

Education E-news update – June 2007

An electronic update on education work in Actionaid and current events and issues affecting access to education for millions around the world.

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In this issue

- **AAI Country Updates**
- **Education team confronts the IMF**
- **IMF makes strong response to AAI**
- **AAI partners with Teachers Unions**
- **Momentum Renewed on Violence Against Girls in Education**
- **Disaster Risk Reduction project gains momentum**
- **CEF: Innovative ideas for sustainability**
- **6 million join hands in the fight for the 'right to education'**
- **GCE releases annual 'School report' on donors**
- **AAI, GCE and ANCEFA face finance ministers in Accra**
- **ANCEFA assesses state of education in Africa**
- **Donors fail to 'keep promises' to education in Brussels**
- **FTI declares new aid for education**

AAI Country updates

Bangladesh: Momentum Builds for Early Childhood Education

AAIB is working on influencing government to provide pre primary education for its citizens, the work is being carried on with 7 AAI partner. A manual has been developed based on current best practice of ECCE in accordance with EFA goals, this is currently being pilot tested.

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Cameroon: Funding For Education a Priority

AAI Cameroon has started off its education work with a national study on public sector wage bill caps; this will feed into the advocacy work planned on financing of education. Also prioritized for education work in Cameroon is an analysis of education rights as enshrined in the education policy framework, a national study on Violence Against girls and increasing citizen participation through building PTA/SMC alliances at local level.

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DRC: Uniting To Challenge Violence against Girls together with the teachers' unions

Recognising the significance of Violence against Girls as a key barrier to girls' rights to education and therefore other rights, the national thematic coordinators of AAI DRC have decided to prioritize VAG in the programme plans for the rest of 2007 and jointly implement key activities. These include training for teachers and school level authorities in July as well as sensitization for girls to develop ownership and develop strategies for denouncing all forms of violence against girls.

(see VAGS activity report)

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The Gambia: Taking Action to Confront Violence against Girls and Women

Currently in its second CSP development period, AAITG is conducting a very thorough consultative process with key partners and stakeholders at all levels. All policy staff are going on a retreat to develop a strategic plan for the implementation of the 'Women Wont Wait campaign, the plan will also harmonise plans for work on Violence against girls in education. A documentary that captures the prevalence of Violence against Girls in Education is being

developed in collaboration with the EFA network and the Gambia Teacher's Union which is to be released in December. Following this, a partnership agreement has been signed with the African Centre for Democracy and Human rights Studies (ACDHRS) to set up Mediation centres in communities where victims can safely lodge complaints and get support at their local level.

For more information contact Kadijatou.baldeh@actionaid.org

Ghana: Reflect Work Is Revitalized

In the recent past many reflect circles in Ghana have suffered neglect due to a high level of attrition of reflect facilitators and recruitment of volunteers is often slow and difficult. Preparations are thus under way to hold a national PAMOJA meeting of Reflect Practitioners towards finding solutions to revitalize Reflect work in Ghana. A national level study is being carried out on how the decentralization of the Ministry of education agencies and departments will affect the deployment of teachers. Implementation of the multi country Disaster Risk Reduction programme has begun with a PVA conducted at the upper eastern region of the country.

For more information contact Dorothy.Konadu@actionaid.org

Kenya: Government Announces Free but Not So Free Secondary Education

AAIK is currently engaged in a debate on the recent political announcement of tuition free secondary education. A policy meeting was held on the 17th of May with AAI and the Elimu Yetu Campaign of which a collective position has been developed. AAI and the Kenya Union of teachers are working towards challenging the governments' decision to hire contract teachers to replace trained teachers on leave. Kenya has been having meetings with the Kamunge committee which was charged by government to do a review of the education sector. AAIK and EYC is planning to respond with an alternate report

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India: AAI Battles for Education Rights in All Indian States

