

THE INVESTMENT CASE FOR EDUCATION

Side event co-organized by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Norway,
the Republic of Korea and UNESCO

Tuesday, 14 July 2015, 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Elilly Hotel, Gada Hall

Concept Note

The new Sustainable Development Goals will include a comprehensive and ambitious goal for education, aiming to reach inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all by 2030. The cost of meeting this goal points to a need for a steady increase in financing in order to secure general access, improve the quality of education, and to address exclusion. Looking ahead to a broader and more ambitious education agenda with a lifelong learning perspective, domestic financing, external sources of support and innovative approaches to financing and implementation are imperative.

A study published by UNESCO GMR shows that the annual total spending in low and lower middle income countries would have to increase from US \$149 billion in 2012 to US \$336 billion on average between 2015 and 2030 in order to achieve universal completion of pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education, as well as universal access to upper secondary education. Furthermore, spending per student will need to increase substantially in order to improve learning: it is projected that low income countries would need to increase expenditure per primary school student from USD 70 to USD197 by 2030.

Domestic resources will be critical but insufficient. Even if countries move closer to allocating 6% of their GDP to education, the total annual financing gap between available domestic resources and the amount necessary to reach the above targets is projected to average USD 39 billion between 2015 and 2030. Note that this excludes parts of the goal such as investments in technical and vocational, university and adult education. The gap is particularly large in low income countries. Development cooperation and efficient multi-stakeholder partnerships will thus remain a crucial source of education financing.

At the World Education Forum in May, the international education community adopted the Incheon Declaration and made a commitment to the Sustainable Development Goal 4 and its corresponding targets and MOI. They called upon all actors and stakeholders to undertake bold and innovative actions to reach the ambitious education goal which will be adopted in September 2015 at the Special Summit at the UN.

The Oslo Summit in July will focus on mobilizing a strong and renewed political commitment to education as a main driver for development. It aims to reverse the negative trend in international support as well as to enhance domestic resource mobilisation and increase interaction with the private sector. With official development aid to education reducing both in volume and in relative importance, the Oslo Declaration on Education for Development will underline how innovative partnerships and results-oriented, well-coordinated development aid is more crucial than ever.

The co-organizers of this side event on financing for education, UNESCO and the Governments of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Norway and the Republic of Korea, will build on the conclusions of the World Education Forum in Incheon, Republic of Korea, and the Summit on Education for Development in Oslo, Norway. The side event will convey key messages from these assemblies to the Financing for Development Conference.

The side event will:

- present the “investment case” for education and demonstrate how catalytic and results-oriented development and effective partnerships can bring economic, social and environmental dividends in the long term;
- illustrate, based on recent data and needs analyses, the imperative for increased investment in education for development as well as the consequences of non-action;
- showcase success stories of country-led initiatives with increased domestic resource mobilisation alongside efficient development cooperation; and
- discuss the experiences to date of global cooperation on education finance.

The side event actively seeks the participation of national delegations, private sector, civil society representatives and other stakeholders to the FfD3 Conference. Main speakers will be H.E. Mr Shiferaw Shigute, Minister of Education of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia; Ms Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director-General; H.E. Mr Yun Byung-se, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea; Ms. Julia Gillard, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Global Partnership for Education; and H.E. Mr Børge Brende, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway.