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PARTICIPANTS:

Introductory Remarks:

REBECCA WINTHROP
Senior Fellow and Director, Center for Universal Education
The Brookings Institution

Moderator:

LANRE AKINOLA
Editor
This is Africa

Presenter:

JUSTIN van FLEET
Fellow
The Brookings Institution

Panelists:

TALYA BOSCH
Vice President, Social Ventures
Western Union

MWANGI S. KIMENYI
Senior Fellow and Director, Africa Growth Initiative
The Brookings Institution

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. WINTHROP: I'm Rebecca Winthrop. I am the director of the Center for Universal Education here at Brookings. It's a real pleasure to have you all with us.

To kick off this morning our discussion of the Africa Learning Barometer, I wanted to give you all a bit of a background on global education, writ large and where we're at today.

All of you, I am sure, are quite familiar with 12 years ago the Millennium Development Goals were formed, a major focus on primary education, enrolling kids in schools, particularly girls and boys in equal numbers, and that was an important focus and it was kind of a blanket approach, but people rallied around and actually a lot of progress has been made on that.

And now moving forward, we know what we need to do. We need to focus certainly in the future; we need to focus on the pockets of neglect and exclusion. By and large, 90 percent of kids around the world are enrolled in primary school, which is a great achievement, but there are huge inequities -- kids from poor families, kids who live in rural areas, girls, children with disabilities, and particularly kids who are affected or live in contexts of armed conflict or humanitarian crises.

We know we need to sort of hone in with laser sharp focus on those marginalized groups.

The second thing we know we need to do, as we move forward, we look sort of up to 2015, which is the deadline for the Millennium Development

Goals, but we need to start looking beyond, is we need to focus on quality of learning. It's one thing to get kids into school, but if they don't learn well while they're there, or if what they learn is not relevant to their lives or their livelihoods, we're basically fulfilling a hollow promise of education for these kids.

Then the third thing we really need to do globally is make sure we do a push that expands beyond primary. We need to start looking at post-primary education, we need to also begin wrapping in early childhood, which really lays important, strong foundations for learning, and these are all issues that we work on a lot here at the Center for Universal Education and I'm really pleased, I hope you all got a copy of this excellent issue of *This is Africa*, which personally I read cover to cover over the weekend and I hope you will too now that you have it in your hand, which does a great job of talking for a non-education audience about the twin crises in access and quality, particularly in a region of the world that needs it the most, Sub-Saharan Africa.

I'm particularly pleased to be talking about this today, in September, because next week is the UN General Assembly meeting in New York and I am feeling really good about the status of global education, and I have to say, a couple years ago I was really depressed. So, I want to give you a little snapshot, a couple of stories to highlight for you what certainly I see from where I sit as growing momentum and attention to the issue of global education.

If we look at the way education, global education was discussed for the past couple years at the UN General Assembly meeting in New York, as I'm sure you all know, every year in September the world's leaders come to New

York, have good wine -- no, I'm kidding -- well, they probably do, but they talk about a whole host of issues and not to say that what they talk about is the most important thing in the world or all that is important in the world, but certainly it is a good way to sort of keep a pulse on the discourse and the dialogue and what's getting paid attention to.

In 2010, three years ago at the UN General Assembly, education -- global education was barely discussed. There were a few small meetings, there was one high-level roundtable, which I have to say consisted of long-time committed champions to education, no new sort of voices or actors, and basically -- forgive me, my UN colleagues -- the main message that came out of that meeting was, oh, crap, we are nowhere. Education is not being discussed. We have to communicate it better. What are we going to do?

That was 2010. And I remember vividly in the fall, October, November, December, having lots of discussions with senior high-level political leaders who really felt that education was a finished agenda. They looked very narrowly at the progress on enrollment in primary school for the Millennium Development Goals, and they said, listen, education is MDG that is the furthest to being met, we can tick that box, we can, in the post 2015 world when we think about what is a priority, we can move on to other topics -- which deeply frightened me, because I know many of you know that enrolling kids in school is just the first step. It really doesn't mean anything in terms of what are they learning and the skills and capacities they're developing.

So, fast-forward to September at the UN General Assembly in

2011 and there was a much more sort of interesting, vigorous debate, still on the margins of the UN General Assembly, but there was a meeting of corporate leaders talking about getting a global business coalition together. There were foundation heads and corporate leaders and NGO heads and UN heads sort of talking about how can we make sure that this message -- and this time there was a message that there's a crisis in access and learning -- gets to the right people?

But again, no senior heads of state or global leaders were really taking part.

This year, next week, we're really at a tipping point, we're really at a different sort of space for global education. This past year, there's been a global business coalition for education founded with some of the well regarded corporate leaders around the world.

There's been a UN Special Envoy for Education appointed, Gordon Brown, the first time the sector has gotten such a high ranking UN Special Envoy post. But most importantly, the UN Secretary General himself has decided to champion the issue of global education.

He is going to make education a central pillar for his next five-year term, which kicks off next week, and he's going to launch an initiative next Wednesday, the 26th, called Education First, where he is going to call for a whole range of actors to put kids into school, so let's make that last sprint to meet the Millennium Development Goals, to improve the quality of learning, including for post-primary education as well as some parts of early childhood, and to make sure that what kids learn helps them positively contribute to their lives and

livelihoods by focusing on good global citizenship.

So, next week education is going to be inside the UN, centrally, championed by many heads of states and world leaders and it's an exciting time for us to be talking about an Africa Learning Barometer because this magazine is going to be handed out to all the heads of state at this event and is really, as I see it, on the ground floor of making the case that there is a twin crisis in access and learning in global education.

And it's something that we are keen to continue doing. We've spoken with our colleagues at *This is Africa*, at the FT. We will continue to be doing an annual Africa Learning Barometer. We, at the Center for Universal Education, are also going to be working on a range of things that feed off of a report we did over a year and a half ago called the Global Compact on Learning, which made a number of recommendations and some of those recommendations are being taken up by actors and we're beginning to work heavily on advising policymakers on how to move from priority to implementation, including -- and we invite all of you to weigh in, if you like -- working with UNESCO Institute of Statistics on a Global Learning Metrics Taskforce, which is a mouthful, but basically the idea is if we're serious about learning, we need to measure it better, and there's not a lot of good ways to measure it, which we'll be hearing more about shortly.

So, we are excited for this collaboration. I want to introduce Lanre Akinola, who you have his full bio in the program. He's the editor of *This is Africa*, which is an FT publication. We use *This is Africa* a lot here at the center.

It's free. If you don't use it, you should definitely go online and register, but it's a great way to keep up with sort of current issues in Africa and you can also see -- Jenny, are there computer somewhere -- there they are. Oh, they're so -- they're down. Yes, people are sitting, I can't see them. After the event, there's computers at the back. We have a whole data visualization. You can go back and check out different countries online for the barometer. You can also get this -- more information on this at the Brookings website at brookings.edu/AfricaLearning.

So, with that, I'm really pleased to turn it over to you Lanre, and thank you, you've been a fantastic partner, and we look forward to collaborating in the future.

MR. AKINOLA: Thank you very much, Rebecca, and thanks very much to the Center for Universal Education here at Brookings for the invitation to be here. We're definitely very excited to be working with you on the Africa Learning Barometer, as well, in our role as sort of the media partner around the barometer has been quite an interesting learning experience in its own right, no pun intended.

Before we get into the panel discussion, I'd like to just set the scene, as it were, for this issue of education, particularly as it relates to Africa and this issue of access and quality.

If you regularly deal with African affairs, as I'm sure many of you here will do, you'll know that Africa's had a relatively good decade by all accounts, sort of written off, quite famously, just over a decade ago as the

hopeless continent. It's starting to generate a lot of interest for its commercial potential, its social potential, its political potential. We're seeing a lot of growth in Africa and have seen a lot of growth over the last decade. This growth has proven to be resilient, and these days, if you spend some time on the Africa conference circuit and the Africa investment circuit, there's certainly a lot of optimism.

Now, a lot of that is well deserved given the experience of the continent over the last 20, 30 years or so, but at the same time there is, quite ironically, a very real risk of some of this optimism being quite blinkered, and overlooking and kind of missing the very real structural difficulties that Africa, and particularly Sub-Saharan Africa continues to face.

And the Africa Learning Barometer really hones in on what is quite a central issue here: that African governments and businesses and Africa's international partners need to take very seriously indeed, and that is the issue of education.

In a minute, Justin will go up and talk in more detail about the Africa Learning Barometer and give you some more of the data, but it makes for quite worrying reading. The numbers are quite shocking and even in those countries that generally get a lot of good press and sort of create a lot of excitement amongst people; the state of education is, quite frankly, appalling.

We all know of the central role that education plays in the development process, as Rebecca said just a couple of minutes ago, it's something that is very much at the heart of the global development agenda now

as being positioned at the heart, and when you look at any successful part of the world, any successful country that has experienced successful development, education has been an indispensible part.

So, for anybody who is concerned with African affairs, looking at this issue of education is absolutely instrumental.

Now, the data is certainly not positive, but that is not because this is supposed to send a negative message. Rather, what I hope it sends is --or what I hope it does is act as a wakeup call to say, look, yes, things are looking up for Africa, but you cannot ignore these structural issues. If you do not look at these, in 15, 20 years from now, we're going to be in the same situation asking what went wrong.

I'm very hopeful that, as the data -- as we continue to strengthen the data over the next few years, that this message does get through to African governments, to the international development community, but also to the business community that this is something that needs to be looked at right now because otherwise Africa's development is not a given.

I'm going to very briefly introduce our panelists. Their four bios are available in the program. And then I'm going to ask Justin to take the stage for his presentation. Justin van Fleet, he's a fellow here at the Center for Universal Education. He's one of the researchers behind the Barometer.

To my right is Talya Bosch, who is vice-president of Social Ventures at Western Union. And to her right is Mwangi Kimenyi, who is a senior fellow and director of the Africa Growth Initiative in the Global Economy and

Development program here at Brookings.

I thank you very much, all of you, for being here, and on that note, Justin, the floor is yours.

MR. VAN FLEET: Let's get into the Africa Learning Barometer and see what we found. Before we get started, though, I think it's appropriate just to thank everyone at the Center for Universal Education who worked on this project. It was clearly a team effort and special thanks to Kevin Watkins, who's not with us today, and also Lauren, our amazing research assistant who did a lot of number crunching over the past few months and didn't have quite as fun of a summer as I think she thought she was going to have when we dug into this.

So, the Africa Learning Barometer, what we were trying to do with this exercise is to identify what is a baseline for the state of education and learning in the region? What is it that we know? We had some questions, when the invite went out about Africa Learning Barometer. We didn't know you did a survey of assessments and different exams all throughout the continent. We did not do that.

What we did is we looked at what was already done, what data was already out there and existing, and tried to pull together everything to sort of give us a state of affairs in the continent. And there are four areas that we look at in the Africa Learning Barometer. We look at enrollment, we look at completion and the interesting and the new part, I think, is what we did with the learning component, and then we also look at issues of inequality.

Again, we use existing data and we acknowledge that when we go

into the learning dimensions, all we really have are reading and math scores, and it's not because we don't think there are more things that are important and that education should be doing more, it's just that that's all that's really out there right now in terms of looking at assessment.

So, if we go to the first part of the barometer and we look just solely at the issue of enrollment in the continent, what we find is globally, we know there's 61 million children out of school. At the current rate of progress, we're nowhere near reaching the Millennium Development Goal by 2015 of all children in school and completing primary school.

In every region throughout the world, the number is decreasing, not at a rate that's acceptable, I think, for most of us, with the exception of one region, which is Sub-Saharan Africa where the out of school number is actually on the rise. Revised UNESCO data came out a few months ago pointing out that the past three years the global number has been stagnant at 61 million, and that Africa is that only region that actually is reverse progress given the growth in population, and so we project that in 2025, there will be actually over 36 million children out of school in Africa if we continue with this current rate of progress.

And so what we did, in this aspect of the barometer, is we took the last three years of progress for each region and then we stretched them out to show what the world would look like in 2025 if we continue at the current rate, and what we see is that the amount of children out of school, two-thirds of those children will be in Sub-Saharan Africa at current rates of progress compared to in 2000 where it was a little over a third.

The next part of the barometer looks at the issue of school completion. Again, this is drawing largely on UNESCO Global Monitoring report data and the take home message here is that children in Africa are far more disadvantaged than any other children throughout the world in terms of their prospects of getting into and completing school. Seventy-two percent of children in Africa will not enroll in secondary school compared to 8 percent of children in North America and Europe.

Even more troubling, when we think about what the outcomes are for growth and what the prospects are for growth and economic development in Africa and innovation, 6 percent of children in Sub-Saharan Africa are youth who actually enroll in some type of post secondary education, so tertiary education, compared to upwards of 70 percent in Europe and North America.

So, if you look across continents, children in Africa are far more disadvantaged in terms of their life prospects and opportunities for completion and continuation of their education beyond primary school.

And so that's what that second part of the barometer looks at.

And the third part, where I'm going to spend most of the time today, is really focusing in on the quality of learning in the continent. So, what do we know about those children who are lucky enough to get into school? What are they actually learning and are they learning, was the question that we wanted to ask. And so what we did is we looked across the board at different types of assessment that are done to be able to pull together a picture of the state of learning.

Before we even go into it, because I'm sure the question will be asked when you look at the barometer, you can't really compare across countries because we're pulling from a variety of different data sets and looking at different types of exams at the end of primary. So, we wanted to know after four, five, six years of school, how much had children learned in the continent in different countries.

And the first thing to recognize is we don't know a whole lot, actually, there's not a lot of data and the data that's out there is, I'd say, a little spotty in some places and when you look for issues of consistency with other exams that are done in the region and within countries, there are significant inconsistencies, actually, within country data.

And what we did here is we looked at it at face value, so we weren't looking at the examination methods, we weren't looking at other factors of teaching and learning, we were looking at, if you take the data that exists at face value, what does it say about the quality of learning in Africa?

So, we pulled together data, which covers 28 different countries in the region. The two main areas were SACMEQ and PASEQ data, so SACMEQ is looking at grade six students in 14 different countries, and the PASEQ data covers 11 countries at the age of -- at grade five. So, this is after five or six years of school.

And then we looked at national examinations in three countries, so we had data from Ethiopia, Ghana, and Nigeria, and again, these were all roughly the end of primary. The lowest grade level was grade four, and that was

the Nigeria data set.

What we then did is we looked at those different exams and we said, what is a cut off point for basic competencies? So, we wanted to know, what percentage of these children are showing little or no value added to their education after four, five, or six years of schooling? So, in each of the different exams, we looked at what would those points be for cut off. So, for instance, in SACMEQ, there are eight different levels, and so we looked at the proportion of children only scoring in levels one and two, which is pre-reading and emergent readers, so these are children that still, after five years of school, aren't able to read with fluency. And the same with the numeracy component.

For PASEQ, a score of 40 on the exams is considered a point of basic competency, and we took a band even lower, so zero to 25, and we wanted to see what proportion of students was scoring in that zero to 25, so showing very little competency or no competency in basic reading and math skills.

And then we did the same for Ethiopia, Ghana, and Nigeria. In Ethiopia, we selected the children who were below basic in terms of their competency in grade four. In Ghana, the point that we selected on the exam was the equivalent of randomized guessing, so the children that were scoring at that level were just -- it's the equivalent of guessing on the exam.

In Nigeria, we looked at students at grade four who were unable to answer questions related to grades one and two level competencies. And then we did population weights to see what that actually looks like in the continent.

And what we found is actually quite disturbing. So, out of the 28 countries we looked at, in 7 countries, 40 percent plus of the children in those countries are demonstrating little or no value added to their education after four, five, or six years of schooling. It starts in Chad with 40 percent all the way up to Nigeria where we found that 58.3 percent of the children are actually scoring at a level so low that it shows that they're not mastering basic reading and math by the end of primary school.

And what I want to do now is just look at a couple of the different countries to see what we found. So, South Africa, a country that we think of as relatively well off on the continent compared to many of the others, over a third of the children are not learning the basic skills, so unable to read and write at the end of primary school. And then we can look at the issues of inequality in learning and this is where the wealth disparity really comes into effect. We look at the richest 20 percent and the poorest 20 percent. The poorest 20 percent -- of those poorest 20 percent, over half of those children are unable to read or do basic math at the end of primary school compared to only 10 percent of the wealthiest 20 percent of the population.

If we look at Zimbabwe, this is a great example of the rural versus urban divide on the continent, so on average, 22.6 percent of the children are unable to meet that basic threshold at the end of primary to show a minimum level of competency, but if we look at the urban versus rural, 30 percent of the rural kids are unable to meet that basic level compared to only 5.9 percent of those in an urban environment.

And then if we look at the issue of the population weights and what that actually says, it paints a really disturbing picture. So, if we look at the data from Nigeria -- so, this is the country that we saw the highest proportion of children not meeting those basic learning levels at the end of primary school, 58.3 percent, if you look at the 21.6 million children enrolled in primary school and you add that weight to it, it shows that we have 12.6 million children who are passing through the school system and by the end of primary school are unable to read, unable to do math, and you add into that the 10 million children who don't go to school in Nigeria, we have one country that's comprising of 20 million children who are learning very little or learning nothing, which has a huge impact for future prospects for the country and for the region as a whole.

And what we then did is we looked at the population weights -- so what we did with Nigeria, we did that for all of the countries in the barometer and then we also looked at weighting for countries that aren't covered in the actual data set of the 28 countries to make the whole entire project of what we think our best guess is in terms of what's happening in the continent of Sub-Saharan Africa.

So, we estimate that 128 million, plus or minus, children are primary school age. In that, we know that based on the barometer, there are 70.4 million children that we assume are in school and meeting some basic level of competency at the end of primary school. There are 17 million children who will never see the inside of a school, will never go to school in their life, and what we've done is we've also compensated for those who don't start school on time,

so the 31 million children out of school who enter late, so they're included in these numbers of children that are in school learning and in school not learning.

And then of the children that actually do go to school, we estimate that a little over 40 million children will have so little value added to their education that they will not be able to do basic literacy or -- not have basic literacy or math skills, so, at the end of the day, we estimate that 45 percent of the children in Africa are falling through the cracks. They're either not in school or in school and not receiving an education of a quality that actually gives them any chance in life.

And I think the other really important part of the Learning Barometer is that we look at what we also don't know yet, which is the 70.4 million children that we deem are learning in the continent, and I think it's really important to return to what our minimum bar and threshold was when we made the barometer. So, this means that these children aren't randomly guessing on a test, it means that they're able to do basic math after five or six years of school. And it means they're able to read after five or six years of school.

And so that's the level we're calling quality learning in this particular barometer, and this was our cut off point, so I think that begs the question of, we know the children are in school -- we know the children that aren't in school, we know the kids that are in school and not learning, and then we have this group that are learning, but what is actually happening and what are they learning and what does this say about other areas beyond reading and math that we actually don't have any data for?

So, I think, at the end of the day this is a huge wakeup call for governments, a huge wakeup call for the business community, a huge wakeup call for citizens in Africa and developed countries about what are we actually prioritizing and what do our prospects look like in the future given this level of attainment?

I would encourage everyone, this will be my plug for the Africa Learning Barometer, it's on the Brookings website, we created a really great interactive, dynamic tool so you can click through different countries, you can sort and rank, and it's animated and it's really neat, it's the first time we've done anything like this. So, there are computers in the back. I'd urge everyone to take a look at it, and it's also available online as of today, and explore a little bit for yourself and see if you're as troubled and disturbed as we are by some of the findings that we have.

And so I guess I'll turn it back over to Lanre to have a discussion about what this actually means for the continent and for the world.

MR. AKINOLA: Great. Thank you very much, Justin.

(Applause)

MR. AKINOLA: I think the most worrying statistic on that is the 58.3 percent in Nigeria. And what was the statistic for Ethiopia? It was 55.3 percent. When you consider that Nigeria has a population of about 160 million and Ethiopia, 18 million, you're talking here about a massive chunk of the school-age population in Africa. And these two economies, Nigeria, in particular, are hugely significant to their respective sub-regions and to the continent as a whole.

Now, to get the conversation started, maybe I'll give you a bit of a rest, Justin, and I'll turn to our other two panelists to explore the various aspects of this debate around education in Africa and the state of learning in Africa. And Talya, I'd like to start with you. One thing that we made a specific point of in putting together the report around the barometer was to get all the different stakeholders involved that really have to have or need to have an interest in this and perhaps one of the more unlikely ones is the business community.

Of course, conceptually, there are very good reasons why businesses should be taking this quite seriously, but it's not really an issue that really would be considered to be sort of something that you take into consideration as your core business. And it was interesting, sort of, doing the research around it to see that, really, in general, business still isn't that sold on why they should be really focused on this.

Now, from your perspective, why should businesses be looking at this and could you maybe speak a little bit about why your company is taking this very seriously, if it is taking this very seriously, but also how that plays into the bigger debate around action on this, so it's not just realizing the problem, but also then asking the question, well, how does the business community fit into this picture?

MS. BOSCH: That's a very good question and in some ways it's disheartening that we're still having this basic conversation about why business should care. I would hope that by now that this would be very clear. we need to care for our employees; it's a work force development issue globally, not just in

terms of the hard skills that Justin has rightly pointed out, but also in terms of the soft skills that really prepare people to work in a variety of industries.

We need to care in terms of who our suppliers are and what we -- many of us, we prefer to source locally, particularly in places like Africa where we know that our purchasing muscle could add to the local economy. But to do that, we need to have vibrant local businesses from whom we can purchase and with whom we can do business as business partners.

But most importantly, perhaps, we need to care because of our customers. If we don't have an educated populace, it's harder to have customers no matter what your business is, and it's certainly true that business does best in a vibrant and thriving local environment. Education contributes to the stability of nations, it's the enabling environment that allows business to succeed, and it's what enables our customers to succeed.

And so at a very practical level, we see that unfortunately a lot of people, for example, who receive money transfers, can't even fill out the paperwork to pick up the money that they need. They rely on our frontline associates, and while we're glad to provide the help, it's painful that we need to, but it really hinders, frankly, our ability to help people move up the economic ladder, which is something we really want so desperately to see them to do.

MR. AKINOLA: So, it's interesting, this point that actually, it's just a practical consideration, it's not, kind of, engaging in social welfare. It's an interesting point because one thing that's changing in Africa is that companies -- a lot of companies, a lot of businesses, a lot of big businesses are moving away

from looking at this place on a transactional basis, i.e., you come in, you do a deal, and you leave, and now people are starting to think, okay, we might be here for 10, 15, 20 years.

Do you think that that is almost inevitably going to put this on the radar for a growing number of businesses?

MS. BOSCH: I hope so. First of all, I would say that even if you're transactionally focused it's shortsighted not to see that education plays an important role in your ability to do the types of transactions you want to do. I think no matter what your industry, even if your in extractives, which obviously have been somewhat disproportionately drivers of some, but not all, African economies, certainly your ability to have an educated workforce has huge implications for health outcomes and we know how much health issues, particularly HIV/AIDS, play a role in industries and we know that education helps with outcomes beyond education, per se, with health and other types of issues.

So, even those businesses that might be most transactionally focused or perhaps a group where people think, well, education doesn't necessarily matter, it does. It matters for all of us. And certainly, as the profile of the African economy evolves, Education becomes far more critical. So, yes, I would say that I hope that this will become far more of an issue for business in that we use every available asset as businesses including our advocacy, our voice, to stand up and say that others should join with us across sectors, because no one sector is going to have all the answers.

MR. AKINOLA: I guess that's where initiatives like the Global

Business Coalition for Education come in?

MS. BOSCH: Absolutely.

MR. AKINOLA: Mwangi, another critical aspect of this is, of course, the role of government, the role of policy in Africa. The role of business aside, this is still an issue that principally people will be looking to governments to address and to fix.

What, from your perspective, is going wrong here? Where are governments across Africa really making mistakes in creating a situation in which we're seeing such quite scary numbers?

MR. KIMENYI: Thank you very much, and I appreciate the invitation to participate in this panel. I do some work on education, but I think I was invited also because I am also a product of the African public education system.

MR. AKINOLA: So, it's not all bad.

MR. KIMENYI: But I think this is very good work because some of us have been struggling. We've been talking a lot about the rise in Africa, the emergence of Africa, and the high rate of growth that Africa has experienced from the last dozen years or so, but when you look back and look at the data, you find that this is growth that is not necessarily going to be sustainable. It's not founded on real human capital; it's not founded on what would sustain long-term growth. So, you have natural resources, but you have also some sectors which are doing very well like the IT, but when a lot of the people are excluded from that sector, so what we have is really two societies in Africa where we have is

two societies in Africa where you have first class education, but most of the people actually are illiterate.

So, and there are a lot of reasons why this is so. We can talk about resources, the poverty, issues of food security, but still we have to go back to focusing on the access issues versus the quality, we know that since the MDGs, there have been a real emphasis on the access issue. And if you look at the data it will show you that there are a lot of kids who have joined school since the MDGs since 2000. The numbers have been increasing although there are cases where you get declining numbers.

But by and large, if you look at that particular MDG in terms of enrollment, you find numbers increasing.

But then you go to what I would really like to point at a serious problem with the quality dimension. When I looked at the data that we have here, I was actually -- I was surprised because I thought the data looked better than what I personally have found in the field, when you go and actually test the kids or talk to the teacher, test the teachers and so on.

So, I think there are big issues. There are resource issues, but there are also issues that I would say there are -- what I may call education governance issues, just the governance of education delivery, even if we got more resources it does not mean that we may -- resources are necessary, I don't want anyone to confuse that, but I don't think that adding more resources would necessarily mean that we are out of the hole.

So, we need to also focus on the education governance. And let

me mention just a few data issues that we observed just last year when we visited -- we did some studies in Senegal and in Tanzania. Teacher absenteeism, in Senegal, every day was 18 percent, in Tanzania it was 23, but what shocked me is that when you get teachers in school, we always assume that when teachers go to school, they are teaching, and one of the things that we found was that in Senegal, the total number of hours spent teaching was three hours. In Tanzania it was two hours and four minutes. In other words, that's where you have -- we are talking about a random sample, 180 schools, and so these are averages, but to send your kid to school in the morning and kids come back in the evening, but the hours of instructions were only two hours.

But then there are other issues that are also important. We know, for example, studies about resource leakages. Many of you would know the cases where when you look at the educations that the amount of resources sent from the central government going to primary schools, you find that there are a lot of resources that leak. In Uganda, it used to be up to about the dollar, only 40 cents used to reach the schools. And this was an issue, again, of just managing what we have.

Now, we also, of course, have problems. There are delays in salaries that teachers will argue that's why they are not in school, but there are also issues like the teachers themselves. We tested teachers in Tanzania and Senegal, but the first ten questions that we -- they did were the same ten questions that were being done by the students in their grades, and based on our test, the teachers with minimum knowledge in Senegal is 52 percent, which

included passing those 10 questions that the students were going to do. In Tanzania it was 42.

So, in other words, we have a lot of problems, issues of how we are managing our resources, how we are managing the schools. So, I go through the issues, why are we -- why is this happening, from my point? If I take a political economy approach, I think we look at access first as quality, but access is easy to confuse the parents and parents only want to know that students are going to school. So, politically there's mileage. Politicians convinced their constituents that, oh, look at how many kids we are taking to school, but when it comes to quality, nobody talks about quality; nobody talks about what's going on.

So, there is a political economy problem in terms of the services, and I can say that this is also -- even the free education programs that we have instituted in all our countries, we see that we have a big jump in primary school, public school enrollment, but we also have a big increase in private school enrollment if you look at many schools.

So, there had been an exit from public school systems in many of these programs. So, what you are having -- you are experiencing now is actually more inequality in the provision of education. Some people are doing very well, but a lot of others are not doing well, so I think this is a big problem and from the public -- from the government point of view, it's not really -- effort has not been put in the quality dimension.

MR. AKINOLA: Thank you very much, Mwangi. I'd like to just

pick up on the point about the lack of equitable growth in Africa, because the growth figures are great and any conference you go to, that's what people leave with, but one thing that's become -- and I'm glad to say that it's become quite a hot topic, is the issue of inclusive growth, and it's interesting how, in education, it's kind of mirrored, that situation is kind of mirrored, and we'll get back to some of the potential solutions to this, but also what governments might be able to do, in a bit.

But I'd like to turn to you, Justin, and sort of bring the final element of this debate in here, and that's the global development community, which clearly has an instrumental role to play here. As much as we can look to African governments and business, the overall framework and sort of -- and action globally, is just as important to drive progress on this.

We've heard that a lot has happened since 2010 to put this on the agenda. What's driving that? And, sort of, should we be optimistic that we're going to see a bit of a reversal here? Are people sort of getting it? Is it all coming together?

MR. VAN FLEET: I think so and I hope so. I think that's the best way to put it. I think for the first time to have someone at the highest level of global institutions, the UN Secretary General, to say -- he could have named this initiative anything he wanted to name it and he said Education First, and this is the person who has all the different sectors competing for attention and for him to come out and say next week that education is first and it's going to be the priority that I'm going to champion, I think it's a huge gain for the sector and I think it

comes at just the right time given that we've had ten years of experience of the Millennium Development Goals, we've made great progress in some regions on the issue of access, and we're also learning a lot about access not being enough, and completely highlighted by what we found in the barometer, and for him to come out and say, we have three more years to achieve these development goals of access, but I think it needs to be more ambitious, so we need to focus on access, we need to focus on quality, we need to focus on citizenship, and part of that is we need to have an ambitious post 2015 agenda for the education sector that focuses on the learning dimensions. I think that's really important and I think that's a great leapfrogging aspect for the education sector that we haven't had for ten years. I think we've sort of been flat lined and silent.

So, I think if this doesn't give us something to be optimistic about, I don't know what else would, to be quite honest, for the development community. I think this is as good as we can position ourselves at the moment and if we fail to make progress given all of this political attention, then it's something -- it's no one's fault but our own, I think, to be honest. I think there's no other better set up that you could have than what we have -- that's going to be launched next week, and I think anything that doesn't come out of that is the fault of us as the education sector, not to advance progress.

MR. AKINOLA: One thing that was interesting putting together the report is -- and it was, sort of, actually surprised me, to be honest, is that there seems to be a general consensus on this issue, which, when you're talking about global development, sometimes seems to be half the battle is just getting people

to actually agree on what the problem is.

I suppose that's quite encouraging. Now, with this basis, next week Secretary General is launching Education First, he's putting it right at the heart of the education agenda as we move into this process of figuring out what happens after 2015. But after we all go back home after next week, what happens when the rubber hits the proverbial road? What needs to happen next in order for this to very quickly start addressing these issues?

MR. VAN FLEET: I think, beyond the PR focus and the headlines of next week, we actually have to do something and it's not -- the "we" is the royal we. So, it's the academic community, it's folks like us at Brookings, but it's the business community, and Talya, it's governments themselves. I think, next week having heads of state in the same room and holding them accountable to deliver on Education First is going to be the first, sort of, achievement, and I think following up with them directly, now that we have a UN Special Envoy for Global Education, we have somebody that can sort of take the lead and be an active focal point to accelerate progress and make sure that we're delivering on those promises.

So, I think everyone really has a role to play after next week and a year from now we'll be able to say whether or not we're a success or a failure, but I think that's really what, over the next year, will be the real test of whether or not we're serious about committing to accelerating progress or whether it's more of the same, which we know more of the same is going to have really negative outcomes for the future of Africa and the rest of the world because it's not just

Africa, and that's one of the things that we're going to be looking at is doing the Learning Barometer throughout the world and I think we'll have similar results in other areas as well.

MR. AKINOLA: Talya, I'd like to bring it back to you. Now, the development community is coming together. Does it understand how business fits into this picture? Does business understand where it fits into this picture? Again, often, that's one of the most difficult things, is just making sure people are actually speaking the same language here.

From where you stand, are you seeing that it's starting to make sense? And also, where does business go from here in terms of bringing education into the fold?

MS. BOSCH: I do think that the development community has been very welcoming toward business and it's a good thing to see, that no sector is -- from where I sit, anyway, no sector is siloed. I think there's an understanding that this problem is too big for any one sector alone to address.

I think that business is broad. There are a lot of sectors represented. I don't know that every business looks at this issue the same way. I know Justin has done reports in the past which highlighted the fact that when businesses do invest in education, and many do, it doesn't reach the poorest and the most marginalized, and I think that that's a critical issue, which is not just, does business care, but does that caring get where it needs to get to have an actual impact on the data that we're seeing here?

I would say that we're very proud to support the Center for

Universal Education. I think that bringing those sectors together, data is critical. Business people are very moved and very driven by data, and so the reports that Justin and his fellows are doing here at Brookings, is critical for us. It helps us make the case internally and with our colleagues. And then I think it also helps us plant a flag. So, when you talk about what needs to happen next, I think there needs to be very specific, not just talk, but goals because then we can use that data-driven approach to say, are we achieving those goals?

One of the things that we can provide is the role model and the voice and kind of the demand-driven side for education, the employment opportunities for people who do graduate with the skills that are needed.

MR. AKINOLA: Now, does this need to go from being something that's considered CSR, something that's considered something that company does as social responsibility and being a good corporate citizen, to something that's actually directly connected to your business and, does it need to move to a point where you're thinking about this in terms of your bottom line rather than just something you do on the side to make sure, if anyone ever comes knocking on the door, you look good?

MS. BOSCH: Yeah, I think to be sustainable, it absolutely does, and I think that that's, perhaps, where some of the challenges are for various types of businesses. For some, you'll see that connection much more directly than others. I referenced extractives. We're beginning to see the connection between health issues and their workforce. I think education, from where I sit it's not hard to connect the dots, but for us we know that a number of our customers

send money home because of education, for educational purposes.

We work with educational institutions around the world and so, it's a reason that people move money and by integrating it into our core business, and potentially by using our core business to solve leakage issues, we could be radically transparent. We'd be delighted to work with government in development to organizations as clients where we think we can offer a better value proposition than a lot of the banks, but we can also offer them the chance to be radically transparent, to say exactly how much reached where and was picked up by whom on what day, and so for us, that could be a very powerful business proposition.

I think there would be challenges to look into other industries and say, okay, what is the value proposition there, and how can they take a truly shared value approach?

MR. AKINOLA: Mwangi, turning back to you, you spoke earlier about the political expediency of building schools. It's something that it's nice for politicians to do to say; we're enrolling kids in school. Sending this message to African governments and politicians who are, vying for electoral office might be a bit more difficult. Do you anticipate that it might be hard to get African governments on board with this, because it's much more difficult to deliver on quality than it is just saying we can build a school?

MR. KIMENYI: Yeah. I think that's a very good question. Would it be through the channel of the public officials or would it be the citizens, and what we have found is something about the voice, the citizen voice, a lot of

things that are going in school are not well known by the parents, the ones we call clients. They don't know what they should be getting or what's going on within the institutions.

My thinking is that for a lot of things to change, we need to have the citizenry more involved in terms of demanding change, first of all in the information -- they need to have the information of what is due to them. They may not know. And, in fact, one of the perceptions about free primary education is actually a very bad one, the word free primary education, because people say, in fact in some contexts they say, free in the sense that there's no cost to it, and they don't take -- they are not too involved in that.

I believe that a lot of changes that would need to take place will be through pressure, pressurizing our government, but that will have to be done through informed citizens, and we have seen that. We have seen, like -- I remember that one my colleagues presented these data to -- in a forum where the President Kikwete was in Tanzania, and also -- and the first question -- I want to know where the teachers are. If they are not teaching, where they are. And so this is something they don't know, but if you put this -- and if you tell the parents, like we saw in the case of leakages in Uganda, all that was needed to do was to post in the outside the class -- outside the offices in the schools, how much money was coming to the schools.

If you go to many of these schools, you find outside the offices that there is a blackboard and it says, this month, 200,000 shillings was received, and then they have to explain how it was spent. So, they have that transparency.

I think this is more information and empowering the clients.

MR. AKINOLA: Now, if we look at Sub-Saharan Africa, in some countries this will be more possible than others. The sad reality is in a lot of countries, the citizen is still largely a marginal actor when it comes to putting pressure on public policy. In the short-term, how confident are you that we can see meaningful progress on this, and especially in some of the bigger countries and the more important countries like the Nigerias, the Ethiopias, the Kenyas, and so on and so forth. Are we likely to see a very uneven balance sheet here?

MR. KIMENYI: I think that some of these countries are very active. It's easier to get some results, probably, in some countries than others, but you have also these fragile states that I don't think the standard models of service delivery, the way I'm describing, actually are going to work that way. You have many states in Africa where these deals that I'm talking about, enforcing these sorts of social contracts are not likely going to work. And we need to link better in terms of what is likely with more collaboration with the businesses, but also I think that's one of the areas that I have seen the international community working.

Now, someone tells me that in DRC, -- not the type of society that most of us have lived in, that the completion rates are fairly high and these are done because you have business interests that are supporting most of the schools there. I think there are school ownerships by businesses. You need a lot of collaboration to achieve some -- we need different models, we need a lot of models to see what works in different environments.

MR. AKINOLA: Thank you very much. We have just under 13 minutes left, and at this point I'd like to get the audience involved in the discussion with any comments or questions.

There's a microphone, please put your hand up and just wait for the microphone to get to you. Yes, we'll start with the gentleman at the front here; his was the first hand up. We'll take a few comments, maybe, and questions, and then bounce them off the panel.

MR. ABDUL-ALIM: Yes, good morning. My name is Jamaal Abdul-Alim. I'm a freelance writer and I'm here on behalf of two different publications, one is *Chess Life Magazine*, the other is *Diverse Issues in Higher Education.* I'd like to ask one question on behalf of both.

The first question has to do with whether public education is actually free. I did an interview by Skype the other day with some students involved in a chess project in Uganda where a girl just recently over the past year or so, rose to great fame because of her chess exploits, and there's an organization that's doing some work to try and get the kids back in school and one of the things they mentioned were school fees, and I was surprised that they mentioned anything about school fees.

If you could, just kind of speak a little bit to what's known about whether public education is actually free, or are there some fees associated with that that might be hindering access.

The other question, which I would ask on behalf of *Diverse Issues in Higher Education* is, those of us who follow higher education in the United

States, we know that the Obama Administration has placed great emphasis on college completion with a goal toward restoring the United States to being the world leader by the year 2020, and I'm wondering how much is known about college completion rates in Africa. I know that of course you'll say, well, if you're not in primary school or secondary school, you can't think about tertiary education, but perhaps the opposite is true, meaning that if you focus on college, then maybe the other things will fall into place.

If you could shine some light on that, that would be appreciated as well. Thank you.

MR. AKINOLA: Sure. Thank you. So, the hidden cost of free education and tertiary education. We'll take a few more questions. The lady in the middle there. There's a microphone coming your way.

SPEAKER: My question is: I'm not really sure who it's directed to, but does culture impede education in Africa? Maybe we should be looking at creating more awareness on the importance of education. If you have parents who don't understand the value of education, who easy is it for them to actually pass that information of the importance of education in the first place? So, maybe culture is an impediment to the numbers of educated or people wanting to get into school in Africa. And how do we tackle that? Thank you.

MR. AKINOLA: Great. Thank you. We'll take one or two from this side. Yep, gentleman right there.

MR. DALL: My name is Frank Dall. I'm an ex UNICEF head of education, many years of teaching in Africa, and now I wander around Africa

doing evaluations.

All the presentations were great. Justin, great, but aggregates are worrying because we're looking at aggregate data and if we're looking at learning, we've got to get below the aggregates.

I spent years working with UNICEF and UNESCO to try and get data together for the global forum in Dakar where we delivered a whole lot of presentations on the different regions that we were working in and all the data was faulty, really, but it was UNESCO data that wasn't really being monitored well or even collected well and UNESCO admitted to that.

I'm hoping now, of course, that they've put that right, but I'm worried about some of these numbers. I've worked for years in Africa, Kenya, a number of African countries like Zambia and recently Namibia, Somalia, and what I'm finding is I hit the ground and I go school-to-school in some of these places particularly poor, rural schools, is that your rural/urban diversity is really the key issue. It's also not only just an issue in terms of school performance, but of course socioeconomic.

It's poverty plus, of course, bad performance. What are we going to do about that? Because we've been drawing attention to that for at least 30 years and nobody's really done very much about it. It boils down to governance and governments actually making the right response.

You drew, I think, a lot of attention to a number of issues that I would like to support, but I'd like to add some issues. In terms of teachers not being there, I've just gone down the Line of Rail in Zambia to evaluate primary

schools and I discovered as I went to primary schools that I used to know 15 or 20 years ago that most of them were not functioning properly because half of the teachers were either ill with HIV/AIDS or dead, and to replace a teacher, of course, is a cycle, it's an expensive cycle, a lengthy cycle. As teachers drop out of a lot of these schools due to things like HIV/AIDS -- Namibia had a similar problem -- you are not replacing your teachers quickly enough, and so your time on task that you drew attention to that kids were only getting two hours worth of education, probably has as much to do with those factors in certain countries as some of the other factors that you drew attention to.

But I think bottom line in Africa is that we've tried for years and years and years to do things in Africa. What worries me is that you have a very uneven response to education in Africa and to say glibly that everybody in Africa is going to gear up next week and do something about getting these numbers right doesn't seem to fit what I know about Jomtien -- I was at Jomtien too, and Dakar -- at each one of these events we made promises to the world that we would do things about education, particularly basic education.

If you look at what we promised to do in Dakar and look at what we've actually achieved, it's something, but not enough. Governments promised, international organizations promised to put a certain amount of money down to get the job done. If you look at the amount of money that was actually invested for education, it's a pittance to what was promised and I think we need to go back again and hold people to their promises, because we're going to make another set of promises very soon, this week of course, and then we're probably not

going to deliver.

But we have to ask ourselves, why is it that we're not going to deliver? And Gordon Brown -- and I'm an ex-Labour Party member myself -- is great, but I don't see him as an inspiring figure that could really sell this to the world.

MR. AKINOLA: I assure you, you're not the only one on that point.

MR. DALL: There are lots of issues here that are not just issues to do with data.

MR. AKINOLA: Sure.

MR. DALL: And we're looking at data only. The issue of the private sector, by the way, I've just looked at the private sector in Namibia, Zambia, Kenya, and its role in education and I'm finding that in most cases, it really isn't doing what it's meant to do or even promised to do, because the private sector in most African countries, even the more promising African countries, is patchy and weak and really not committed to social development.

And if it's going to be private sector that is international only, I'm very worried that the sustainability of that is going to boil down to how long international companies want to stay in a given situation to provide that sort of an input, and that can be very patchy.

MR. AKINOLA: Okay, well, we'll just --

MR. DALL: One more point.

MR. AKINOLA: Very short -- a very brief point.

MR. DALL: On China. With -- all of us are doing -- I go to Peterson quite frequently, to look at what China is doing worldwide. China, which is largely in its input extractive and looking at economies as an extractive base for resources, is actually have an enormous effect on African economies, but what is the contribution of China towards African education and some of these problems? I think we need to take a look at this because China is replacing countries like the UK and a number of other countries in its roll -- in the roll that it plays economically in Africa, and I think it's an important point that you don't seem to have touched on here.

MR. AKINOLA: Okay. We've got a buffet of issues right there. We'll take one more contribution from the lady right at the front here, and then I promise I'll come back to the audience. We'll try and get as many people involved as possible.

MS. HARDING: Thanks. Deborah Harding, the Liberian Education Trust.

I think one of the -- I think this is all wonderful, it was a great panel and I think what the Center for Education at Brookings has done on the whole larger issue is really extraordinarily impressive, but I think there's one issue that is very complicating, I think, particularly in rural primary education in Africa, it's almost never emphasized, and that's the complication of mother tongue. And, you have kids coming to school illiterate in their mother tongue being taught by teachers who may not even speak the mother tongue, and then going on by the time they're in the third grade being taught in English or French or Portuguese,

which they don’t understand and the teachers often don’t have a very good grasp on.

And I think that should be on the top of the list of problems facing this sector in Africa. Thank you.

MR. AKINOLA: Great. Thank you very much. There’s a whole bunch of issues there.

Justin, I’d like to start with you and maybe just sort of pick them apart and respond to them.

MR. VAN FLEET: Yeah, so the question of free public education, I think it’s completely true. There’s a whole host of hidden costs associated with education from school uniforms to supplies, and so even when education is free, it’s still -- there are still costs associated with it that are prohibitive to the most poor and marginalized.

I think it’s definitely something to not lose or let fall off the radar that cost of school, even if it’s free, does affect someone’s ability to attend school.

In terms of the college completion, I just would sort of go back to the issue of, even the college access part when we look at the Learning Barometer and seeing that only 6 percent of African youth have any shot of getting into tertiary education, if you’re a poor, rural girl, it’s even significantly less than that. And one of our visiting fellows from Ethiopia, Abraha, who is here, is actually doing a whole study right now looking at gender dimensions in Ethiopia of higher education, so I’d actually encourage you to speak with him about some

of the factors that impede college completion rates in that country. He's actually here today and will be a good resource for you.

In terms of the culture of education, how families value education, I think one of the things that we forget or need to remember is that when we look at some of the learning numbers, if there's very little return to education, so even the families that make the sacrifice to send their children to school, after four, five, six years their children are unable to read or do basic math, that's another element that's not boding well for getting families to want to send their children to school, and so it's not helping to change the culture in the way that we value education just because of not addressing the learning crisis at the same time that we're addressing the access crisis.

To Frank's point, yes, aggregates are scary, especially when the data is really poor to begin with, and that's taken -- and if you look at the Learning Barometer, we actually do get into some of the inequality issues, so looking at gender issues, urban/rural divide, and wealth disparity, and then have those areas of inequality also affect not just access, but the learning dimensions. I think that's really important.

And then in terms of what we do about it, my colleague Kevin Watkins is doing some really interesting work with the government of Kenya right now looking at their financing scheme for education and how inequitable financing is actually sending money to the places where the learning outcomes are great, where the families have more resources, and how you can look at equitable financing policies to address some of these more marginalized areas

within the country.

MR. AKINOLA: There was one point on sort of making these big promises and I guess the implicit question there is, what's different about this time?

MR. VAN FLEET: I think -- I would think we could call it a crime against humanity the fact that we make such promises and we fail to deliver as an international community. I think the thing that's different -- or maybe it's not different, maybe it's the same but ten years later, but the thing that gives us some hope is we've seen what failed promises look like and we should be outraged at what failed promises look like, and now we have data that shows us not just this access issue, that it's actually much graver than we thought, it's a quality issue. We have more actors involved. The business sector is organizing for the first time, I think, and it's not just international business and their corporate social responsibility, we're seeing local business within countries focusing on it.

If you look at Latin America, for instance, you have 14 countries that have national business associations for education that are investing in some places more than the government is in schooling. So, I think there's some real lessons that we've learned. I think we have a lot more data and information to work with now.

Not that that's everything that we need. It's also, at the end of the day, a matter of political will, and so it goes back to citizens and are citizens going to be outraged and are governments going to make this a priority. You

look at the growth of organizations like Uwezo in Africa and Pratham's work in India with drawing media attention to these issues of learning and poor quality of learning and really getting up the government agenda.

And so I think there are things that are happening that are different now that we can build off of. Not to say that it's perfect and not to say that everything is going to be amazing the week after next, but I think without optimism, I think it's a really sad place for the global community.

MR. AKINOLA: Talya, what would you like to pick up on?

MS. BOSCH: Well, a couple of things. To your point about universities, which I think is a good one, I would say that there are reasons to invest, and that's always hard. I think that it's distressing when you try to make tradeoffs within the world of education. Hopefully we can grow the pie so we don't need to do that.

But that said, I think universities, at least from a business perspective, play a critical role not only in the education for individual students, but also, obviously, as hubs of innovation, and so as we think about growing economies, as we think about really harnessing the untapped human potential that exists, we can't afford to leave any of the world's people, out of the equation or, away from the table.

And so I think universities will be critical for that purpose.

I know you mentioned UNICEF. They're doing some great work, for example, in the world that I travel through, in financial services and learning through mobile, and UNICEF has a hub of mobile innovation in Uganda, which is

great that that's happening.

How much better would it be if UNICEF had a very strong series of partner universities in Uganda and beyond so that it's not just a development organization to the degree that it is today, but other actors coming together to take that technology-driven innovation even further?

When it comes to technology I would be remiss, as a representative of Western Union, if I didn't mention Diaspora and the ways in which technology are shrinking the world. We know that Diasporado care quite a bit -- African Diaspora care about and invest in education, they send money home for educationat the same rates as anyone else, and so I think that thatis a powerful statement.

And one of the things that we've seen -- I know that the inter-American dialogue has certainly seen it in Latin America, anecdotally I believe it to be true in Africa -- you may know much more about this than I would -- but when people are in a community -- I see this even in my community -- I'm shocked at what parents accept within education, you're right, if the kids are going, that's good enough, and I don't think it should be.

But when people get one step removed, they begin to reflect in a different way and the inter-American dialogue has talked about the effect of Diaspora of pressuring local communities, or at least raising the bar on what quality could look like and what standards should be. So, that's a type of social remittance that I think is very powerful and I suspect is happening in Africa as well and perhaps could happen more.

I've spoken with Twesigye Jackson of the Nyaka AIDS Orphan School, and he talks about them doing great work even when a lot of the supports for education are present, role models aren't necessarily present in the ways that they need to be. And so technology is perhaps one way to bridge the gap so the kids, even in rural environments, can see people like them succeeding. It would be even better if they could see them succeeding in the rural environment, and that's, perhaps, where local businesses do play a role.

I think that you're right; of course it would be great if more local businesses were investing. I think that they can and will be as they invest in their own employees, first and foremost, and succeed enough and get on stable enough footing then to invest in their broader community.

I think that global businesses can play a role there. For example, we offer a one-to-one match for any dollar that our local, African business partners want to invest in their local communities for education, we'll match it dollar for dollar, and I think that there are things like that that large multinationals can do to invest together with local partners and perhaps to model what business engagement can look like in a positive way.

MR. AKINOLA: Mwangi?

MR. KIMENYI: Yeah, briefly. I would touch on maybe the culture issue and the mother tongue. I am not quite sure that these are really barriers that we can use to really explain the quality to an extent. There are many marginalized populations whose school attendance varies. You find cases, religion and cultural practices that do, in fact, create some differences in terms of

school participation.

But I think we've been breaking those barriers consistently, so I don't think that is a constant, I don't think that's a constant for the African case.

When it comes to the mother tongue, I think most of the Africans, at least I know, you all go with your local, tribal language, and by the time, you go and then learn English or French and you also have a national language, so most people will speak three languages at least within a few years. I haven't seen this as a major problem in terms of learning. It may take a little longer, but I don't think it's a real issue.

Let me just mention one final issue on the data. I think it's true -- this is a very good start because that's the type of data that we have. Eventually it would be nice to really complement this type of data with more micro-based type of service, but they are very expensive. I know we've been doing that, but it's very -- quite expensive, so that's a new investment that we would like to -- that needs to take place.

MR. AKINOLA: The clerk is telling me we've got about ten minutes. I reckon we can probably drift a little bit over that. I apologize in advance for anybody who doesn't get a word in. You can always mob the panelists after the discussion.

We'll take a couple from each side. Lady in the third row, she had her hand up earlier.

MS. OJIKUTU: Hi, I'm Sandy Ojikutu with USAID. Lanre, you mentioned or you ask a question of Mwangi that wasn't really answered or you

started answering it -- we can define, thank god, today what the problems are in quality and we can start looking at solutions, but the question that was asked that wasn't answered adequately was the question of corruption.

How much money goes into education, well, about 40 percent gets to go where it's supposed to go. Education is not cheap. You asked the question in terms of the polity of the country. What about the national politics? If we start talking about corruption, it starts at the leadership and it goes down to the classroom level.

As people go to UNGA next week, this has to be part of the discussion. Everything we said here has to be part of the discussion, but the big elephant that people don't want to talk about is the corruption issue. People get killed over that issue. Sixty percent of the money going to education goes somewhere else and those other people don't want to let go of that money.

I'm not saying it's the only problem, I'm saying it is one of the problems that needs to be discussed as we move forward with looking at quality in education.

MR. AKINOLA: Thank you very much. There's a gentleman in the middle there. Yeah.

MR. DANT: Good morning. My name is Bill Dant. I'm an international education consultant. Thank you all for your remarks, very, very interesting.

I recently spent some time in Ivory Coast, Cote d'Ivoire, assisting the Ministry of Education there with post conflict rehabilitation of middle schools.

Very complicated situation. But one point that has not come out in a specific way that I was really aghast at learning was a study that the Ministry of Education itself did there a couple of years ago relating to the experience of girls in the upper primary and middle school grades.

The study, which was a national study of a number of schools across the country, both rural and urban, revealed that 58 percent of the girls in that group had experienced some sort of sexual exploitation from a teacher. Now, that may be an extreme statistic in this one country that's experienced ten years of a lot of conflict, but I think this is very large -- I don't know if it's an elephant in the room -- but there is a tolerance for this. When I challenged the Ministry about what approach it was going to take to addressing that, there was a shrug of the shoulders and I thought that this is also a very, very critical issue in terms of girls' access, in terms of girls' success, and in terms of having a healthy place to learn. Thank you.

MR. AKINOLA: Thank you very much. We'll take a couple of questions from this side. The gentleman sort of at the back there. Yeah, his hand was up first.

MR. MUNTU: Thank you. My name is Roger Muntu; I'm with Voice of America, French to Africa. I have a radio and that's Do Speak, it's a social show and I do speak with a lot of youngsters and parents and people all over Africa, of course, from villages to bigger cities.

And last week we actually spoke about this issue, about schools, about going back to school, and most of the people who call me on my show,

they only had one concern, is they were losing hope. And this is for parents, this is for students, this is for teachers -- they are losing hope because, as they told me on my show, is, like, Roger, we don't even have any information, we don't even know what's going on, we don't really know what's going on.

And I know one of the gentlemen was talking about information. How do we do -- or how do you guys think about giving those guys hope, I mean, if they don't even have hope, that's a really serious problem, and I'm just asking what do we need to do to give them back hope that something is coming or something is being done? Thank you.

MR. AKINOLA: Thank you. The gentleman right at the back.

SPEAKER: Thank you very much. My name is Abraha Asfaw from Ethiopia, working with Brookings here on girl's education. Thank you very much, Justin, for the work well done and the presentation. I have a suggestion and question.

It is true that education in Africa is -- the quality education is low and it's deteriorating. I do agree. And I do agree on the factors on the problems of initiation in -- at the local level and the like, but also, can't we question also on the compatibility of the global policies in African context, like I can site some of the -- like the alternative education system? Was it really an alternative for primary education or an alternative just for literacy? This is my question, in fact, starting ten years ago in Ethiopia because we are hiring teachers just with three days of training, initial training, and then we are promoting students -- or forcing students to complete four years of education in three years and then just jump

from grade three to grade five.

So, I think this is one issue of discussion. The other one is, let's take the World Bank, for instance, policy, which says; lower teacher's pay. They do have a policy called Lower Teacher's Pay at the same time, lower cost of training so that you will have many to expand more schools in rural areas.

So, really are we -- was it really focusing on learning or just focusing on bringing children to schools? I fear that the issue of learning in Africa is more than what we are, I think, looking. I think the factors are so diverse, so it needs diversified or comprehensive kind of response, and not just looking into the local situation only.

The second one is, we have the primary education, right, but after primary education children are not going to higher education, so that means they are not eligible for employment given the industrial development level of African countries. I don't know what they are going to do with a primary education. They can be able to read and write, but it can never be helpful to get employment. So, isn't it time now to see it beyond primary education so that there will not be even question on the access part because if they are not visionary, the students may not continue going to school. And even the younger ones may not be following them.

SPEAKER: Yeah. There was access at the expense of quality. What's your suggestion to protect this kind of bias also going to learning at the expense of maybe access again? Thank you very much.

MR. AKINOLA: Okay, thank you. I'm very sorry for anyone who wasn't able to get into the conversation. I'm going to bring it back to the panel.

I'll start with you this time, Mwangi, the issue of corruption, maybe you could start with that one.

MR. KIMENYI: Yeah. Actually, when I talked about -- I think that's a very good question from USAID. I think when I started talking about governance in education, I actually was focusing on not -- making sure teachers are going to school, they are teaching when they are in school, but I also talk about the expenditure and we talked about the leakages and I think that's a serious problem because we know that if you look at the data they will tell you that there is quite a bit of resource leakages that do not go to provision of education where they are.

So, that's a broad question and it has to be part of the discussion in terms of improving the access and quality. So, that's the way -- the context that I wanted to mention that. And it's an issue in many countries, some of the more, but we also know that it has improved in some cases where, interventions have been made and I talked about Uganda where just by providing the information, we know that resources have now increased -- the resources reaching the facility level have increased.

And it's not just in primary school, but also in health and so on.

I thought I would talk about maybe the issue of -- I am not quite clear how the Ethiopian system works on -- sort of what is clear, no interest in quality, but just getting kids through. I am not quite sure, but that's not the intent,

actually, broadly of primary school education. The idea was, make sure that kids go to school, but they also learn some skills. By the time they are being tested at the end of seven years or eight years, that they have learned some -- they have some knowledge that is expected.

So, I am not sure why that happened, and these could be problems particular -- in conflict -- post-conflict societies where they have this huge backlog and trying to get people into the system, maybe that was the intent, but I'm not sure.

So, the big issue is moving away from just access to access and quality, so right now what we find is we are being more access and less of quality, and I don't think this tradeoff should be there, I don't think this is necessary it should be there, and so what we need to do is look at all this in totality and be able to provide both access and quality.

MR. AKINOLA: Thank you very much. Talya, what would you like to pick up on?

MS. BOSCH: I'd like to pick up on the question of hope. I think it's a very good one. I think one of the things that everyone in this room can do is to share success stories, is to share the positive news, not to not present the challenges, not ever, to not challenge all of us to do more, but to share what is working and what is happening so people feel like they have some solid ground under their feet, and that's something everyone of us can certainly do.

One of the challenges, I think, with education is that it takes time to pay off, and I think with health or other issues that, thanks to Justin, I know,

get 13 times more investment than education, you can see the Lazarus effect, right, and that's powerful, and of course we should invest in that. But we don't have a comparable video for education, not exactly, but we could create one, and I would challenge all of us to think about how we could do that because it's one of the reasons that governments and, for that matter, a lot of corporate funders -- I talk to my colleagues all the time about why maybe building a physical school is not the best investment, but at least it's something tangible that we can point to, at least it's a story, we can share the before and the after, and, boy, does that school look good, and that's important as well, for sure, but one of the things that we need, certainly, to make sure that all the funds get there.

But when they do, let's make sure that they're well spent. And that's a global issue. In some ways it's better to have fewer funds there that are very well spent than more funds that get wasted, and I don't know that we fully know what that looks like, to your point, in very local contexts, how could those funds that do reach whatever -- the classroom, how are they best used? Is it a local language book? Is it something else all together, is it teacher training?

And so I think that's another place where more data is useful so that people like me and you and all of us who want to invest, know that our investments will really be well spent and then we can tell that story.

MR. AKINOLA: Thank you. Justin?

MR. VAN FLEET: Sure, I'll just pick up quickly. Bill, your issues that you brought up about gender I think are really important. One of the things I think we were surprised about when we looked at the barometer data is in

primary, some of the gender gaps weren't as pronounced as we thought they would be in achievement, but you actually start to see that at the secondary age, especially in the access part, and we didn't look at the quality of learning at the secondary age, but I assume you'd also see that impact there, so that would be really interesting for us to look at a little bit further.

In terms of the hope, I think Talya gave a really eloquent answer, I was scribbling something here, but I'll let her go with that one, but I can point to some of those concrete examples and success stories I you're interested in that later.

And then back to Abraha, how we can have a conversation upstairs later around all that, but I think you raise some really good points. I think the bottom line is that what we've learned or what we can't be -- we can't accept the status quo having a tradeoff between access and quality. There's no point in focusing on access if you're going to put kids into a school that isn't delivering anything, so it's a twin crisis and we have to address both the access and the quality issues at the same time, and I think it's also bigger than just this primary issue. And some of the things that came out in the Global Compact on Learning Report we did was really focusing on the issues of preparing kids to learn, so the issues of early childhood education, the issues of local languages that Debbie brought up, ensuring learning in those first few years of primary, then also what happens after that, so the post-primary and the relevancy and the transitions.

So, I think all of that is important and we can't just focus in on the access component or just the literacy component. In grade three I think it's a

broader spectrum and a whole suite of investments that we need to make at the same time if we really want to have a sustained impact.

MR. AKINOLA: Right. Now, we're slightly over time, as usual. We've barely been able to scratch the tip of the iceberg, but I know there are some questions that went unanswered. I do encourage you to corner members of the panel before they have a chance to escape, but be gentle, especially with Justin; he's nursing an injured back.

Just to bring the discussion to a close, thank you very much to all our panelists, thank you very much to the audience. I think, next week we do have an interesting event in UNGA week and education is going to be at the top of the agenda.

We are planning to do this again next year. It will be very interesting to have a post mortem, perhaps, a year from now and see where things have gone and whether the promise has been fulfilled or how much of it has been fulfilled.

Thank you, again, very much everybody.

(Applause)

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