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REPORT

on the Commission communication to the Council and the European Parliament
on education and training in the context of poverty reduction in developing
countries

(COM(2002) 116 – C5-0333/2002 – 2002/2177(COS))

Committee on Development and Cooperation

Rapporteur: Margrietus J. van den Berg

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PROCEDURAL PAGE

By letter of 6 March 2002, the Commission forwarded to Parliament a communication to the Council and the European Parliament on education and training in the context of poverty reduction in developing countries (COM(2002) 116 – 2002/2177(COS)).

At the sitting of 2 September 2002 the President of Parliament announced that he had referred the communication to the Committee on Development and Cooperation as the committee responsible and the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport and the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities for their opinions (C5-0333/2002).

The Committee on Development and Cooperation had appointed Margrietus J. van den Berg rapporteur at its meeting of 20 June 2002.

It considered the Commission communication and the draft report at its meetings of 3 December 2002, 18 February and 23 April 2003.

At the last meeting it adopted the motion for a resolution by unanimously.

The following were present for the vote: Joaquim Miranda (chairman), Margrietus J. van den Berg (vice-chairman and rapporteur), Marieke Sanders-ten Holte and Anders Wijkman (vice-chairmen), Yasmine Boudjenah, Marie-Arlette Carlotti, John Alexander Corrie, Fernando Fernández Martín, Concepció Ferrer (for Luigi Cesaro), Michael Gahler (for Karsten Knolle), Vitaliano Gemelli, Karin Junker, Bashir Khanbhai (for Nirj Deva), Glenys Kinnock, Nelly Maes (for Paul A.A.J.G. Lannoye), Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez, Hans Modrow, Ulla Margrethe Sandbæk, Francisca Sauquillo Pérez del Arco, Agnes Schierhuber (for Jean-Pierre Bebear), Maj Britt Theorin and Sabine Zissener (for Jürgen Zimmerling pursuant to Rule 153(2)).

The opinions of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport and the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities are attached.

The report was tabled on 24 April 2003.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

European Parliament resolution on the Commission communication to the Council and the European Parliament on education and training in the context of poverty reduction in developing countries (COM(2002) 116 – C5-0333/2002 – 2002/2177(COS))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission communication (COM(2002) 116 – C5-0333/2002¹),
 - having regard to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo in 1994, and to the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW), held in Beijing in 1995,
 - having regard to the World Summit for Children, held in Jomtien in 1990, the 1995 UN Social Summit and the World Education Forum, held in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000,
 - having regard to the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children, held in New York in 2001,
 - having regard to the International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Monterrey in 2002,
 - having regard to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002,
 - having regard to the World Trade Organisation Development Round, to be held in Cancún in 2003,
 - having regard to its resolution of 6 September 2001 on basic education in developing countries in the context of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children, held in September 2001²,
 - having regard to Rule 47(1) of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Development and Cooperation and the opinions of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport and the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities (A5-0126/2003),
- A. whereas Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights established education as a fundamental human right,
- B. whereas the 1995 Convention on the Rights of the Child has still not been ratified by all the signatories,

¹ Not yet published.

² OJ C 72E, 21.3.2001, p. 248.

- C. whereas, on 10 November 2000, the Commission and the Council issued a Joint Statement which supported the view that there should be a global commitment to universal primary education and identified education as a development priority,
- D. whereas global economic inequalities and the burden of debt have left many governments without the resources required to provide education for all children, and whereas structural adjustment programmes have forced governments to reduce public sector spending,
- E. noting that the Global Campaign for Education has called for spending priorities to be reordered in those countries where military expenditure is high, so as to ensure that education has a greater emphasis in the national budget,
- F. noting that, in 2001, the European Commission disbursed 4.1% of the combined general budget of the Commission and of the EDF on education in the countries covered by the DAC; whereas this is much less than it had promised and is at odds with the official aims which the Commission published previously,
- G. noting that, in its resolution of 30 May 2002, the Council acknowledged that donors, including the European Union and Member States, had not increased their education aid as much as was needed to meet the Millennium Development Goals concerning education,
- H. noting that, in its resolution of 30 May 2002, the Council stated that the European Union and Member States would adjust their policies and allocation of resources to reflect the belief that education was central to poverty reduction, the achievement of sustainable development and the construction of democratic, prosperous societies,
- I. noting that little money has been earmarked for education in the National Indicative Programmes under the EDF, since few countries chose education as a focal point in their NIP,
- J. noting that not only is the Commission's budget for primary education too small but also that the disbursement of funds is slow and inefficient,
- K. whereas 113 million children have never attended school, whereas another 150 million children start primary school but drop out before they learn to read and write, and whereas 860 million people in the developing world are illiterate,
- L. whereas child labour prevents many children from attending school, since their earnings are essential for the survival of the family,
- M. stressing that human rights, including the right to education, are universal and indivisible and that there is no place for discrimination of any kind on the grounds of sex, disability, race, ethnic origin, religion or culture,
- N. whereas two thirds of children who do not attend school are girls, whereas enrolment rates for girls are still behind those for boys, and whereas drop-out rates for girls are higher,
- O. having regard to the vital importance of education and vocational training, especially for girls and women, in combating poverty and disease, and therefore supporting the Commission's political commitment to stepping up education and training resources in its development cooperation,

- P. whereas education policy in developing countries must address the problems specific to developing countries and, given that procuring energy and water is a job that usually falls to women and children, access to, and management of, energy and water must form an integral part of the education policies recommended by the European Union, in order to improve lastingly the standard of living and health of informed populations and to promote their economic development,
- Q. whereas the Commission's Communication is to be considered as an important step towards attaining the aim of promoting education in the developing countries, and whereas it presents a comprehensive strategy in which objectives are accompanied by priorities, methods and specific measures, such as campaigns to make parents - especially fathers - aware of the advantage of educating girls,
- R. whereas the framework thus presented can be considered satisfactory, albeit poor in proposed actions to promote education and training for girls and women,
- S. noting that emergency provision for many children who are displaced or affected by conflict, drought or famine rarely extends to appropriate education, even when displacement and instability are prolonged,
- T. stressing the importance of peace education where children are victims of violent conflict, as is the case with children in refugee camps,
- U. believing that tackling the education crisis is one of the most effective strategies at our disposal for breaking the cycle of poverty and is the key to sustainable human development and efforts to make progress towards the internationally agreed 2015 human development targets,
- V. regretting the fact that, since the Dakar Conference, there has been minimal progress, the Fast Track Initiative notwithstanding, and, in international efforts to tackle the crisis in education, a lack of willingness to accept coordination; whereas, given current trends, we shall not meet the 2005 target for gender equality in education, particularly in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, and whereas the 2015 target for universal primary education will be comprehensively missed, with an estimated 75 million children not attending school,
- W. welcoming the Fast Track Initiative and the Commission's support in principle of it; regretting, however, that to date, the Commission has not stated what funds it will make available to those countries that are covered by this initiative,
- X. urging the Commission to ensure that the Fast Track Initiative is quickly extended to other countries, including those countries that have not yet completed their Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers,
- Y. noting that parents in developing countries make enormous sacrifices so as to be able to send their children to school,
- Z. whereas efforts are being seriously undermined by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, as a result of which 10% of teachers in the worst affected countries in Africa are expected to die over the next five years, and whereas the number of AIDS orphans is predicted to rise to more than 20% of all school-age children,

- AA. whereas sex education in school offers the best prospects for the prevention of HIV/AIDS,
- AB. believing that the classroom experience should be student-centred, relevant to the local community and in the local language and that curricula need to be flexible and relevant to children's lives,
- AC. believing that the achievement of primary education for all is a precondition for more equitable patterns of globalisation and for the closure of the digital divide,
- AD. whereas donors, including the EU, should develop joint guidelines on policy, operating procedures, accounting systems and monitoring and evaluation which ensure transparency, and whereas they should end the practice of tying aid in the education sector to the provision of goods and services,
- AE. noting that, given the capacity constraints faced by developing countries, it is important to set realistic time scales for the production of participatory national education plans,
1. Emphasises that universal, compulsory, free, public and high-quality primary education, which provides children with at least six years of primary education, is the foundation for an education strategy which encompasses secondary, tertiary, vocational and adult education; emphasises, further, that promoting high-quality primary education, and especially girls' access thereto, should be the top priority of the EU's and Member States' development strategy for education;
 2. Welcomes the Commission's undertaking to propose an increase in total resources for education and training, in particular for the poorest countries and population groups, since this will contribute to ensuring that education remains free of charge without compromising on its quality;
 3. Notes that, during the budget negotiations in 2001 and 2002, the European Parliament, together with the Council, stated that Community aid for education had to be increased and noted that specific targets for expenditure on education had been included in regional budget headings; emphasises once again that the budget for education needs to be doubled to at least 8% of the Commission budget for development, and that this increase should not be achieved through substitution but should represent an actual increase;
 4. Calls on the Council to agree a timetable for Member States to increase their aid to basic education, where they have not already done so, with a view to meeting the commitments they made in Dakar;
 5. Regrets that, with regard to the financing of the proposed programme, the Commission has not set a target; calls on the Commission to set a budgetary target for education, as the budgetary authority did in 2001; deems it imperative to attain the 35% target for social sector spending, including education, which was agreed in 2001; calls for clear time indicators within the current framework between now and 2015, and asks the Commission to submit an annual report evaluating compliance with those indicators;
 6. Calls on the Commission, when it revisits the priorities and targets in the mid-term review of National Indicative Programmes in 2004, to make a concerted effort with the developing

countries to allocate money for primary education not only to the NIPs but also to other ACP funds, to increase the focus and target funding on education and to push for more efficient mechanisms for disbursement on education;

7. Notes that, to date, the Commission and developing countries have not used the dialogue concerning the increase in spending on primary education by the governments of the developing countries to a sufficient extent; urges the Commission to start such a dialogue, with the involvement of Member States, and emphasises that this must not mean budgetary substitution; calls for concentration on sectoral funding, since substitution is not possible within the sectoral framework;
8. Urges the Commission and Member States to give preferential support to countries committed to educational strategies encompassing free universal primary provision, gender equality, wide access, high quality, decentralisation of reform, and special support for the poorest and the most disadvantaged;
9. Urges the Commission to play a greater role in ensuring the complementarity and consistency of the development education policies of Member States and the Union and as an interlocutor with international organisations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, the OECD and the World Bank; stresses, in this connection, the need for the EU to be given international legal personality;
10. Urges the Commission and Member States to announce the extent of their support for the Fast Track Initiative as soon as possible; is disappointed that the Commission, which hosted the first Education for All Donor Consortium meeting in November 2002, did not agree to finance the first group of countries;
11. Urges the European Commission and Member States involved to press for the Fast Track Initiative to be opened to all of the 18 pre-selected countries by the end of 2003 and for the Analytical Fast Track Initiative to be opened to all other countries that could benefit from it, and not just to the five high-population countries, regardless of whether or not they have completed a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper;
12. Calls on the Commission to establish a scoreboard which will facilitate the tracking of Community and EU bilateral aid to education in the light of the Dakar commitments and of Member States' commitments to increase the volume of their aid to education;
13. Welcomes the Commission proposal that budget support be given on the strict condition that the recipient country has a comprehensive Education for All plan; urges the Commission to attach legal guarantees to the budget support, based on public expenditure reviews, and to give it in advance, respecting the 'ownership principle';
14. Calls for reform of IMF and World Bank Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers so as to ensure that they support, rather than undermine, free, public, high-quality education and take account of the specific nature of each situation and region while subordinating technical considerations to the overall objectives of sustainable development and the fight against poverty;
15. Believes that eligibility for assistance should be contingent on poor countries developing strategies that are capable of providing high-quality education without relying on user fees

in any shape or form;

16. Agrees with the Commission that responsibility for the quality of education should lie with the developing countries themselves; calls for standards to be agreed with those countries for acceptable girls' enrolment and completion rates for each year with a view to closing the gender gap in primary and secondary education, failing which the Commission will need to consider whether budget support is the most appropriate mechanism for achieving the gender equality Millennium Development Goal in that country;
17. Emphasises that, if countries do not comply, mechanisms should exist to induce them to do so, including the possibility of budget support being suspended;
18. Emphasises the importance of Commission and Member State support for the EFA goal of improving adult literacy, especially the female literacy rate, by 50% by 2015;
19. Stresses, with regard to gender equality, the importance of reliable information and statistics on the education and training of girls and women and supports the Commission's proposal to promote the collection of the relevant data; recalls that the association agreements signed with developing countries and the Union's regional strategies should cover the necessary statistical instruments and exchanges of information;
20. Considers that, given the importance of women in the local, social and family economy, it is essential to develop training programmes for women and girls leading to qualifications which will enable them to obtain work and to develop local businesses, with the aim of promoting the economic development which will enable these women and their families to escape from the vicious circle of poverty and disease;
21. Stresses that the education of girls and women must not stop at basic education but must be promoted and developed at the levels of higher education and exchange programmes and that after-school and sports programmes must likewise be open to women and girls;
22. Welcomes the Communication's emphasis on gender balance and mainstreaming, as well as its recommendation that the number of specialists in education within the Commission's delegations be increased, but considers that they should have undergone training in gender mainstreaming; calls on the Commission to ensure gender mainstreaming and to make available, as soon as possible, the communication on training in the external services which it should have submitted in the first quarter of 2002;
23. Notes that, as in the developing countries diseases principally affect poor communities, perpetuating poverty through work loss, ill-health, school drop-out and increased social and economic instability, this factor should be taken fully into account in all education programmes;
24. Considers information on the available education and training programmes to be an essential part of the success of their implementation and calls on the Commission to pay special attention to ensure that the relevant information reaches women and girls, since education can help to protect them from all forms of exploitation;
25. Stresses the importance of adapting education to local culture and mentality (for example by providing Pan-African editions of textbooks and by building schools out of local, cheap

material);

26. Stresses, in particular, the importance of education for girls and women in improving sexual and reproductive health, including the prevention of STDs such as HIV/AIDS and illnesses related to water supply and conditions of hygiene such as tuberculosis, malaria, cholera and diarrhoea;
27. Welcomes the Commission proposal that the connection be acknowledged between AIDS and education, emphasising that education policy and the policy on combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases typically found in developing countries must be complementary and mutually reinforcing, and that their priorities should include reproductive and sexual health and rights, in line with the European legislation in this field, while also taking account of the importance of health and practices in the context of diet and water supplies;
28. Welcomes the Commission proposal that account must be taken of the impact of conflict on children and education, including the circumstances of children in refugee camps;
29. Believes that special attention must be paid to the reintegration of child soldiers into society and calls on international donors to establish programmes for the re-education of child soldiers;
30. Like the Commission, attaches great importance to the involvement of parents and the community in education;
31. Like the Commission, acknowledges that there are many different ways in which education may be organised, although education must remain the primary responsibility of the State; emphasises that education must be considered a public service even though it may be provided by the private sector;
32. Broadly endorses the principles set out in the Commission's Common Cooperation Framework for Higher Education, but calls on the Commission, at the forthcoming WTO negotiations, not to allow schooling to be included in the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) as a 'service' that must be subject to free-market rules and productivity criteria, as this would not only seriously infringe the right of all to education but could also seriously restrict public education which, since it is necessarily supported by government funding, would be likely to be considered in breach of the rules on free competition;
33. Emphasises that teachers deserve adequate remuneration and should not be replaced by volunteers, that they have the right to form professional associations and to undertake collective bargaining, that no international body should impose salary scales on their profession and that more female teachers need to be trained; believes that teachers are entitled to good initial and in-service training, with refresher courses also focused on their specific needs;
34. Emphasises the need to provide a working environment for teachers and pupils that is healthy, safe, secure and conducive to learning;
35. Believes that Community development aid for education will be effective only if it forms part of a broader development policy which sets as its chief goal the reduction of poverty;

36. Urges that account be taken of the specific needs of indigenous people in the Union's policies, especially in the areas of education, the fight against poverty, food aid and sustainable development; calls on the Commission to make available the necessary resources to improve the protection of indigenous cultures and to enable the indigenous peoples to control their own development and collective identity and combat the forms of discrimination that affect them, especially through the expansion of primary education in the local languages in conditions similar to those applying to an official language of the territory concerned;
37. Emphasises, in this connection, the need to promote school books and teaching materials with content based on the regional cultures concerned, written whenever possible in the predominant regional languages and relevant to local agricultural, economic and social interests; also emphasises the need to develop curricula specific to the region and language and teacher training in the relevant regional languages;
38. Points out that primary education must be designed to suit the local situation, for instance by means of mobile schools in sparsely populated areas;
39. Emphatically underlines the positive role that information and communications technologies, whether Internet, e-mail, mobile phones or the traditional radio, television, newspapers and magazines, can play in all areas and at every level of education, and calls on the Commission and Member States to encourage their use more strongly than they have so far;
40. Draws particular attention here to the great potential of the radio medium, which in large parts of Africa particularly is still the most widespread medium and by which even remote areas can easily be reached, to convey agricultural, economic know-how, promote the empowerment of civil society and health education, especially the prevention of HIV/AIDS, also reaching the people who are unable to read and write; hence calls on both the Commission and Member States to give this area greater financial and creative attention;
41. Calls on the Commission to foster quality control of education through support for national inspection systems in developing countries;
42. Calls on the Commission to foster dialogue between Ministers of Finance and Education, teachers' unions and parental organisations in developing countries;
43. Calls on the Commission and Member States to harmonise their education programmes within each developing country, with the coordinating role being given to one of them, and to ensure that financing, monitoring and follow-up activities are complementary;
44. Emphasises that education for all means not only an increase in enrolment rates but also an increase in completion and achievement rates;
45. Emphasises the importance of supporting projects for street children with accommodation in which the children can wash themselves, sleep and learn, even if they continue to live on the street and survive by taking whatever jobs they can find, so as to enable them to have a minimum of education and social and cultural skills, thus improving their prospects;

46. Points out that decisive advances in the education sector will be secured only if compulsory schooling is successfully enforced, which would rule out the possibility of 'exemption' in return for payment;
47. Points out that universal full-time education requires an effective ban on child labour as well as an education system that includes strategies to integrate all working and other out-of-school children into full-time schooling; calls on the Community to ensure that all education programmes financed by the Community have outreach strategies which include social mobilisation and bridging courses for older children;
48. Calls on the Commission, the developing countries and the private sector to establish a system whereby child labour would be discouraged as much as possible and in which provision would be made in every case for part-time education;
49. Underlines the need for all educational institutions to impart democratic values, to promote active citizenship and to foster a sense of responsibility towards others;
50. Calls on the Commission to report back to Parliament on the progress made one year after the adoption of this resolution;
51. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Introduction

In Africa, on average, 60% of children attend elementary school. Although that figure represents a 6% increase over 1990, 45 million children in Africa still do not attend school. Of that number, most are girls. They are kept at home because their parents do not understand the value of education or because daughters must contribute to the family income.

Source: 2000. A Better World for All. Joint publication of the World Bank, the IMF and the UN

World-wide, 113 million children do not attend school. Of that number, two thirds are girls. Millions of children do attend school, but they are taught by poorly trained or even untrained and underpaid teachers in overcrowded, unhealthy and poorly equipped classrooms. One third of all children fail to complete five years' schooling, although that is the minimum requirement if children are to acquire basic proficiency in reading and writing. By 2015, if the current policy continues, 75 million children will still not be attending school¹, although the international community agreed in 1990 that, in 2015, all children should receive an elementary education and that the disparity between boys and girls at school must be abolished by 2005². According to UNESCO, 70 countries will fail to attain the Dakar goals in 2015 (see box below). Although 83 countries have made a good start, it is disturbing to note that one third of the world population lives in countries where the 2015 goals represent Utopian ideals.

World Education Forum goals (Dakar, 2000)

- better early childhood care and education;
- free and compulsory primary education of good quality for all;
- teaching children and adolescents the skills which are necessary for their further personal development;
- a 50% cut in illiteracy among adults by 2015, and access to lifelong learning for adults;
- elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achievement of gender equality in education by 2015;
- improvements in the quality of education.

Education for development

Education is the key to poverty reduction. Literacy breaks the vicious poverty circle in which many families are imprisoned. Individuals may achieve personal development through education. If countries are to develop, they need a properly educated population. Girls must receive special attention. Education is the key to securing an improvement in the position of women. Educated women have more opportunities, for example in their choice of a husband or in the utilisation of their own economic potential. However, attendance at school is no guarantee

¹ The Oxfam Education Report, January 2001.

² Millennium Development Goals, Dakar, 1990, (<http://www.developmentgoals.org/>)

that children will learn to read and write, especially in the case of the poor, who have to make do with a low level of education. Training of teachers is also required, and a system must be established where funds made available for education are distributed in a transparent manner. One of the most effective methods for countries to ‘develop themselves’ is the involvement of educational organisations and local parents’ associations. The role played by mothers and extra help for girls are crucial. Education must be relevant to everyday life. The use of ICT must be widely introduced.

Funding of development

In its policy, the EU emphasises the importance of exchange of information, policy coordination between the Commission and the individual Member States, and the organisation of meetings of experts. Relatively little money is disbursed on elementary education (in 2001, 0.53% of total EU expenditure on education in the countries covered by the DAC¹). In 2015, all children ought to be attending at least elementary education classes. That goal is attainable, since, world-wide, it would cost about an additional EUR 8 billion per year, which is less than one fifth of EU expenditure on agriculture. If it is to attain that goal, the EU will have to double its budget for elementary education, as the European Parliament proposed for 2001². That applies as much to the EDF budget as to the regional and thematic budgets. The level of education has declined in many countries as a result of structural adjustment programmes. In order to service their debts, governments have frequently slashed their budgets for the social sectors. For example, Niger spends twice as much on debt-servicing as it does on elementary education. Such budgetary substitution must be prevented by giving financial aid on the basis of sectoral programmes.

The EU recently concluded a contract with the Santa Fe Province in Argentina to provide part-financing for reforming and training the Province’s police force. The Province itself provides 45% of the funding. It raised its share of the money by slashing expenditure on literacy centres, adult education and higher education establishments. As a result, teachers were made redundant, and thousands of pupils and trainees were deprived of education.

Source: Ciudad, 2 December 2002

The EU must play its coordinating role and secure more financial resources and more expertise in order to support the devising of national education programmes. That must be done by recruiting experts for EU delegations locally instead of centrally in Brussels. The basic principles set out in the Commission communication must be connected with specific action plans which include objectives and a timetable. It is very important that the EU and Member States participate in the World Bank’s current ‘Education for All – Fast Track’ programme, that they actually increase the appropriations that they devote to education, double the budget for elementary education and, finally, ensure that EU aid for education is coordinated and disbursed within a financing and policy framework set up by the partner government and not by the EU as

¹ Letter dated 21 October 2002 from Commissioner Nielson to Mr Miranda, Chairman of the Committee on Development and Cooperation.

² Resolution of the European Parliament on the draft budget of the European Union for the financial year 2001, as amended by the Council (all sections) (13830/2000 – C5-0600/2000 – 1999/2190(BUD)) and on Letter of Amendment No 2/2001 on the draft general budget for 2001 (13833/2000 – C5-0653/2000).

donor. In its resolution on the 2003 budget¹, the EP emphasised ‘the urgent need to increase EU direct interventions in the fields of basic health and basic education in developing countries’.

Education for All – Fast Track Initiative

The Fast Track Initiative is an agreement concerning education in the developing countries on the basis of funding from donors for countries which are prepared to give priority to elementary education for all and to develop policies designed to improve the quality and efficiency of their elementary education system. In addition, the donors provide their resources and expertise in order to improve existing coordination with the aim of making development more effective. The World Bank provides the framework for this Initiative.

At the 2002 G8 Summit in Canada, world leaders gave their support to this Initiative. For 18 of the poorest countries in the world, that meant that they were asked to draw up actions plans with a view to providing elementary education for all the children in their country. In November 2002, those plans were discussed at the first Donor Consortium meeting in Brussels. After the meeting, it was announced that seven countries² would be receiving support for the implementation of their plans. That means support for the construction of the requisite capacity and the covering of a financial shortfall estimated at around USD 400 million between 2003 and 2005. At that meeting, five other countries³ were invited to draw up supplementary policy plans so that they would be able to participate in the Fast Track Initiative in due course. Canada and the Netherlands are involved as donors in this instance. It is very important that the European Commission should become a member of the Donor Consortium as soon as possible.

Education for All: Girls and Boys

At the 2001 UN Summit entitled ‘A World Fit for Children’, emphasis was again placed on the importance of education for children: ‘All girls and boys must have access to and complete primary education that is free, compulsory and of good quality as a cornerstone of an inclusive basic education. Gender disparities in primary and secondary education must be eliminated’⁴. Similarly, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002, the Heads of Government and the representatives of civil society and of the business world present at the Summit acknowledged once again that ‘the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration ... will require ... significant increases in the flow of financial resources ... to ... education ...’⁵. The communication from the European Commission takes over a number of those objectives but ignores just as many. If effective action is to be taken and the Dakar objectives attained in 2015, the following quantitative indicators are required: percentage enrolment for elementary education and completion of schooling, attainment of gender equality and mastery of reading and writing. Qualitatively, education must involve properly trained and motivated teachers, a relevant curriculum and appropriate reading material, appropriate language tuition, a pleasant school environment and the encouragement of parental and community involvement. The

¹ Resolution of the European Parliament on the draft budget of the European Union for the financial year 2003, (C5-0300/2002 – 2002/2004(BUD)) and on Letter of Amendment No 1/2003 on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2003 (12640/2002 – C5-0480/2002).

² Burkina Faso, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Mauritania, Nicaragua and Niger.

³ India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, DR Congo and Nigeria.

⁴ <http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/documentation/index.html>.

⁵ http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/documents/summit_docs/2309_planfinal.htm#_fin2: paragraph 75 (IX: Means of implementation).

Commission must link these quantitative and qualitative aspects to a clear timescale and report back to the European Parliament about these matters.

Involvement of the private sector in education

The World Trade Organisation has expressly acknowledged that education is a matter for national governments. The public nature of education is indisputable. Involvement of the private education sector and a contribution from the business world are welcome, with particular regard to vocational training. However that may be, people active in education deserve a decent wage. They may never be replaced by volunteers, as threatens to be the case in some instances. Teachers and educational support staff deserve recognition for what they are as well as appreciation by society. All international initiatives must be geared to strengthening their position, not to undermining it.

In Pakistan, thousands of teachers protested against government proposals to involve the private sector in higher education and thus to increase enrolment rates. According to the teachers, that would lead to an increase in student fees for establishments financed by the government, with the result that the acquisition of a degree would become virtually impossible for poor students. Students also joined the protests because they feared that student fees would be increased. Out of a population of 143 million, only 3% of those aged between 17 and 23 are involved in higher education in Pakistan.

Source: TerraViva Europe, 24 October 2002

HIV/AIDS

Children are dying, more and more of them are leaving school without any qualifications, and traumas and discrimination are on the increase as a result of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Fewer children are attending school, since more and more of them are having to go out to work because their parents have died from AIDS. In addition, it is estimated that, in 1999, 860 000 children in sub-Saharan Africa lost their teachers as a result of the HIV/AIDS epidemic¹. The direct consequences of the epidemic are many and varied. The high rate of disease and death among teachers and administrators has seriously affected the supply and quality of education. In some countries, more teachers die than retire.

In the Central African Republic, HIV/AIDS is the major cause of death among schoolteachers. UNAIDS claims that between 25% and 50% of all teachers in the country will have died from AIDS by 2005. Between 1996 and 1998, the number of teachers who died was almost the same as the number of teachers who retired. Of those that did die, some 85% had AIDS.

Source: In Irin HIV/AIDS Leading Cause of Death for Teachers, 1 September 2001

The AIDS epidemic not only reduces the supply of teachers, it also results in a reallocation of funds. The funds are no longer used for investment in the quality of education, a large proportion

¹ *The Progress of Nations 2000* (UNICEF) 2001.

thereof will be devoted to pensions for the families of AIDS victims, the remainder being devoted to the training of new teachers.

It is very important that attention be paid to the consequences of the epidemic, with particular regard to education. Ignorance is the principal reason why this epidemic is so widespread. Information must be supplied so that individuals become aware that they are at risk, why they are at risk and how a further spread of the epidemic may be prevented. This requires more than just AIDS-awareness campaigns in school, the entire community must be involved.

Conflict and post-conflict situations

113 million children do not attend school. 82% of them live in areas where a war is going on or has been going on. Schools frequently constitute a target, and teachers are at risk. Lengthy and widespread wars may lead to the education system being disrupted. For children, education is an important element to help them recover from the trauma of war. Going to school every day gives them the feeling that life is back to normal.

Now that the winter has begun, schools in Afghanistan have closed for three months. The new school year begins in March, but Nadima Maiwan, a teacher, does not intend to spend that time sitting at home twiddling her thumbs. Over the next few months, she and many of her colleagues will be running winter classes for girls who want to catch up on their missed schoolwork. 'I do not like sitting at home. Five years under the Taliban was long enough,' she says. She teaches English at the Abdul Qasim Ferdousi School, one of the largest girls' schools in Kabul. When the Taliban captured Kabul in September 1996, the school had 6 000 pupils. Now, twelve months after the expulsion of the Taliban, who prohibited education for girls, the school is bursting at the seams. 237 teachers, of whom just 17 are men, are teaching almost 7 500 girls and 2 700 boys. A country-wide sample taken by UNICEF revealed that, at the end of July, a total of 3 million children were attending school. That means that there are still many more children in Afghanistan who do not attend school than who do attend. Nevertheless, UNICEF believes that the Back to School campaign launched at the beginning of this year has been a great success. A UNICEF spokesman in Kabul, Chulho Hyun, said: 'At the beginning of the school year in March, we had estimated that about 1.7 million children would be receiving elementary education, i.e. grades 1 to 6 inclusive. In fact, we have about 1.3 million children in the first few grades. That is a very hopeful sign, since we may therefore expect that large numbers of the children will continue their schooling.'

Source: NRC Handelsblad, 9 December 2002

28 November 2002

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE, YOUTH, EDUCATION, THE MEDIA AND SPORT

for the Committee on Development and Cooperation

on the Commission Communication to the Council and the European Parliament on education and training in the context of poverty reduction in developing countries
(COM(2002) 116 – C5-0333/2002 – 2002/2177(COS))

Draftsman: Eurig Wyn

PROCEDURE

The Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport appointed Eurig Wyn draftsman at its meeting of 11 July 2002.

It considered the draft opinion at its meeting of 11-12 November 2002 and 28 November 2002.

At the latter meeting it adopted the following conclusions unanimously.

The following were present for the vote: Michel Rocard, chairman; Theresa Zabell, vice-chairman; Raina A. Mercedes Echerer (for Eurig Wyn, draftsman); Konstantinos Alyssandrakis, Ole Andreasen, Pedro Aparicio Sánchez, Christopher J.P. Beazley, Thierry de La Perriere, Marielle de Sarnez, Lissy Gröner, Ruth Hieronymi, Ulpu Iivari, Renzo Imbeni, Karin Junker, Maria Martens, Pietro-Paolo Mennea, Juan Ojeda Sanz, Doris Pack, Christa Prets, Gianni Vattimo, Sabine Zissener, Myrsini Zorba.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport calls on the Committee on Development and Cooperation, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following points in its motion for a resolution:

1. Underlines the role of education, especially of girls and women, in reducing poverty, improving health, promoting sustainable development, and building democratic societies;
2. Underlines the need for all educational institutions to impart democratic values, to promote active citizenship and to foster a sense of responsibility towards others;
3. Underlines the importance of education in combating sexually-transmitted diseases, including HIV and AIDS;
4. Recalls the commitment of the Community and the Member States to the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) in the field of education (e.g. provision by 2015 of universal primary education and the elimination of gender discrimination at all levels of education) and to the Framework for Action on Education for All (EFA) agreed at the World Education Forum in Dakar;
5. Urges the Community and the Member States to take note of, and to draw the appropriate conclusions from, the view of the World Bank that development aid for education would have to be increased three-fold in order to meet the MDGs in education;
6. Calls on the Commission to require part of the development aid to have education as its compulsory final purpose, above all in those countries which show that they have major shortcomings and inadequacies in their education system;
7. Believes that Community development aid for education will only be effective if it forms part of a broader development policy which sets as its chief goal the reduction of poverty;
8. Underlines that universal and free primary education, providing children with at least six years of primary education, is the foundation for an education strategy which encompasses secondary, tertiary, vocational and adult education; and that promoting high-quality primary education, and especially girls' access to this, should be the top priority of Community and Member States' development strategy for education;
9. Points out that primary education must be designed to suit the local situation, for instance by means of mobile schools in sparsely populated areas;
10. Emphasises the importance of supporting projects for street children with accommodation in which the children can wash themselves, sleep and learn, even if they continue to live on the street and survive by taking whatever jobs they can find, so as to enable them to have a minimum of education and social and cultural skills, thus improving their prospects;
11. Notes that, worldwide in 2000, 900 million adults were illiterate and that most of these were women; underlines the importance of Community and Member State support for the EFA goal of improving adult literacy, especially the female literacy rate, by 50% by 2015;

12. Urges that account should be taken of the specific needs of indigenous peoples, in particular by means of primary education in regional languages in addition to uniform official languages;
13. Broadly endorses the principles set out in the Commission's Common Cooperation Framework for Higher Education; but calls on the Commission not to permit, at the forthcoming WTO negotiations, education to be subject to free market rules and productivity criteria, as this would not only seriously infringe the right of all to education but also seriously restrict the effect of public education which, since it is necessarily supported by government funding, would be likely to be considered in breach of the rules on free competition;
14. Emphatically underlines the positive role that information and communications technologies, whether Internet, e-mail, mobile phones or the traditional radio, television, newspapers and magazines can play in all areas and at every level of education, and calls on the Commission and Member States to encourage their use more strongly than they have so far;
15. Draws particular attention here to the great potential of the radio medium, which in large parts of Africa particularly is still the most widespread medium and by which even remote areas can easily be reached, to convey (agricultural) economic know-how, promote the empowerment of civil society or health education, especially the prevention of HIV/AIDS, also reaching the people who are unable to read and write; hence calls on both the Commission and the Member States to give this area greater financial and creative attention;
16. Urges the Community and the Member States to give preferential support to countries committed to educational strategies encompassing free universal primary provision, gender equality, wide access, high quality, decentralisation of reform, and special support for the poorest and most disadvantaged;
17. Urges the Commission to play a greater role in coordinating the development education policies of the Member States and as an interlocutor with international organisations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, OECD, the World Bank;
18. Calls on the Commission to submit a full report on its activities, projects, achievements etc. in the field of education, in which in particular the ACP countries should receive special attention;
19. Calls for full incorporation of the European Development Fund in the European Union's general budget, classifying the funds concerned as non-compulsory expenditure.

29 January 2003

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

for the Committee on Development and Cooperation

on the Commission communication to the Council and the European Parliament on education and training in the context of poverty reduction in developing countries
(COM(2002) 116 – C5-0333/2002 – 2002/2177(COS))

Draftsperson: Patsy Sørensen

PROCEDURE

The Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities appointed Patsy Sørensen draftsperson at its meeting of 10 July 2002.

The committee considered the draft opinion at its meetings of 2 December 2002 and 23 January 2003

At the last meeting it adopted the following conclusions by 17 votes in favour, with 1 abstention.

The following were present for the vote: Anna Karamanou, chairperson; Patsy Sørensen, draftsperson, María Antonia Avilés Perea, Regina Bastos, Lone Dybkjær, Geneviève Fraisse, Fiorella Ghilardotti, Lissy Gröner, Jutta D. Haug, (for Christa Prets), Heidi Anneli Hautala, Mary Honeyball, Hans Karlsson, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Astrid Lulling, Erika Mann, Olle Schmidt (for Marieke Sanders-ten Holte), Feleknas Uca, Elena Valenciano Martínez-Orozco.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities calls on the Committee on Development and Cooperation, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following points in its motion for a resolution:

- A. Considering the vital importance of education and vocational training especially for girls and women in combating poverty and disease, and therefore supporting the Commission's political commitment to stepping up education and training resources in its development co-operation; calls however on the Commission to streamline the different development policies of the Member States in this area;
- B. Whereas the Commission's Communication is to be considered as an important step towards attaining the aim of promoting education in the developing countries and presents a comprehensive strategy in which objectives are accompanied by priorities, methods and concrete actions, such as campaigns to make parents -especially mothers-aware of the advantage of educating girls;
- C. Whereas the framework thus presented can be considered satisfactory, albeit poor in proposed actions to promote education and training for girls and women;
- D. Welcomes the fact that this Communication does what the EP has asked for many years: statistics, genderbalancing and mainstreaming, as well as it's recommendation that the number of specialists in education within the Commission's delegations are to be increased, but demands that they should have a genderspecific training;
- E. Whereas education policy in developing countries must address the problems specific to developing countries and, given that procuring energy and water is a job that usually falls to women and children, access to, and management of, energy and water must form an integral part of the education policies recommended by the European Union, in order lastingly to improve the standard of living and health of informed populations and to promote their economic development;
 1. Fully supports the aim of eliminating gender-based inequalities by 2005, as stated in the Framework Action for Education for All (April 2000) and that of improving particularly female literacy by 50% by 2015, while stressing that these aims cannot be achieved without particular measures and actions clearly destined to women and a clear definition of the necessary financial resources destined exclusively to these objectives.
 2. Notes that in the developing countries diseases affect mostly the poor communities by perpetuating poverty through work loss, ill-health, school drop-out and increased social and economic instability and this link between education and poverty should be taken fully into account in all projects and programmes of economic and technical aid.
 3. Stresses in particular the importance of education for girls and women in combating disease, including STDs such as HIV and AIDS;
 4. Underlines the importance of reliable information and statistics concerning the education and training of girls and women and supports the Commission's proposal to promote the collection of the relevant data. Considers, however, that education and training should not be

restricted to girls and young women (education should be also taken into account in the setting of country strategies and sectorial programmes, day-care centres as well as after-school programs for girls, whereby special attention should be paid to enable mothers having children at school to join in on this programs).

5. Information on the available education and training programmes is an essential part of the success of their implementation and calls on the Commission to pay special attention that the relevant information reaches women and girls, since education can help to protect them from all forms of exploitation. Stresses as well the importance of education adapted to local culture and mentality (e.g. Pan-African edition of textbooks and schools build out of local, cheap material).
6. Calls for education and training in energy and water management to be the subject of a clearly identified sub-sectoral measure accompanied by an implementation timetable in the education and training programmes of the developing countries, in order to create conditions favourable to sustainable economic and social development by training qualified indigenous staff;
7. Stresses that the education of girls and women must not stop at basic education but must be promoted and developed at the levels of higher education and exchange programmes; after-school and sport programmes must likewise be open to women and girls;
8. Given the importance of women in the local, social and family economy, it is essential to develop training programmes for women and girls leading to qualifications which will enable them to obtain work and to develop local businesses with the aim of promoting the economic development which will enable these women and their families to escape from the vicious circle of poverty and disease;