



The Commonwealth
Education Hub

Financing Quality Education

Discussion Summary

This e-Discussion was conducted by The Commonwealth Education Hub between
11 August and 11 September 2015.

Financing Quality Education

Introduction

The adoption of the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#) on Financing for Development in July 2015 set a direction for the international community to follow. In preparation for further discussion on how to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda at the [UN General Assembly in September](#), the [Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting](#) in November and the [21st Conference of the Parties](#) in December, the Commonwealth Education Hub hosted an e-discussion on financing for Education in August 2015.

The objective of the four-week e-discussion was to engage a wide range of education stakeholders from various professional and geographical backgrounds to reflect critically on the outcomes from Addis and the implications for Education financing going forward.

The discussion reached out to about 630 participants, comprising representatives from Education Ministries, development organisations, the private sector and academia from across the 53 countries of the Commonwealth. Responses were received from 16 countries spanning all five Commonwealth regions (Africa, Asia, Caribbean and Americas, Europe and Pacific) and beyond.

Contents

- Discussion Summary*2
- Commonwealth & Other Case Studies*4
- Related Resources*6
- Discussion Question*9
- Full Responses*..... 11

About The Education Hub



Conceived as a ‘network of networks,’ The Commonwealth Education Hub is intended to promote knowledge sharing and collaboration among policy-makers and practitioners across the Commonwealth. Through its virtual ‘one-stop-shop,’ the Hub offers an array of online services designed to share the knowledge and experience of Commonwealth education professionals, as well as to strengthen the collaborative context within which approaches, solutions, and best practices can be shared and adopted at scale across the Commonwealth, and perhaps even more widely.

www.thecommonwealth-educationhub.net



Discussion Summary

Key points & recommendations

Discussion emphasised that sustainable quality education is not simply a function of funding inputs, but also maximising existing resources. The funding gap was acknowledged as significant, with existing mechanisms deemed inadequate - addressing national budget allocations, domestic taxation and mobilising non-traditional funding sources were identified as central to meeting international targets of 4-6% of GDP. However, participants argued that more effective and innovative use of existing funds was equally important. Recommendations included:

- National government financing for education should be the starting point. **Mobilising domestic resources through taxation is vital**, focussing on both the efficiency of taxation systems and the allocation of revenues received.
- Domestic resources alone will not be sufficient to bridge the funding gap. Joint mobilisation of additional funding sources including **private sector input, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and innovative financing mechanisms will be essential**.
- **Effective utilisation and prioritisation of existing resources**, targeted at realistic goals - for example basic education and teacher training - is essential.
- The use of funds can be maximised by increased use of technology and **Open Educational Resources (OER)** in particular.

Issues discussed

Existing funding gap

Discussion noted that the expansion of access to education has stretched resources and affected quality. 59 million children remain out of school and an estimated US\$39 billion per year is needed for lower and upper secondary in order to achieve the SDG4 on education by 2030. Existing finance mechanisms were not thought adequate to bridge the gap.

Start with domestic financing

Participants identified domestic financing as the most critical source of financing for education. State responsibility to provide adequate resources for education as a human rights obligation was highlighted. It was thought vital to mobilise domestic resources through taxation if education budgets are to grow sufficiently in order to meet international targets of 4-6% of GDP or 15-20% of national budgets. More efficient tax collection, smarter analysis of potential revenue sources and consolidation of budget inputs to education across ministries were recommended. Special taxation schemes such as the 2% Education Cess on [central taxes in India](#) were also referenced. Changing existing attitudes to taxation was also seen as important, with a [re-emphasis on mutual responsibility](#) and taxes as a contribution rather than a deduction.

Joint mobilisation of resources

Discussion acknowledged that domestic financing alone will not be sufficient. Participants argued that international cooperative initiatives, development partners, non-governmental organisations, and the private sector must play a collective role in mobilizing resources for a new education agenda. The private sector was seen to have an important role to play, particularly in supporting secondary and [tertiary education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training \(TVET\)](#). Low cost private schools and public-private partnerships (PPPs) were advocated by many as a necessary means of delivering affordable education. But there remained voices of caution questioning the sustainability and equity of PPPs and calling for assurances that private sector inputs are adequately quality assured and do not divert scarce resources away from core public provision or reinforce inequities. The growing potential of philanthropy and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to provide effective support for education was repeatedly highlighted, with members citing government initiatives to mandate [CSR input in India](#) and international efforts like the [UN Global Compact](#) as relevant examples. The role of parental funding was touched upon with calls for [better statistics](#) on the scale and impact of household expenditures - including tracking [shadow systems of tutoring](#) - to inform future directions.

