

Event Summary – Public Event

On December 5th, the Center for Universal Education at Brookings hosted a public event that examined the likelihood of achieving the education-related Millennium Development Goals and the role of education in the post-2015 development agenda. The event was launched by two keynote addresses and concluded with two panel discussions and a reception.

Keynote Addresses

Former British prime minister and recently appointed U.N. special envoy for global education, Gordon Brown, and White House director of the National Economic Council, Gene Sperling, a leading advocate for improving education and learning in developing countries, provided the keynote remarks. Special Envoy Brown opened with a powerful reminder of the importance of education as a transformative opportunity for all children and youth to realize their ambitions and potential. Speaking passionately about the recent shooting of Pakistani schoolgirl, Malala Yousafzai, who was targeted for her advocacy for girls' education as well as the launch of Education First, Special Envoy Brown called for greater coordination amongst the global development community to reach the remaining 61 million out-of-school children and increase pressure on government leaders to make education a priority. He concluded by launching a new report on child labor, which argues that 15 million children under the age of 12 are denied education due to child labor practices.

Gene Sperling followed, stating that schooling can be fundamentally life enhancing and can influence the success of all the other MDGs. He urged the education community to not forget about the quality of education when pushing to get the last 10 percent of children in school. However, he also argued that the education community needs to deliver results of improved learning outcomes for parents to justify what, for many families in the poorest regions of the world, are enormous opportunity costs for sending their children to school. In constrained budget situations we need to show that education is the key and also complementary to broader development goals.

Panel 1: Education Priorities - How to Meet the MDGs Looking toward Post-2015

Moderated by Center for Universal Education director and senior fellow, Rebecca Winthrop, the first panel discussed the priority areas of Education First and how the education community can shape the post-2015 agenda. Panelists included Carol Bellamy, chair of the Global Partnership for Education, Patrick Awuah, founder and president of Ashesi University, César Guadalupe, associated researcher at Universidad del Pacífico in Peru, Ritu Sharma, co-founder and president of Women Thrive Worldwide and Heather Simpson, senior director of education and child development at Save the Children.

The panel discussed how Education First strives to reach the education-related MDGs but is also an open window since it goes beyond access and looks beyond the 2015 MDG deadline. Education First has the potential to be a game changing initiative as the secretary general engages with heads of state and government officials who are not currently committed to making education a priority. However, it will

only be game changing if it's not business as usual. The panel emphasized a need to understand how different sectors are moving on parallel paths towards the post-2015 agenda and how to cross-fertilize ideas across the fields of education, health, agriculture, water and others. The panel also delved into the three priority areas of education first: access, quality and global citizenship.

Panel 2: 2012 Global Monitoring Report on the Theme and Youth and Skills

Center for Universal Education nonresident senior fellow, Kevin Watkins, moderated the second panel, which launched the 2012 Education for All Global Monitoring Report on the theme of youth and skills. Pauline Rose, director of the Education for All Global Monitoring Report, began with an overview of the report which indicates that progress towards the Education for All targets is stagnating, aid to education is decreasing and that there is a growing skills deficit among young people affecting poor youth, especially women. The report shows that we have the largest youth population ever with one in six of the world's people aged 15-24 years old and six in 10 Africans under age 25.

The other panelists included Joseph Munyambanza, co-founder and education director of COBURWAS, Mary Chandler, director of policy and planning, corporate responsibility at Cummins, Inc., Clare Ignatowski, senior advisor for workforce development and youth at the U.S. Agency for International Development and Tyrone Littlejohn, assistant trainer at the Mosholu Montefiore Community Center in the North Bronx, New York. Joseph and Tyrone discussed the importance of fostering opportunities for youth from their own perspectives. Joseph, from the DRC, fled to Uganda with his family as a refugee at age 6 and has since been committed to ensuring that other refugee children have access to education. Tyrone discussed the benefits of skills training for youth. Clare gave an overview of USAID's new youth policy, which aims to strengthen grassroots dialogue around youth issues and mainstream those issues into all development efforts. Mary discussed Cummins' new technical education training program, which was established in response to a dearth of qualified youth in the countries where the company operates. The panelists all urged for youth to be seen as an opportunity rather than a threat.

Reception

Homi Kharas, executive secretary of the U.N. secretary-general's high-level panel on the global development agenda beyond 2015, provided the group with insight on the high-level panel's process. He opened by asking the audience to not forget about getting to 2015 by focusing too much on post-2015. He also argued that the current MDGs will be the scaffold upon which the next set of global development goals is built. Developing countries are now contributing more of their own resources to development than they did 13 years ago when the MDGs were originally drafted. This makes money a less critical constraint, but increases the need to convince actors to spend more wisely.

The high-level panel is discussing issues that are not currently included in the MDGs such as increasing equity, creating more jobs, reducing child mortality, and others. Education is instrumental to achieving all of these goals. The panel has met twice and three more gatherings are planned. The next development agenda will aim to: end poverty in all its forms; create sustained prosperity; and serve as a global agenda with a global responsibility. The panel is emphasizing the importance of outcomes and, as a result, the next agenda will be more granular, context specific and operational than the current MDGs and it will include accountability measures.

Following Homi's remarks, representatives from four civil society-led education campaigns announced current initiatives they are taking up to improve the quality of education worldwide. Sarah Hendricks

from Plan International shared the latest developments in the organization's ['Because I am a Girl'](#) campaign, which aims to improve education access and learning for girls. She specifically spoke about their plans to focus on child marriage and other key issues blocking the empowerment of girls. Dennis Sinyolo representing Education International and The Global Campaign for Education spoke about the importance of supporting and training teachers to achieve the Education First vision and shared the newly launched ['Every Child Needs a Teacher'](#) campaign that uses the tag-line: "Without teachers, a school is just a building. Without trained teachers, schooling is not education." Lori Heninger from the [Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies](#), which represents over 8,000 members worldwide, announced a new advocacy initiative focused on improving the continuity of education in humanitarian contexts, including those affected by armed conflict. Lastly, Holly Gordon from 10x10, a media initiative focusing on social issues, previewed the feature-length documentary, ["Girl Rising"](#) and spoke about the power of girls' education and the organization's aspiration for the film to mobilize action around the world through a broad network of partners on the ground.