AII has completed a study on state level budget analysis. In order to promote ground level understanding of education finance, a Programme involving 4 states of India has been initiated where work is taking place towards the development of a manual for school level budget analysis. This will be completed by the end of the year. Actionaid is actively engaged in the discussions on bringing out a Right to Education Bill. In collaboration with UNESCO, a meeting is to be held with other activists, government officials, teachers' union members and legislators next month to initiate a debate on what should be the form of the Bill. With government showing no inclination to bring about a central legislation, the possibility of developing a generic legislative framework on education will be discussed; this is to be used as a practical tool to support certain states in developing legislature on the right to education. The DRR project has been launched and work has started in the Assam region.

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Nepal: Citizens Participate in School Management

AAIN will be engaged in PRRP meetings with key partners in the beginning of June. The EC block funded work on school level accountability is continuing in Nepal; currently training workshops are being conducted for School Management Committee members at local level to enhance accountability and enhance the quality of education of the schools they represent. Manuals have been produced in the local languages on the roles and responsibilities of SMC members and to guide the establishment of future committees. A study on Financing of Education in Nepal has just been completed; it discusses among other things the impact of IMF macroeconomic policies on the hiring and distribution of teachers. The report will be disseminated shortly.

For more information contact Latika.pradhan@actionaid.org

Nigeria: More Funds for Girls Education Work

The AAIN 3 year project on Enhancing Girls Basic Education in Northern Nigeria has received funding from Oxfam-Novib for a 2 year extension, an independent mid term evaluation of

the project is currently being carried out. Implementation has just started on a new programme in partnership with One World, it is focused on implementing the Family Life and HIV/AIDS Education (FLHE) curriculum through electronic media and ICT at local and national level, AAI is providing the operational base. AAIN is working with Community Action for Popular Participation on the new Comic Relief funded project on increasing schools responsiveness to HIV. Start up plans and budgets have been forwarded to CR for approval and release of funds.

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Malawi: Strengthening Linkages with Teachers Unions

AAIM has concluded a study entitled “teacher’s vulnerability to HIV”, the report is being disseminated nationally and results will factor into the ongoing training for teachers on behaviour change. In the wake of the “writing the wrongs” meeting in February, the Malawian government is organising a national literacy symposium with the support of Actionaid to domesticate the benchmarks on adult literacy start the planning process for a national literacy survey in 2008. A review of the National Action Plan on EFA which has been operational in Malawi since 2001, is to be conducted, AAIM will work together with the EFA national coalition on this.

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Mozambique: Positions to Challenge IMF at National Level

A national study on the impact IMF macroeconomic policies on education has just been completed, this will be shared at a meeting with key civil society partners to share the findings of the report and build ownership among NGOs. The positions and outcomes of this meeting will be presented at the education donors meeting which will follow shortly. AAIM is working with the government, PTAs and Teachers Union to carry out training workshops for School Council facilitators in several districts on rights to/in education and strategic planning. A nationwide campaign on Violence against Girls

in education is being carried out at national and local levels; partners in this work include FAWEMO, MEPT, and UNICEF etc.

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Pakistan: Teachers Brought Together in National Level Mobilization

With the banning of Teacher's Union in some parts of Pakistan, AAIP has recently organised a convention which brought together teachers and existing teachers unions from all over Pakistan to form the 'Teachers network'. The network was able to develop an action plan in which it will serve as the platform for advocacy towards quality of education, increased funding for education and curriculum reform. In the follow up of the Abuja 'Writing the Wrongs' meeting in February, the Minister of education Anisa Zeb Tarkheli has formed a literacy group involving UNESCO, AAIP, and Bunyad to promote adult literacy in Pakistan. The group will organise a follow – up convention in order to carry forward the Abuja 'call to action'. AAI Pakistan has just launched the second phase of its alternative History Books projects in Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad, and Hyderabad. While the first phase included books on Stone Age, Bronze Age and the Iron Age the second phase focuses on the history of South Asia; The books aim at giving youth a true picture of their history about the life of ordinary people and the struggle of women artisans as opposed to glorifying militarization, Kings and heroes of wars. The books have strong messages of peace for children and counter elements in the current curricula that discriminate on the basis of religion, class, caste etc.

