



19 March 2012

Dear Mr. Brown

We are writing to you as a network of 23 international NGOs¹ supporting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in development efforts in over 100 countries. IDDC promotes **inclusive development**, i.e. respecting the full human rights of every person, acknowledging diversity, eradicating poverty and ensuring that all people are fully included and can actively participate in development processes.

We read with great interest your recent report, *Delivering on the promise, building opportunity: the case for a Global Fund for Education*. This report powerfully communicates the ethical and practical arguments for huge increases in international funding to basic education. In addition, we strongly support the report's call for a focus on both access and quality when investing in education.

Nevertheless we have two major concerns that we would like to raise with you.

Firstly, assuming that the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) reform process is successfully completed, we are unclear of the added value of transforming the GPE into a Global Fund for Education, as you propose. To be clear, we agree that the GPE has at times acted 'too slowly and with insufficient flexibility'. We also share your view that the current nature of the World Bank's role in the GPE 'hinder[s] the development of a more effective response'.

¹ A full list of IDDC members may be found at the end of this letter.

Yet the GPE reform process is already making headway on addressing these issues. On the first point, for example, the lags between grant allocation and disbursement have been reduced. While there is scope for further improvements, the same is true for similar multilateral initiatives. On the second point, the GPE's governance structure is now more broad-based, and the World Bank publicly stated its support for a more independent Partnership towards the end of last year. As you note, the GPE has enjoyed a great deal of success to date. It is our view that all stakeholders should apply pressure and provide support to the GPE, so that it builds on its achievements and becomes a model for aid effectiveness.

One area of weakness in the GPE's work has been around marginalisation beyond the (extremely important) issue of gender. We are very disappointed that the GPE has stopped using the *Equity and Inclusion in Education* guide it developed in conjunction with the United Nations without creating a replacement. We believe that moving beyond a narrow approach to tackling exclusion – including supporting those that are vulnerable to multiple forms of discrimination – is something that all donors must urgently address.

This brings us to our second issue of concern. Neither *Delivering on the promise, building opportunity*, nor your previous report, *Education for All: beating poverty, unlocking prosperity*, mentions disability. However, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities commits State Parties to ensure that '[p]ersons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live'.² In 2010, the UN General Assembly reaffirmed the importance of engaging with disability by '...developing and operationalizing an inclusive education and defining targeted, proactive strategies, policies and programmes, including cross-sectoral approaches, to promote accessibility and inclusion'.³

Indeed, the most recent data suggests that disability is a major issue that must be addressed in order to meet Millennium Development Goal 2 and the Education for All goals. For example, according to the *World Report on Disability*⁴ the gap in primary school attendance rates between disabled and non-disabled children ranges from 10% in India to 60% in Indonesia. The *EFA Global*

² Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 24(2)(b).

³ *Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals*, Paragraph 71(d).

⁴ *World Report on Disability*: http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/en/index.html.

*Monitoring Report 2010*⁵ states that having a disabled parent who is poor increases the likelihood of seven to sixteen year olds never having been to school by 25% in the Philippines and 13% in Uganda.

In light of the above, we would like your support to ensure that:

- 1) The GPE reform process is successful.
- 2) The importance of removing barriers for children with disability to mainstream education, and of taking a more holistic approach to equity and inclusion issues more broadly, is promoted across the global education sector.
- 3) Pressure is placed on donors, including the GPE and World Bank, to create appropriate targets for ensuring that disabled children access quality basic education, and to dedicate appropriate funding to meet these targets.

We appreciate your efforts to transform the lives of children denied their right to education. We look forward to hearing your response to the points raised in this letter, and would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss these issues in greater detail.

Yours sincerely



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⁵ *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010*: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/efareport/reports/2010-marginalization/>.

Full members:

ADD International

Associazione Italiana Amici di Raoul Follereau (AIFO)

The Atlas Alliance

CBM

Disabled Peoples Organisations - Denmark (DPOD)

Dutch Coalition on Disability and Development (DCDD)

EU-CORD

Finnish Disabled People's International Development Association (FIDIDA)

Handicap International Federation

International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations (ILEP)

Leonard Cheshire Disability

The Leprosy Mission International

LIGHT FOR THE WORLD

LIGHT FOR THE WORLD The Netherlands

Liliane Fonds

Norwegian Association of Disabled (NAD)

Organismo di Volontariato per la Cooperazione Internazionale la Nostra Famiglia (OVCI)

Platform Disability and Development Cooperation (PHOS)

Save the Children UK

Sightsavers

Swedish Organisations of Persons with disabilities International Development Cooperation Association (Shia)

World Vision UK

Associate member:

International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (IF)