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**Key policy initiatives and capacity-building on gender
mainstreaming: focus on education and training**

LIGHTING CANDLES IN THE DARK: FINANCING QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL*

by

SANIYE GÜLSER CORAT
Director, Division for Gender Equality, UNESCO

*The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.

Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms. Irina Bokova, allow me to begin by saying that I am delighted to have been invited here today specifically to talk about financing in education. This issue cuts across two issues at the top of UNESCO's agenda: gender equality which is one of two global priorities of the Organization and education for all and particularly of girls and women. Guaranteeing the funding necessary to ensure that all girls and boys can have a quality education is something UNESCO is passionate about. We know that the necessary changes cannot be brought about without the right investments and the right resources. And - as I shall endeavor to explain - this will not be possible unless we start lighting candles in the dark.

These resources are – for the time being – lacking. Currently, education is primarily financed by domestic resources, that is, by governments and households. The budgets of both have been put under strain by the global financial crisis. As ever, girls lose out: when poor families are forced to choose which children to educate, it seems that more often they choose boys.¹

perspective, it is helpful to compare it to

UNESCO is clear about where this money must be invested. There is a real threat that *more* children than now will be out of school in 2015. Ensuring that education for all means precisely that and reaching the marginalized is necessarily more difficult and more expensive. Many live in rural or conflict-affected areas. This affects many girls who are doubly marginalized by intersecting factors of discrimination. This also affects girls' access to education and to science and technology. In most regions of the world, women are more likely than men to be uneducated or undereducated, especially in science and technology.² Statistics show the persistently low participation of girls in these areas through all levels of schooling.³

Gender disparities – which have been reducing overall – can be improved, via scholarships, community campaigns, sending female teachers to rural areas or simply by installing separate sanitation facilities in schools. These generalized examples show that there are best practices that can be replicated. Progress is attainable. There is light in the dark.

The second message is that we must invest in quality so that all children – girls and boys – and women and men have the skills they need to make a difference in their lives and communities.

Basic education – sound literacy and numeracy skills - are a fundamental pre-requisite for women to access science and technology and careers in these domains. Yet, UNESCO fears the creation of a 'quality divide', as millions of children leave school without these essential skills. In sub-Saharan Africa, in some countries young adults with 5 years of education have a 40% chance of being illiterate.

We need to invest in access to education and in guaranteeing quality. Pupils need and deserve well-qualified, motivated teachers; we must invest in their training and incentives – including additional incentives to deploy talented teachers to teach marginalized children. We must invest in urgently training the 1.9 million extra teachers that will be needed to achieve EFA. Drawing on international

knowledge and learning made before and after the project saw tangible improvements; by the end, the majority achieved an A grade. They also showed a marked improvement in their literacy skills and confidence. The results were so encouraging that, the pilot project has been expanded to benefit a further 1250 girls. Here we see that quality and innovation unite – as an innovative solution has led to an improvement in the quality of the girls’ learning.

This project - showing the potential for harnessing modern technologies to promote EFA and gender equality – makes me particularly excited about UNESCO’s recent partnership with Nokia. Nokia will invest \$ 5-10 million in researching how mobile technologies can support EFA and support new educational applications. This kind of partnership again shows that innovative financing is about much more than finance: it can be as much about sharing knowledge and expertise.

‘Quality’ and ‘Innovation’ have been key words running through these debates on education and the future of financing. As we progress, we must be guided by optimism – that success is achievable and tangibly so, and by creativity – to expand the range of possible solutions to help educate the world’s children. This is our chance to light our

Examples of Partnerships between UNESCO and private partners include:

Nokia:⁷ UNESCO is partnering with Nokia to promote the use of mobile technologies to further the objectives of Education for All. Nokia will invest \$ 5-10 million in researching how mobile technologies can support EFA and to develop new applications with an educational potential. Mobile technologies will also be used to support teacher training and school management.

Microsoft:⁸ This partnership, formed in 2004, aims to support the use of technology in transforming education with a primary focus on the EFA goals. One example of the many projects elaborated co-jointly is the Innovative Teachers Program that aims to improve teacher's practice.⁹

Innovative Financing for Education

A full discussion of the varied mechanisms which have been proposed under the rubric 'innovative finance' is beyond the scope of this paper.¹⁰ However, to demonstrate the breadth of possibility and creative thinking, it is useful to provide some selected examples, which were identified in UNESCO's recent Future Forum on Innovative Financing for Education as having the most potential:¹¹

Soccer (FIFA)-Levy: UNESCO's 2010 Global Monitoring Report has proposed a small levy (0.4%) on the revenue of some of Europe's premier league football clubs. This would be estimated to raise around \$ 48 million per year. The association with the sport would also help to raise the profile of education.

World Cup Legacy Fund: A fund established by the host country to help education at home and in poor countries.

Teachers for Education for All Fund: Education International, an international teachers union, have proposed a 1% voluntary levy on teacher union dues in rich countries.

⁷ <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single->

Levy on financial transactions: the proposed tax destined for global development could benefit education. Oxfam have estimated that this levy could raise \$ 400 billion for development every year.¹²

A remittance levy for schools: a voluntary 0.1% levy on remittance could raise \$ 300

21 September 2010: <http://www.oxfam.org/en/pressroom/reactions/oxfam-reaction-leading-group-innovative-financing-mdg-summit> (Accessed on: 14/2/2011).

UIS, UNESCO, Information Sheet No. 5, The Global Demand for Primary Teachers - 2010 Update.

UNESCO, Education Counts: Towards the Millennium Development Goals, 2010a.

UNESCO, Future Seminar on 'Innovative Financing for Education,' 14 September 2010, 2010b.

UNESCO, Global Monitoring Report: Reaching the Marginalized, 2010c.