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Rwanda: Challenging Gender Based Violence

AAI Rwanda has just started a 3 year EU funded programme on "Fighting Gender based Violence" which will be implemented in 10 districts, the project entails community sensitization, creation of girls clubs and policy advocacy at national level, 4 partners have so far been recruited. Two research pieces **are being** completed on "violence towards

female domestic workers” and “violence against girls in schools. These reports will be shared shortly.

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Senegal: Strengthening Linkages with Teacher’s Unions

AAI Senegal organised a meeting to create linkages and discuss possible partnerships with prominent Senegalese Teachers Unions towards the improvement of the quality of education in Senegal. Several different unions attended the meeting including Education International member affiliates: SAES, SUDES, UDEN, SYPROS, SNEEL-CNTS etc. Discussions on partnerships started with agreements on basic policy positions on issues such as Violence against girls in education, non professional teachers, quality of education and the principles of the Parktonian Recommendations. In the follow up of the meeting AAI will continue to facilitate the partnership process and encourage the unions to engage with the national education coalition towards having a united civil society voice in the EFA process. AAI Senegal is engaged in an advocacy project with SCOFI, a national committee on girls’ education. The CP has organized a training workshop for members of the committee on advocacy techniques.

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Sri Lanka: Post conflict back to school project continues

AAI SL is part of a large platform of NGOs that are working towards disaster preparedness in schools in a campaign called the ‘Elated schools development campaign’. Currently towards the end of its 2nd phase, the campaign has entailed training teachers and working at school level to significantly reduce their vulnerability to disasters and violent conflicts. As this phase of the work is ending, documentation has started on the outcomes and processes of the campaign. AAISL has taken part in a government driven research on regional practices on Disaster Preparedness; this involves ensuring INEE and Hyogo standards to improve the current government framework.

For more information, contact Thusitha.Siriwardena@actionaid.org

Sierra Leone: Promise of New Funding From FTI

A national research focused on public sector wage bill caps has been completed; the report of this will be shared shortly. AAISL has also just finished participating in the writing of the national education sector plan with the ministry of education, the plan has since been forwarded and accepted by the Fast Track Initiative, this means a significant increase in donor funding for the education sector in Sierra Leone. Preparations are under way to launch the Sierra Leone chapter of PAMOJA. This effort is towards the federating of Reflect Practitioners in SL for the improvement and revitalisation of reflect work in SL.

For more information contact Sam.Bangura@actionaid.org

Tanzania: Researches Effectiveness of Government Provision of Services

AAIT has just completed research on government service provision in 4 DAs: Kigoma, Tanda himba, Newala, and Bagamoyo. A research on IMF conditionalities and its Impact on education has also recently been completed.

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Highlights of IET work

The Education Team Confronts the IMF

At the IMF Spring Meetings this April in Washington D.C. Actionaid International Education Team led a panel discussion on the impact of wage bill ceilings on teacher recruitment in Sierra Leone, Malawi and Mozambique. The panelists included, Tennyson Williams, from Sierra Leone, Julita Nsanjama, from Malawi, Paula Mendonça, from Mozambique and Akanksha Marphatia and Rachel Moussié from IET. Our report, **confronting the Contradictions: The IMF, Wage Bill Caps and the Case for Teachers** was launched at the meeting. To respond to our findings, an adviser to the IMF Africa Department, and a Senior Education

Adviser from the World Bank were also speakers on the panel.

During the discussion the IMF representative conceded that the IMF would get out of the business of setting wage bill ceiling. But he said nothing of the underlying macroeconomic policies that lead to such low wage bill ceilings in the first place. Our work now is at the country level. We must stop the IMF from imposing low wage bill ceilings that prevent governments from hiring all the teachers they need to provide quality education in schools.