Non-traditional & innovative funding sources

The discussion included calls to harness innovative and non-traditional financing mechanisms that will work at scale. Members argued that traditional funding methods are not sustainable. Suggestions for alternative mechanisms included: [private sector input to global funding platforms](#); [open licensing](#) of government funded educational materials; [blended finance structures and innovative implementing partnerships](#); international agreement on allocating a [proportion of interest repayments to fund education](#); [education levies on corporations](#); and the provision of [interest free loans for students](#).

Prioritising resources

Discussion repeatedly highlighted that quality education is not just a function of funding inputs, but also of prioritisation of existing resources. Whilst a minimum funding level is required, beyond that quality is driven as much by effective management of supply side factors (curriculum, textbooks, teacher quality, parent input, etc.) as available resources. Participants called for a clear definition of what is meant by education for all and the setting of realistic and achievable goals. Recommendations were to focus in on [basic education](#) and [teacher training](#) as priority areas in order to improve quality. A broader focus on people, motivation, teacher enthusiasm and school ethos was also recommended in a number of posts.

Effective management & governance

Effective management of public finance resources to ensure funds reach intended recipients was emphasised as a priority. The role of [Sector Wide Approaches \(SWAPs\)](#), [pool financing and sector](#)

[budget support](#) in mobilizing and pooling resources to improve management and outcomes was cited. The [use of technology to improve education management systems](#) and reduce costs was also raised.

Maximising the use of existing funding through OER

The potential for OER to reduce costs and increase access to quality resources was highlighted in a number of posts. Participants argued that investment in OER [can offset the cost of purchasing materials](#), a major component of the high cost of education delivery. Initiatives such as [MITs release of open license teaching materials](#) and the [Open Education Universities](#) were cited as valuable case studies. The need to for [governments to implement open policies](#) - releasing education materials under an open license - was seen as the key lever for reducing cost whilst widening access.

Commonwealth & other Case Studies

Education Cess on Income Tax, India (from [Kishore Singh](#), UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Paris, France)

Mobilizing additional resources through special taxation schemes can be crucial in reinforcing budgetary provisions. Legal instruments can enable such mobilization. For example, a 2 per cent Education Cess on all central taxes levied in India resulted in expanding significantly funding for the elementary education. [\[Read More\]](#)

Companies Act 2013, Corporate Social Responsibility, India (from [Swati Sharma](#), Nishkam Foundation, Ajmer, India)

For example, in India the provision regarding CSR in the New Companies Act 2013 has brought within its ambit all the companies with at least Rs. 5-crore (about 750,000 USD) net profit or Rs. 1,000-crore (about 150 million USD) turnover or Rs. 500-crore (about 7.5 million USD) net worth, making it mandatory for them to spend 2 per cent of the three years' average net profit on CSR activities. [\[Read More\]](#)

UN Global Compact (from [Swati Sharma](#))

The UN Global Compact works with business to transform our world, aiming to create a sustainable and inclusive global economy that delivers lasting benefits to all people, communities and markets. This is the leading global voluntary initiative for CSR that addresses the issue of business and human rights. [\[Read More\]](#)

MIT Open License Teaching Materials (from [Abel Caine](#), Communication & Information Sector, UNESCO, Paris, France)

The decision by MIT (USA) in 2001 to release a large number of its teaching materials with an effective open license and the subsequent similar release by many ivy-league global universities signalled a key moment in the historical evolution of freely sharing educational knowledge. UNESCO organized a global forum in 2002 that created the term Open Educational Resources to describe this phenomenon. [\[Read More\]](#)

Shadow Tutoring, Korea (from [Mark Bray](#), *University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong*)

In the Republic of Korea expenditures on private tutoring have been estimated as equivalent to about 80% of government expenditures on public education for primary and secondary students. Data are less readily available elsewhere. [\[Read More\]](#)

Open Education Universitas (from [David Porter](#), *Education Support and Innovation, British Columbia Institute of Technology, Burnaby, Canada*)

The Open Education Universitas, a consortium of universities worldwide that proposes to provide higher education courses for free and allow learners to count them towards real qualifications. This is a much different approach than the MOOC-style education providers. Interestingly, the OERu consortium is dominated by institutions from Commonwealth countries such as the UK, New Zealand, India, Australia and Canada. [\[Read More\]](#)

Free Textbook, British Columbia, Canada (from [David Porter](#))

The B.C. Open Textbook Project is funded by the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, and BCcampus is tasked with managing it. A goal of the Project is to provide flexible and affordable access to higher education resources in B.C. by making available openly-licensed textbooks in the highest-enrolled academic subject areas. A second phase was announced in the spring of 2014 to add at least 20 textbooks targeting trades and skills training. [\[Read More\]](#)

Sector Wide Approaches (SWAPs) (from [Wathando Mughandira](#), *Ministry of Education, Republic of Malawi*)

