

The Sprint to the 2015 Development Goals: challenges of Quality Learning & Financing Debated at the Learning For All Ministerial Summit in Washington DC April 16-19th, 2013.

Washington DC is where things were happening last week April 15-19, 2013 - the world had descended from the UN Secretary General's handpicked global youth leaders to civil society activists, coalition leaders, experts, finance and education ministers, UN Secretary General, his Global Education Envoy Gordon Brown, government representatives, donors, think tanks and many more groups to lend a positive voice to the challenges of education, learning and financing. Whilst the sunset phase up to 2015 or 1000 days was under scrutiny the post 2015 development goals were also being debated and crafted learning lessons from Jomtien 1990 Dakar 2000 and MDGs 2000.

The global community has 1,000 days left to meet the Millennium Development Goals. Success in getting all girls and boys in school and learning by 2015 will depend on driving support to the countries and communities that are the most left behind. Washington DC hosted the International Monetary Fund-World Bank Spring Meetings providing an important window of opportunity to highlight the concrete actions needed for reaching the marginalized and accelerating progress in universal education and learning. The United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education, Gordon Brown, had called the summit to bring together the UN Secretary General, President of the World Bank, heads of UN agencies and key countries with the aim of accelerating progress in delivering quality education for all children.

Unless the world acts in the next 1,000 days – the deadline of the Millennium Development Goals – tens of millions of children will remain on the margins of government priorities around the world, and girls will suffer most.

The Ministers of education and finance were present from those 8 countries where nearly half of the world's out-of-school children live; - Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, India, Nigeria, Yemen, and South Sudan – and representatives from all of them will be attending. Many provided convincing arguments for firm resolutions on enhanced and innovative financing for education to meet the targets for MDGs.

Several organizations including the Brookings Institute's Centre for Universal Education (CUE) organized panels and brown bag sessions on important matters pertaining to financing and quality of education. UNICEF and Plan International hosted another session with experts on challenges of gender equality to articulate a Call for Action, informing the UN Secretary General's Global Special Envoy on Education Rt. Hon. Gordon Brown in the run up to the post 2015 development agenda.

Baela Raza Jamil from ITA and as representative of the Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE) and the South Asia Forum for Education Development (SAFED) participated in several fora, as a

speaker, panelist, expert in the above sessions at the Brookings Institute and also with Rt. Hon. Gordon Brown UN Special Envoy for Global Education on roundtables for a call to action for Education For All and beyond.

The panel on April 17th was moderated by Rebecca Winthrop, Director, Center for Universal Education at Brookings and the panelists included: Baela Raza Jamil, Director of Programs-ITA/ Center of Education and Consciousness, Pakistan, Albert Motivans, Head of Education Indicators and Data Analysis Section, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Sumaya Saluja, Program Coordinator, YP Foundation India, and Kevin Watkins, Nonresident Senior Fellow, Center for Universal Education at Brookings.

Baela presented the evidence from the citizen led initiative Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) Pakistan as a major South-South initiative across 7 countries of South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa highlighting the centrality of learning and quality as the foremost agenda for education. Its capability of giving disaggregated data on gender, geography, wealth and learning is powerful to support actions for addressing the current gaps in quality, access and equity. The household based approach is inclusive to tap all children irrespective of which schooling system they participate or for that matter do not participate. This identifies for policy makers and doer the most critical groups that can be reached for action. The program is a public service by the citizens and for the citizens used powerfully today by the government, planners and politicians alike.

Gordon Brown hosted a three hour program on Friday 19th April at the New York University Global Academic Center in Washington DC, including a round table on Slavery with civil society titled **FROM EXPLOITATION TO EDUCATION- ENDING CHILD SLAVERY and a Call to Action session**. During the latter h Baela Raza Jamil handed over the one million signatures of out of school children from Pakistan to both the special envoy and to Ambassador Sherry Rehman. The one million signatures handed over were actually the second million collected in a short span of 13 months (March 2012 to April 2013) by members of youth groups and civil society organizations and schools across Pakistan. ITA has been able to do this work due to wide ranging partnerships with the Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE); Child Rights Movement (CRM), working closely with the National Commission for Human Development (NCHD), media groups and teacher unions across the country. These groups have helped mobilize unprecedented support for the advocacy work. During Gordon Brown's visit to Pakistan civil society activists presented the first million signatures on November 9th 2012 which were subsequently presented by him to the President on Malala Day November 10th 2012. Three days later the first right to education bill was passed by the National Assembly and ratified in December 2012 by the President for Islamabad Capital Territory(ICT). Since then two more bills/ordinance on RTE have been passed in Sindh and Balochistan .

Baela Raza Jamil as a representative of civil society on education in Pakistan and the South Asian region also gave interviews to radio station America Abroad Radio and attended the session on Learning

Metrics Taskforce (LMTF) to take forward the implementation phase briskly in Pakistan. The Federal Minister for Finance Dr. Shahid Amjad appreciated the efforts of civil society laong with the Ambassador Sherry Rehman and the former invited Ms. Jamil to present the update on the RTE campaign and the legislsation for discussions on the way forward

ITA will be following up on this activity with its partners a 10 day program on Global Action Week for EFA in Pakistan to build on this critical momentum with children/students, schools, teacher unions and politicians pushing the education agenda as a high priority area during the elections -making education for the first time central to the political campaigns. - taleem kay badlay vote lo ..