For a more information contact InternationalEducationTeam@actionaid.org.uk or you can also download **Confronting the Contradictions** at: <http://www.actionaid.org/main.aspx?PageID=581>

IMF Makes Strong Response To AAI Report!

Following the spring meetings in Washington DC, the IMF's response to '**Confronting the Contradictions**' came in the form of a letter written by Calvin McDonald the former IMF mission Chief to Malawi. The letter claims that the Fund has had 'solid macroeconomic justifications' for prescribing wage bill ceilings in certain countries and that it is "firmly committed to explain such a decision and the decision making processes that led to it" it does however concedes to our position that ceilings are not the best way to solve the underlying problems of a poor country's wage bill, stating that the "Fund is committed to use ceilings more selectively and transparently". The letter also makes strong statements that refute the evidence presented in the three country case studies and claims wrongful data and analysis. The letter does not however discuss the contradiction between IMF's inflexible macroeconomic policies and the urgent need to increase spending on education which was the central message of the report.

AAI has put together **and sent** a response **in** which we state that *"Removing wage bill ceilings as conditionalities are but the first step. The ceiling may no longer be a conditionality, but it may still be too low for government to hire the number*

of teachers needed to ensure quality education". We also reiterate our position and refocus their attention on the wider and harmful macroeconomic policies that IMF imposes on governments stating that *"we believe the IMF needs to fully recognize the disproportionate power that it presently wields – which too often undermines democratic processes. At present the IMF can single-handedly shutdown donor funding and foreign investment if governments do not abide by the Fund's macroeconomic prescriptions"*. The letter counters IMF's attempt to discredit AAI findings by presenting further evidence and clearly stating the sources of the data, and pointing out that these are often IMF official documents. You can see AAI's response at www.actionaid.org .For more information contact InternationalEducationTeam@actionaid.org.uk

AAI Engages With Teachers Unions

In April 2006, ActionAid International and Education International joined hands and formed a partnership to strengthen linkages between AAI and Teachers Unions at all levels bringing together the strengths of both organisations in a collaboration towards achieving good quality education for all by 2015. The partnership was solidified in the 'Parktonian Recommendations' which details agreed policy positions as well as recommendations for action. The partnership has since filtered down to national level with many AAI countries developing joint work with Teachers' Unions at different levels: In Malawi, Sierra Leone and Mozambique, the national unions took an important part in AAI study on the case for the teachers , the result of which has been incorporated into the AAI report on IMF: Confronting the contradictions. Similarly, AAI country programs in Anglophone sub Saharan Africa participated in the survey conducted by EI on Teachers recruitment, retention and motivation.

In Malawi, AAI and the teachers union have developed a joint strategy to work on violence against girls at school, education financing and HIV/AIDS, In India, AAI is working with teachers on the campaign for the recruitment of qualified teachers, In Pakistan, despite the banning of the teachers unions by government, AAI has facilitated the 'Teachers'

Network' including teachers from provincial to national level, In Brazil, the teachers unions are working alongside AAI in a national campaign for quality education.

Globally, AAI and EI are slowly building a united front to challenge governments and international institutions on issues like Education financing, violence against girls at school, education and HIV/AIDS, etc.

For more information, please contact InternationalEducationTeam@actionaid.org.uk

IET and WR Renew Momentum on Violence against girls at schools

The AAI International Women's Rights team and the International education team have worked together to develop a strategic framework for the next steps of the joint work on Violence against Girls in Education. VAGS work in AAI started in 2004 with national level studies looking at the prevalence of VAGS as a major obstacle to girls' education. So far studies have been conducted in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Vietnam, Nepal, Kenya, Malawi, Burundi, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda, DRC, Nigeria, Mozambique, and Guatemala. Rwanda, Cameroun, and Senegal are preparing to carry out the study. Following this, an African regional synthesis report supported by the African Regional office will be carried out to present more evidence on the issue and generate renewed interest at regional level. Both teams are presently collating country studies and CPs are currently preparing national strategies for 2007/8 on how to take the work forward, the strategies outline how the Model Policy developed in 2006 will be used by each country as a tool to influence policy change around VAG in education.

For more information, please contact InternationalEducationTeam@actionaid.org.uk, you can download the model policy on www.actionaid.org

Disaster Risk Reduction through Schools Gains Momentum

The AAI 5 year multi country DRR through schools project is aimed at making schools in high disaster risk areas safer through incorporating disaster preparedness into school systems and curricula. The project is now fully operational in

all its targeted countries: Malawi, Nepal and Bangladesh have been in the implementation phase for a year now, Ghana, Haiti, and India started 6 months ago and Kenya is just starting its implementation phase.

A review of the Participatory Vulnerability Analysis methodology used in the project countries has just been completed by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), a key partner in the DRR project. The findings of the review will be shared widely and hopefully will inform the application of the PVA methodology in future within and outside AAI. IDS is also conducting a survey considering ways in which to incorporate Climate resilient approaches into DRR activities.

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Commonwealth Education Fund: Innovative Ideas for Sustainability

With the CEF programme drawing to a close, efforts are going on at the national and international levels to find solutions towards sustaining country level work after the termination of the programme in June 2008. CEF has supported civil society driven education work in 16 commonwealth countries since 2002; a sustainability mapping process was carried out in 2006 to explore ways of sustaining the advocacy work that CEF has been supporting. The report revealed that civil society does not benefit significantly from the present Direct Budget Support (DBS) aid architecture; this has given birth Idea of a Civil Society Education Fund in which donors would place a percentage of the budget support they give to governments. The fund, if managed properly could provide the safety nets that Civil Society coalitions will need to stay above water for the next few years. This concept is being broadly discussed with donors at international level but momentum critically needs to be strengthened at national level. The implications of this for education work in AAI are significant as it also creates an opportunity for Actionaid countries to not only take the lead in negotiating future CSO funding mechanisms with donors but to also renew and

strengthen their relationships with national education coalitions.

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Other Education Updates

6 Million Join Hands in the Struggle for the 'Right to Education:

This year's Global Week of Action saw millions in over 100 countries around the world mobilized to demand the right to education for every person. Many AAI countries participated and organized joint action around diverse activities lobbying policy makers and world leaders for progress and policy change: many stood side by side, holding hands and forming human chains in Ghana, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Bangladesh, and even a cross – boarder chain across the Gambia and Senegal. Cameroon organized a televised debate on improving teacher status; Ministers of education were lobbied by children in Malawi, Ghana and Sierra Leone and many more. Several promises were made with direct policy implications and AAI countries and partners are dedicated to following these up.

For more information contact muleya@campaignforeducation.org

GCE Releases 2007 Annual 'School Report'; Verdict is 'Not Up To Scratch.

The report launched in May, gives an assessment and ranking of the 22 world's richest OECD countries, and holds them to account for their promises on aid for education. George Bush, president of the wealthiest country in the world is ranked a shocking 20th in the class, followed only by Greece and Austria who trail at the very bottom of the class. According to the report, aid to basic education is less than a third of the amount required to achieve even the minimal target of getting all children into school; Download the report at:

<http://www.campaignforeducation.org/documents/news/2007/April/EngsNarrativelowres.pdf>

Actionaid, GCE and ANCEFA Face Finance Ministers in Accra

Actionaid supported GCE, ANCEFA AND GNECC ASK AFRICAN FINANCE MINISTERS TO REMEMBER EDUCATION at the Financing for Development Conference of African Finance Ministers, May 30-31st in Accra. Although the theme of energy took centre stage at this meeting, education was still a hot topic. The conference noted that there were significant challenges facing the Sustainability of programs initiated to accelerate the quality and quantity of educational plans as well as funding for the 10-year plans of education. All countries present noted that they had serious financing gaps. They noted that some of the financing gaps are related to disagreements between donors and recipient countries regarding the relative emphasis that some of them have placed on secondary and tertiary education

Erich Stather State Secretary at the German Development Ministry opened the session on progress on Gleneagles by promising that Germany would fulfill its aid commitments. Honourable Minister of Finance of Ghana, Mr. Baah-Wiredu gave a summary of progress since the Abuja meeting in Nigeria last year and called on donors to give their fair share for education. There was little space to discuss the plans as only Ghana was able to give a review of their 10 year plan. It is clear that to live up to the commitment made by African Finance Ministers at Abuja last year both Finance Ministers and rich countries need to increase their efforts.

For more information contact actionweek@campaignforeducation.org

ANCEFA Assesses Progress on Education in Africa

ANCEFA began coordination of the Africa Education Watch Project in 2006, the which project is dedicated to carrying out a detailed assessment of the state of education in Africa is nearing completion, the 12 countries involved in the project: Burkina Faso, Niger, The Gambia, Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya,

Burundi, Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda and Togo are finalizing their field studies and will be submitting their country reports by the end of June. The ANCEFA secretariat has set up a technical team which will work on the country report and harmonize the final report.

ANCEFA recently held two capacity building workshops for its members on campaign skills/strategies and Education expenditure budget tracking. A follow up workshop on campaign skills and strategies for francophone members will be held in late June. For more information visit www.ancefa.org

Donors Fail to 'Keep promises' to Education in Brussels

"Once again the world's richest nations have failed the world's poorest and neediest children. The ministers came with their notebooks, not their chequebooks." Kailash Satyarthi, GCE International President

Louis Mitchell, Gordon Brown and Paul Wolfowitz co convened the *"Keeping our promises to education"* conference which held on the 2nd of May in Brussels. Being the first major donor meeting on education in five years, the meeting provided a crucial opportunity for world leaders to secure the breakthrough needed to fulfil the promises to bridge the gap in order for poor countries to achieve EFA. It proved not to be the case and cumulated in bitter disappointment with richer countries offering practically no new funding for education; Most of the promises made were based existing funds with the exception of Japan who pledged a mere \$1.2 million.

In a press statement the global Campaign for education said that the new money pledged would get less than a million children into school, a tiny fraction of the global total. GCE called for increase in funding saying that EFA will only be achieved when all donors contribute their fair share.

For more information contact alex@campaignforeducation.org

FTI Declares New Aid for Education

New allocations from the Fast Track Initiative Catalytic fund were made in the FTI Technical Meeting in Bonn in May, including \$79 million to Mozambique, \$76 million for Benin, \$57 million for Cambodia, \$13 million for Sierra Leone and \$8 million for Mali, sadly Liberia's request was turned down for being too short-term focused. We have been critical friends of FTI, conscious that it is good in that it promotes donor coordination behind government education plans, but concerned about some of the benchmarks / indicators they use. On a positive note the Benin plan included a substantial allocation to adult literacy and following this AAI has requested the FTI secretariat to send out a clear message to all countries seeking FTI support saying simply that "adult literacy can be funded by the FTI." The concept of national Civil Society Education Funds was shared with all the FTI donors and attracted considerable interest. A major evaluation of FTI is planned over the coming year in which GCE will be involved.

Upcoming Dates and Events

- MDG Halfway Point
7th July
- AAI Global Education Meeting
16th – 20th July 2007
- Comic Relief project Planning Workshop
23rd – 26th July 2007
- COMEDAF III: AU ministers of education meeting
6th - 10th August 2007
- International Literacy Day
8th September
- World Teachers Day
5th October
- High Level Group Meeting
5th December

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*"Poverty often leaves a man without dignity or virtue, an
empty sack cannot stand on its own"*
Benjamin Franklin