commission.

We welcome the Commission's thorough approach in its ambition to secure new and sustainable financing for education, and we are pleased to have had the opportunity to participate, particularly given the focus of GCE's Global Action Week for Education (GAWE) this year is education financing, and the efforts that have been and will continue to be made by GCE, EI and our memberships to advocate on this critical issue throughout the year. The following submission draws on the demands of the GAWE *Fund the Future* campaign, our extensive consultations with our memberships, and our long, shared history of pushing States to commit to financing inclusive, equitable and free quality education and lifelong learning for all.

We welcome the ambition of SDG 4 and the Education 2030 Framework for Action, but we note with concern that this has not been matched by any financing commitments, nor has domestic or donor funding ever been achieved at the level required to fully deliver free, quality education for all. On the domestic side, even when low-income and lower-middle-income countries spend the recommended minimum of 4-6% of GDP or 15-20%¹ of their domestic budgets on education, the overall pot for public services is so small that fulfilling this commitment will not – and cannot – deliver quality education. On the donor side, despite pledging in 2000 that no country's efforts will be thwarted by a lack of resources, monies have never come close to those required: in April 2016 the Global Education Monitoring Report noted that aid levels stalled in 2010, worryingly stating that the aid situation shows little sign of changing. With ambitions in the 2015 SDG 4 and FFA targets to realise pre-primary, primary, lower- and upper-secondary education, and a fundamental commitment to lifelong learning, we must tackle the formidable financing challenge with equal ambition.

As a human right, education should be treated as a *public good* that is provided equitably on a non-commercial and fee-free basis. Because education is a human right and a public good, States have the primary responsibility for sufficiently financing education. The education civil society community calls for domestic resources to be mobilised to increase the pot for public services in order to deliver sufficient financing to education. The single most effective route to increase the domestic resource base is taxation, in the form of ending tax incentives for existing and potential investors, and ending tax dodging by multinational companies. While our members acknowledge the important role of donors as we move towards delivering the full vision of quality education, none believe that the future of long-term, sustainable, and adequate financing lies in ODA; nor do they believe it comes from financial donations from the private sector – and certainly not from 'donations in-kind'. We are yet to see the evidence of any *de facto* contribution of the private sector, and we particularly caution against so-called new and innovative sources of education financing; transaction costs and benefit ratios should be identified for any new financial instrument such as bonds.

Existing resources and any potential increased resources – encompassing both domestic resources and ODA – should not be used to fund or subsidise for-profit private education providers. In particular, we draw attention to the use of domestic resources in Liberia to outsource its education system to for-profit providers, and the use of monies intended for ODA by the UK Department of International Development to fund low-fee private school providers, Bridge International Academies. Indeed, Jim Kim of the World Bank controversially – and inaccurately – stated that Bridge International Academies cost “*just \$6 per month*” in a 2015 speech, suggesting that this amount is not only ‘affordable’ but also acceptable for parents to pay – but free education is a human right, and over 100 civil society organisations condemned this support for for-profit provision of primary schooling in an open statement to the World Bank.²

Free education is a human right; moreover, States have already committed to SDG 4 and the FFA, both of which explicitly state that primary and secondary education should be provided free of charge. Financing low-fee private schools not only

¹ As recommended in the Education 2030 Framework for Action (FFA)

² http://campaignforeducation.org/docs/privatisation/May%202015%20-%20Join%20statement_%20to%20WB%20statement%20on%20Bridge_EN.pdf

flies in the face of these commitments, but also poses a real risk to quality and equity in education: it creates a State-endorsed two-tier system, deepens social divides, and creates segregation – all with little or no independent evidence that such providers deliver quality education as defined in the Framework for Action itself. Public resources must be invested in public services, and not to fund for-profit providers, which are often unregulated and unaccountable to citizens.

Achieving equity and inclusion for all learners is another ongoing and broad challenge. For example, of the six Education For All Goals, agreed at the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, Goal 4 on adult literacy was the most neglected, with the rate of illiteracy dropping only slightly (4%) since 2000 – painfully far from the target of 50%. The needs of learners with disabilities were not even mentioned in the Dakar Framework. The respondents to our consultation repeatedly stated the need for sufficient funding to be put aside to specifically deal with achieving equity, and we particularly raise the need for funding to tackle adult and youth literacy. This aspect was neglected in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), with only school education mentioned. Data on financing for adult literacy has been extremely scant over the past fifteen years; however, in 2009, UNESCO estimated that the amount needed to eradicate adult illiteracy was \$156 billion annually. While much must be done to make up for the neglect of this target since 2000, there is a commitment to do so in SDG 4 and the FFA, and this amount is not unachievable.

The teaching profession lies at the heart of universal, equitable and inclusive quality education. We will not achieve this shared vision of quality education for all without adequate funding to ensure adequate numbers of professionally trained teachers, inclusive infrastructure, robust curricula, and good teaching and learning materials. Investment is particularly needed in good quality, relevant, and up-to-date teacher training; reliable and adequate salaries; and ongoing professional learning and development.

We assert our concerns regarding moves towards performance-related pay and bonuses for teachers which are linked to student results. Such schemes place undue focus on short-term, quantifiable targets such as test scores, and fail to take into account the broader inputs made by teachers which together comprise a true vision of quality, such as fostering creativity, problem-solving, interpersonal skills and social skills, alongside the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy. Indeed, the 2013-2014 EFA Global Monitoring Report noted, *“a closer look at the evidence on performance-related pay from around the world shows that in practice it is not possible to conclude that it has clear-cut benefits.”* Worse still is that such systems are being discussed or even implemented in a global context where teachers are consistently being paid less than those working in comparable fields, which require similar qualifications.


The level of sustained funding that is required to deliver the full vision of SDG 4 and the Framework for Action should not be underestimated, but at the same time remains achievable – as it was in 2000. Political will is needed to create the long-term infrastructure which will deliver adequate education funding, and it is our demand of the Commission that it leads the way in pushing for serious change. This must start with the biggest potential resource available, and that is progressive taxation systems.

GCE and EI remain committed to campaigning for adequate and reliable funding for the realisation of quality, inclusive education for all. We fully support the work of the Commission to push forward this agenda, and look forward to working with the Commission in future to realise this shared ambition.

Yours faithfully



Camilla Croso
President, Global Campaign for Education



Fred van Leeuwen
General-Secretary, Education International

cc. Justin W. van Fleet, Director, International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity