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Education for all realities, achievements and challenges. The story of Bangladesh

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Mit: Mitteilungen der DGfE-Kommission
Vergleichende und Internationale
Erziehungswissenschaft

2'15

Education for All

- Education for All – bleibende Vision als Auftrag zum Handeln!
- Education for All 2000–2015: Review and Perspectives
- The 2015 Promise of Education for All in Kenya
- Low-cost Private Schools: Controversy and Implications
- Education for All in Honduras – 15 Jahre nach Dakar
- Education for All in Bangladesh



WAXMANN

1'15 ZEP

Für das internationale Projekt Education for All (EFA) ist 2015 gewissermaßen ein Schicksalsjahr. Die UN-Generalversammlung in New York und der UN-Bildungskongress in Dakar hatten 2000 das zentrale Ziel, einen Zugang zu Bildung für alle Kinder der Welt bis zum Jahr 2015 durchzusetzen und lebenslange Bildungsoptionen auch für Jugendliche und Erwachsene zu schaffen. Bereits auf dem Weg dorthin wurde der visionäre Charakter der Zielperspektive deutlich. Obgleich z.B. die Zahl der nicht eingeschulten Kinder von 108 Mio. (1999) auf 58 (2012) Mio. gefallen ist, wird das Gesamtziel weit verfehlt. 29 % der Länder mit verfügbaren Daten sind weit und 9 % sehr weit davon entfernt das Ziel der Grundbildung für alle zu erreichen (EFA-Monitoring Report 2015). Aber auch die Einschulungsrate sagt wenig über den Lernerfolg und über die Qualität des Unterrichts aus. Nach wie vor unterrichten in vielen Ländern eine große Zahl von Personen ohne professionelle Ausbildung und viele Schüler/-innen können auch nach Durchlaufen der Grundschulzeit weder lesen noch schreiben. Insgesamt ist der Erfolg des EFA-Projekts sehr unterschiedlich verlaufen. Da in diesem Jahr (2015) die Post-Millenniumsziele bis 2030 bei der UN-Generalversammlung im September verabschiedet werden, ist es an der Zeit, Bilanz zu ziehen und Perspektiven zu überprüfen. Dabei sollen vor allem Kolleg/inn/en aus dem globalen Süden zu Wort kommen.

Mit dem vorliegenden Heft soll den interessierten Lesenden eine Zusammenschau zur gegenwärtigen weltweiten Bildungssituation geliefert werden. *Asit Datta*, *Gregor Lang-Wojtasik* und *Sarah Lange* bieten zusammenfassend Rückblick, Bestandsaufnahme und Ausblick der thematischen Felder an.

Vor diesem Hintergrund fasst *Aaron Benavot* – der Direktor des Global Monitoring Report (GRM) – zusammen mit seinem Team die wichtigen Ergebnisse des soeben erschienenen GMR zusammen und beschreibt neben den Kernergebnissen auch deren Bedeutung für die weiteren Finanzierungspläne von EFA. Im Anschluss werden weitere inhaltliche Schwerpunkte vertieft. Zunächst wird der geografische Fokus auf Ostafrika gelegt. *John Kabutha Mugo*, *John Kiruru Nderitu* und *Sara Jerop Ruto* beschreiben verfehlt Ziele und Chancen neuer Initiativen am Beispiel Kenias.

James Tooley widmet sich dem Thema der Schulen mit geringfügigem Schulgeld, indem er die umstrittene These ausführt, dass ‚low cost private schools‘ Alternativstrategien sein können, um die EFA-Ziele zu erreichen. Im Anschluss beschreiben *Claudia Richter* und *Ricardo Morales Ulloa* ihre Bestandsaufnahme mit einem Fokus auf Honduras, also einem jener Länder, das Teil der Fast-Track-Initiative des EFA-Projekts war.

Bangladesh ist ein Land, das in jüngster Vergangenheit häufig auf Grund der vielen Entwicklungen im Bildungsbereich genannt wird. Es steht im Zentrum des Beitrags von

Rasheda Chowdhury und *Mostafizur Rahaman*, die für das Netzwerk CAMPE (Campaign for Popular Education, Bangladesh) tätig sind und einen Überblick über Fakten, Erreichtes und Herausforderungen im südasiatischen Kontext berichten.

Die Bilder in dieser Ausgabe wurden von Kindern aus Süddeutschland in einem informellen Malwettbewerb zum Thema Schule für alle gestaltet und ermöglichen einen bodengeerdeten Blick auf das Thema.

Darüber hinaus wird auch diese Ausgabe der ZEP durch einen Bericht zum deutschen Launch des GMR im April 2015 in Bonn, Rezensionen und Informationen des Globalen Lernens und der internationalen Bildungsforschung bereichert.

Neue Erkenntnisse und Anregungen für eine Weiterbeschäftigung mit dem Thema wünschen

*Asit Datta, Gregor Lang-Wojtasik
und Sarah Lange
Hannover, Weingarten, Bamberg, Mai 2015*

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Education for All Realities, Achievements and Challenges The Story of Bangladesh

Abstract

Bangladesh has made significant improvement in education covering the six EFA goals. Yet, challenges in education are also in the race. This paper attempts to highlight the successes and challenges in education of Bangladesh. It also conveys a sort of way forward for further realization of educational progresses as well as a broader range of post-2015 education goals. Education for All (EFA) adopted in Dakar World Education Forum 2000 is approaching its deadline in September 2015. Attention has been given worldwide to think further for achieving EFA targeting 2030. Will countries like Bangladesh be in a position to achieve the new targets with appropriate strategies, focused priorities and timelines, adequate resourcing and strong political commitment?

Keywords: *Education for All, Post-2015 Education Goals, Primary Education, Adult Literacy, Quality Education, Enrollment, Technical and Vocational Education, Early Childhood*

Zusammenfassung

Bangladesh hat beachtliche Fortschritte gemacht, um die sechs EFA-Ziele zu erreichen. Gleichwohl bleiben viele Fragen offen. Der Aufsatz beabsichtigt, einerseits die Erfolge zu beschreiben, andererseits auch die Defizite aufzuzeigen. Ferner wird beschrieben, welche Aufgaben in Zukunft bewältigt und welche Bildungsziele nach 2015 angestrebt werden sollen. Bildung für alle (EFA) – wie sie in Dakar auf dem Weltbildungsforum in 2000 verabschiedet wurde – nähert sich der Deadline im September 2015. Weltweit wird das Augenmerk auf Überlegungen gerichtet, wie weiter mit Blick auf die Erreichung der EFA-Ziele bis 2030 gedacht wird. Werden Länder wie Bangladesch in der Lage sein, die neuen Ziele mit geeigneten Strategien, mit fokussierten Prioritäten und Zeitperspektiven, mit angemessener Mittelausstattung und starkem politischen Engagement, zu erreichen?

Schlüsselworte: *Bildung für alle, post-2015 Bildungsziele, Grundbildung, Alphabetisierung, Bildungsqualität, Einschulung, technische und berufliche Bildung, Frühkindliche Bildung*

Introduction

Bangladesh enters the fifth decade of its independence with a huge population (158,13 million). The education system in Bangladesh is a large one comprising some 150,000 institutions, 40 million students and more than one million teachers. Primary and second-

ary level institutions naturally form the bulk of the system with approximately 19 million students in primary education and twelve million at the secondary level (including government recognized madrasahs) (cf. MoPME 2015, p. 1). Basic education development in the country is guided by Compulsory Primary Education Act 1990, EFA National Plan of Action (NPA) I and II, National Non-Formal Education Policy 2006, National Education Policy 2010, National Skills Development Policy 2011, The Sixth Five Year Plan (2011–2015) including Vision 2021/Perspective Plan 2011–21. Various initiatives in basic education like Primary Education Development Program (PEDP) 1 and PEDP 2 were implemented and PEDP 3 has been under implementation to fulfill the relevant EFA Goals and NPA II objectives (cf. BANBEIS 2012).

The Dakar Framework for Action with six main goals put forward twelve major strategies towards achieving Education for All (EFA) by 2015 based on the experience of the previous decade and the changing global context. The strategies included international development targets for education to which national governments and the international community were committed. Fifteen years have gone by since the adoption of the Dakar Declaration and a lot of positive changes have happened around the world. Bangladesh attempted to achieve all six commitments, in line with the constitutional obligation and the commitments made in international forums, putting its utmost effort to fulfill the targets set for EFA 2015. As a result, Bangladesh has achieved commendable successes in expanding education opportunities including increased enrollment, reduction of gender parity and drop out with a focus on poverty alleviation. Even though Bangladesh has taken considerable steps towards education for all, many challenges remain to be addressed. Better service provision especially in education is also key to Bangladesh's continuing ability to meet the challenges. The education system will have to play its vital role in this envisioned future.

The Experiences and Lessons

At the end line of the EFA declaration, it is high time to take stock of progress that has been made so far and challenges that are still being faced by governments, communities, teachers, learners and the general public. This exercise is expected to focus on the realities, achievements and challenges of education in Bangladesh, which has 'achieved a lot but still has to go a long way' for fulfilling its vision of a literate knowledge-based society and middle income country.

EFA Goal 1: Early Childhood Care and Education

Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children (UNESCO 2000).

The EFA Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO 2012a) identified three key dimensions of early childhood development that include child health, nutrition and education (Ibid., p. 14). Following the global Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) guidelines, the nature and the scope of ECCE were defined in the context of Bangladesh. National Children Policy 2011 considered any individual below 18 years of age as a child (cf. MOWCA 2011, p. 3). National Comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Policy 2013 has included the right of an individual in relation to survival, safety, care, growth & development and access to education since conception (the embryonic stage) to eight years of age (covering the period of a child's transition into school education).

Over the last few years, Bangladesh has made significant progress in early childhood education. "Pre-Primary Education Operational Framework" approved by the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) in 2008 for effective implementation of one year pre-primary education for all children of five to six years of age. The database of the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) reflected that 2,002,624 children were enrolled at pre-primary classes in 2012, 3,141,104 in 2013 and 3,088,460 in 2014 (cf. DPE 2014, p. 12). Among the children enrolled in 2014, 1,581,605 were boys and 1,506,855 were girls. The achievement in enrolment at the pre-primary level is in line with the EFA target of achieving pre-school participation by 55 % of the target group by the year 2015 (cf. CAMPE 2014, p. 9). In addition to policy development and expansion of services, the development and introduction of national pre-primary curriculum contributed to unified service delivery to all children. The Early Learning Development Standard (ELDS) also has been an initiative to set and apply benchmarks for quality improvement in ECD services.

NGOs are another contributing factor in Bangladesh education sector. Early childhood education for the underprivileged and disadvantaged children is given through community based learning centers of the government and some NGOs. Government is also running mosque and temple based early childhood education for three to five year age group children. Ministry of Religious Affairs (2010) claimed that in a two year course they provided pre-primary education to 161,220 children through 2,687 centers. In addition, the Ministry also introduced and managed 24,000 mosque-based early learning centers for four to five year old children serving some 700,000 children of that age each year. There is a limited number of government supported day care centers, which are available for working mothers. Several NGOs are also running day care centers for slum dwellers, coastal belt people and garment-industry workers. Besides these, several NGOs and corporate bodies are also providing day care center facilities for their employees. Moreover, private commercially run day care centers are also available. However, the number in relation to demand appears to be very inadequate and there is no update data available on day care centers (cf. CAMPE 2014).

EFA Goal 2: Universal Primary Education

Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have

access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality (UNESCO 2000).

Five year primary education under Compulsory Primary Education Act (1990) is being provided to more than 19.5 million learners (50.7 % girls) in Bangladesh through 108,537 institutions by 482,884 teachers (57.8 % female) (cf. DPE 2014, p. 13). Bangladesh has achieved significant success in providing universal access to free and compulsory primary education. The gross enrolment rate was 108.4 % (112.3 % girls) and net enrolment rate was 97.7 (98.8 % girls) in 2013 (cf. MoPME 2014). The number and proportion of out-of-school children reduced significantly over the past decades. The dropout rate has been reduced from 47.2 % in 2005 to 20.9 % (girls 17.5 %) in 2013 (cf. MoPME 2014). The PEDP 3 as flagship (sub-sector program) for ensuring primary education in Bangladesh has been instrumental in bringing positive changes. National Education Policy 2010 of Bangladesh considered eight years of primary education (excluding pre-primary) as basic education although the current practice is five years. Along with government primary school, NGOs also play a contributing role in primary education. They operate mainly in areas not served either by the government or private schools, essentially to meet the educational needs of vulnerable groups in the society. They usually follow an informal approach to suit the special needs of children from these vulnerable groups. But nowadays, some NGO schools are operating into places where there are both private and government schools.

EFA Goal 3: Skills for Youth and Adults

Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programme (UNESCO 2000).

The learning needs for all young people and adults refer to the acquirement of relevant and recognized functional literacy and numeracy skills that allow them to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute using printed and written materials in their diverse contexts. Although increasing over the years, participation in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and skills education in Bangladesh is still significantly low. According to the Education Watch 2011–12 study, only 1.1 % of secondary level students in Bangladesh are enrolled in the TVET programs. The proportion increases at the higher secondary level and reaches about 4.7 %. Bangladesh aims to increase female enrolment in technical and vocational education by 60 % by 2020. But girls currently accounted for only 21 % of technical and vocational enrolment, compared with 51 % of general secondary enrolment (cf. CAMPE 2014). There are Non-Governmental Schools and Non-Formal Education Centers. However, all NFE graduates do not continue on to secondary school. They cater mainly to the drop-outs of the government and non-government primary schools.

The positive factors contributing to the achievements include: (i) boost in primary and junior secondary education created demand for youth education and skills development; (ii) policies and plans to take care of the demand through increasing capacity of existing educational institutions and establishing new institutions; (iii) girls' stipend programs at secondary level that included a tuition waiver and a conditional cash transfer to rural girls meeting attendance and performance criteria; (iv) government and private initiators (both non-profit and for profit)

coming forward to establish new educational institutions such as higher secondary schools and colleges and universities; and (v) improvement of policy environment through formulation and/or enactment of the Private Universities Act 2010, the National Education Policy 2010 and the National Skills Development Policy 2011 as well as the formation of the National Skills Development Council and a non-formal education policy framework, among others. Until recently, meeting the learning needs of youths and adults was one of the neglected goals and the lingering effects persist. There is a vicious cycle of incomplete education, poor skills and low income in Bangladesh and the country has been trying to come out of it.

EFA Goal 4: Adult Literacy

Achieving a 50 % improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults (UNESCO 2000).

All adults have a right to basic education, beginning with literacy, which allows them to engage actively in transforming themselves, their community and the nation in which they live. There are still millions of people in Bangladesh, who cannot read or write. Statistics in Bangladesh show that about half (48.7 %) of the adults (15+ aged people) are illiterate (cf. BBS 2013) and a higher number of them are female, particularly in rural areas. Many of the neo-literates acquire only rudimentary skills, not functionally useful and not sustainable, unless there are opportunities to enhancement and practice of their skills. Yet, the education of adults remains neglected, always at the periphery of national education system and budget.

There has been acceleration in the achievement of adult literacy in Bangladesh in the decade since 1990. From 37.2 % in 1990, the rate changed to 52.8 % in 2000. Similarly, female literacy changed from 25.8 % to 43.2 % in the same period. And rural literacy rate reached 48.7 % from 30.1 % during the same time. Then it (15–45y) was 51.3 % at national level, while the rural literacy rate was 47.9 % and urban 64.3 % in 2011 (cf. BBS 2013). This trend in the scenario of adult literacy has corroborated by studies, which applied simple tests for assessing skills, rather than relying on self-reporting which is often the practice in literacy assessment (cf. CAMPE 2014).

Key contributing factors in improving the adult literacy outcome include: (i) continued expansion of primary and secondary education, which accelerated literacy improvement in the country; (ii) adoption of the non-formal education policy, which provided a framework for literacy and NFE programs; (iii) a number of literacy and non-formal programs initiated by the government and NGOs with special emphasis on women and adolescent girls. The Second National Plan of Action for EFA (2003–15) had made provision for adult education programs prioritizing younger age groups for literacy and continuing education. Projects on post-literacy and continuing education have been under implementation by the Bureau of Non-formal Education, targeting some three million adults.

EFA Goal 5: Gender and Equity in Education

Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality (UNESCO 2000).

Bangladesh achieved full gender parity in primary and secondary levels of education. The net enrolment rate in primary education for both genders is now 97.3 % in 2013 – 96.2 % for boys and 98.4 % for girls (DPE 2014). In secondary education, the net enrolment rate is 49.72 % – 54.44 % for girls and 45.25 % for boys (cf. BANBEIS 2013) in 2012. Secondary education enrolment in Bangladesh has more than tripled and the number of institutions has more than doubled since 1980. The growth of girls' enrolment, spurred by social mobilization (often initiated by NGOs) and incentives, offered by the government such as stipends and tuition waivers for rural girls, has been spectacular. Girls now outnumbered boys in secondary schools. The ratio of girls to boys in primary education was 103:100 and for secondary education it was 117:100. Interestingly, from 2009 onwards, more girls than boys were attending schools at the primary and secondary levels. Data show that the percentage of girls' progression to secondary schools is 95 %, while the rate is only 84 % in case of boys. The net attendance rates at the secondary level remain unacceptably low at 53 % for girls and 46 % for boys (cf. CAMPE 2014). However, this is not the end of the story, in contrast to advances in initial enrolment, girls lagged behind boys in reaching class ten (final class in secondary education) and in passing the public examination. Boys were ahead of girls in completing the cycle and passing secondary examination although the gap has been narrowed down during the past decade.

EFA Goal 6: Quality of Education

Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skill (UNESCO 2000).

Quality is at the heart of education and what takes place in classrooms and other learning environments is fundamentally important to the future well-being of children, young people and adults. Taking the cue from the Dakar Framework for Action, Bangladesh has formulated the concept of quality in education in terms of student quality, teacher quality, sound classroom and learning environment, quality curriculum, textbooks and teaching learning materials, resource allocation, sound physical environment in schools and good governance (as reflected particularly in PEDP 2 and PEDP 3) (cf. MoPME 2015, p. 45).

The government of Bangladesh has taken up pilot projects, namely, Each Child Learns and Primary School Quality Improvement (PSQA) to enhance quality of primary education and projects like Teachers Quality Improvement at the secondary level, but the results of these initiatives are yet to be seen. The deficits in learning achievement in respect of basic skills and competencies in literacy and numeracy have been brought out by several Education Watch assessments as well as the assessments carried out by the Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education themselves. These evidences showing low achievement in language and math skills of students of grades three, five and eight in terms of specified competencies in the curriculum are inconsistent with high pass rates in public examinations at the end of grade five and grade eight in recent years (CAMPE 2014). By the end of primary education cycle (i.e., at the end of the grade), only 25 % of students achieved Bangla, and 33 % achieved Mathematics competencies. The rest of the students finish primary education with knowledge and competencies that are short of expectations specified in the Bangla and

Math's curriculum. In grade 3, two third (67 %) students achieved Bangla competencies and around 50 % are in Mathematics. This finding tells that a significant number of students are falling short of achieving nationality set relevant competencies at the early grades of primary education (cf. DPE 2014).

Challenges of Achieving Education for All

Bangladesh has demonstrated its commitment to achieve EFA goals and visible progress has been made in this regard. A good number of the vulnerable and disadvantaged children i.e. children with disabilities, street children, children from hard to reach areas and ethnic communities including children with extreme poor socio-economic condition are still out of the education system. Some of them got the opportunities, but could not continue. The EFA 2015 National Review, that the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education in Bangladesh prepared, indicated inadequate budget allocation in education as one of the reasons behind it.

Though major achievement in primary education is almost universal enrolment, it still has a long way to go in dealing with other concerns. The DPE report has shown that the overall repetition rate is 6.4 % and survival rate to grade five is 81.0%. Efficiency remains at the level of 80.0 % and the average number of years' input per graduate is 6.2. In the baseline survey (2005), the overall repetition rate was 10.5 %, the rate of survival to grade five was only 53.9 % and efficiency was 60.6 % (cf. DPE 2014). The fact that almost a quarter of the children, who began their journey to the primary school, could not reach their destination is clearly a major hurdle to achieving the Goal two (MDGs) of universal primary completion (cf. MoPME 2015, p. 2).

Bangladesh aspires to be a middle income country within the next decade, which makes it an imperative that the vicious cycle or chain of deficiencies in education, skills, productivity, employment and income opportunities is broken. But major challenges remains in respect of skills and capacities for rewarding life and livelihood including improving the quality of primary and secondary education. The Bureau of Non-Formal Education under the Ministries of Primary and Mass Education has to go a long way to be an effective agency for delivering non-formal education and promoting inclusive functional and sustainable literacy.

Progress in the literacy rates for youth and adults in the last few years have been very slow. The agenda for adult literacy has not been prioritized by NGOs. Absence of flexible delivery mechanism, lack of initiatives in developing structures, validation and accreditation of all forms of learning by establishing equivalency frameworks, inadequate training and capacity building measures towards professionalization of teachers and facilitators and absence of long term, sustainable planning of Non-formal, lifelong learning programs and absence of permanent physical set up at the local level are major reasons behind it (cf. CAMPE 2014).

Though girls are doing better than the boys in primary level, the frustration is that the percentage of girls completed primary education is not equally seen in the secondary level education. Poverty, early marriage, unawareness of guardians, misapprehension of religion, lack of communication, eve teasing and violence against girls are among the reasons of their lagging behind. Different studies confirm the prevailing views about the main reasons for dropout as being poverty and poverty-related factors. There is also unanimity about higher dropout among girl students in rural areas, confirming prevailing views about early marriage of

girls, household role of girls in life and lack of recognition of the need for their education. Their participation in TVET and tertiary education is also unsatisfactory and below the MDG target of full equality. Gender-based discrimination remains as one of the most difficult hurdles to realizing the right to education. Inclusive, gender responsive framework, second chance and non-formal education have to be recognized and implemented dynamically to end various forms of disparity and inequity in education. The challenge is to turn education into a rights-based tool for building a just and equitable society for breaking the cycle of trans-generational disadvantages.

Moreover, with the concentration of focus on increasing quantity by decision makers and practitioners, many aspects of quality remain neglected. Evidence over the recent decades has shown that efforts to expand enrolment should be accompanied by attempts to enhance educational quality, if children are to be attracted to school, kept there and enabled to achieve meaningful learning outcomes. Attention should be ensured for professional development of Primary School teachers and School Managing Committee (SMC) members to improve their skills and capabilities as key elements of quality improvement.

Way Forward

Keeping in view the realities, an effective plan should be developed focusing on the right to quality education, universal, equitable and non-discriminatory education, education from early childhood to adulthood and adequate finance. Necessary initiatives should be ensured in realizing the plan including transparent governance in education and linking the post 2015 framework for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In the following the current draft of SDGs are referred to the specific situation of Bangladesh:

The plan may include the following proposed targets by 2030 for Bangladesh –

1. all girls and boys to be ready for primary school through participation in quality early childhood care and education, including at least one year of free and compulsory pre-primary education, with particular attention to gender equality and to the most marginalized;
2. all girls and boys to complete free and compulsory quality basic education of at least twelve years and achieve relevant learning outcomes;
3. all youth and at least 80 % of adults to reach an acceptable level of proficiency in literacy and numeracy sufficient to fully participate in society, with particular attention to girls and women and the most marginalized;
4. all youth and at least 80 % of adults to have the basic knowledge and skills for decent work and life and progressively higher specified proportions participate in technical and vocational, upper secondary and tertiary education and training, with particular attention given to gender equality and the most marginalized;
5. all learners to acquire knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to build sustainable and peaceful societies, especially through promoting goals of global and local citizenship and emphasizing education and learning for sustainable development;
6. Governments to ensure that all learners are taught by qualified, professionally-trained, motivated and well-supported teachers and;

7. Bangladesh government to allocate at least 6 % of GDP or at least 20 % of public expenditure to education, prioritizing groups most in need; (adapted from UNESCO 2015, p. 285).

Conclusion

We have a great opportunity to ensure quality education for all by 2030, there have been signs of this over the last 15 years. But we will not be able to do this, if we neglect other imperatives of the sustainable development agenda today – the desire to develop human capacity and achieve prosperity through education in all countries.

We recognize that the world has changed significantly by 2015, since the Dakar Declaration for EFA and the Millennium Declaration. We should be aware how much it will change by 2030. People will be more connected to each other, using modern communication technologies, but perhaps also more uncertain about what the future may bring. Thus, there should be healthy preparation to handle the next 15 years for achieving a bold vision to ensure quality education for all which is focusing on sustainability.

We dream of a literate, knowledge based society which is economically viable, socially just, culturally vibrant and environmentally sustainable. But we have the challenges of tackling the socio-cultural and economic constraints as well as systematic hurdles and other issues at the same time, while creating responsibility among the stakeholders – governments at all levels, international organizations, civil society, academics and people from all walks of life.

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