Over the past decade, the education Sector Wide Approaches (SWAPs) have been instrumental in mobilizing and pooling financial resources from various sources to finance country level education sector plans. There's a significant amount of evidence showing that in most of the developing countries where SWAPs were implemented, improvements have been made primarily in achieving access to basic education. [\[Read More\]](#)

Related Resources

Schools and learning in rural India and Pakistan: Who goes where, and how much are they learning? (from [Pauline Rose](#), University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK)

Benjamin Alcott, Pauline Rose; PROSPECTS, September 2015, Volume 45, Issue 3, pp 345-363
<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11125-015-9350-5> (Abstract only)

Article investigates learning crisis through a comparative analysis of rural India and Pakistan and demonstrates that socioeconomic status and gender are important determinants

Financing of Education in Pakistan (from [Pauline Rose](#))

REAL (Research for Equitable Access and Learning), University of Cambridge

<http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/real/researchthemes/finance/educationfinancing/>

Case study on Pakistan which provides an input into strategic papers on financing challenges facing a country with large number of children out of school and very low levels of learning

The Saber-Tooth Curriculum (from [Jim Wynn](#), Imagine Education, Bristol, UK)

Abner J Peddiwell, (1939) McGraw-Hill Professional; Classic edition (1 Sept. 2004)

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/The-Saber-Tooth-Curriculum-Classic-Edition/dp/0071422889> (Abstract only)

Discusses the contradictions and confusion generated by conflicting philosophies of education, outlining the patterns and progression of education itself

From [Kishore Singh](#), UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Paris, France

Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Advanced Unedited Draft)

United Nations

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/7891Transforming%20Our%20World.pdf>
(PDF, 611 KB)

The report emphasizes to enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships

Incheon Declaration: Education 2030: Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all

UNESCO, May 2015 <https://en.unesco.org/world-education-forum-2015/incheon-declaration>

Building on the legacy of Jomtien and Dakar, this Incheon Declaration is an historic commitment to transform lives through a new vision for education

The Oslo Declaration

The Oslo Summit on Education for Development, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 2015

<http://www.osloeducationsummit.no/pop.cfm?FuseAction=Doc&pAction=View&pDocumentId=63448>

Aims at mobilizing political commitment to reach the 58 million children who are denied their right to education, and to improve learning outcomes for those who attend school

Working For The Many - Public services fight inequality

Oxfam Briefing Paper, 3 April 2014

https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/bp182-public-services-fight-inequality-030414-en_1.pdf (PDF, 899 KB)

Discusses why Governments should abolish voucher systems which support private providers at the cost of public education system

Financing for Development Agenda Calls for Strengthening and Scaling-up of the Global Partnership for Education (From [Karen Mundy](#), Global Partnership for Education, Washington DC, USA and [Kishore Singh](#))

Global Partnership on Education, Press Release - July 16, 2015

<http://www.globalpartnership.org/news/financing-development-agenda-calls-strengthening-and-scaling-global-partnership-education>

A strengthened and scaled-up Global Partnership for Education which is a central implementing mechanism to fulfil the ambitious post-2015 sustainable development agenda

Global Partnership for Education - Strategic Plan 2016-2020, (From [Karen Mundy](#))

<http://www.globalpartnership.org/strategic-plan-2016-2020>

Global and national efforts to achieve quality education and learning for all, through inclusive partnership, focus on effective education systems, financing for basic education

Framework for Action Education 2030: Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all (From [Karen Mundy](#))

World Education Forum, 23 April 2015

<https://en.unesco.org/world-education-forum-2015/file/245/download?token=RAk0bEVT>

The draft framework proposes a structure for coordinating global education efforts, as well as governance, monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms

Report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing (from [Kishore Singh](#) and [Swati Sharma](#), Nishkam Foundation, Ajmer, India)

United Nations General Assembly, 15 August 2015

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/69/315&Lang=E

Mentions financing opportunities - blended finance that pool public and private resources and expertise like structured public-private funds and innovative implementing partnerships

United Nations Global Compact (from [Swati Sharma](#))

<https://www.unglobalcompact.org/>

Works with business to transform our world, aiming to create a sustainable and inclusive global economy that delivers lasting benefits to all people, communities and markets.

The Companies Act, 2013 (from [Swati Sharma](#))

Government of India

<http://www.mca.gov.in/Ministry/pdf/CompaniesAct2013.pdf> (PDF, 2.1 MB)

The Act has brought within its ambit all the companies with various degrees of revenue ceiling, making it mandatory to spend at least 2 percent of their profit on CSR activities

Computers 'do not improve' pupil results, says OECD (From Ann Fullick, Science Writer & Education Consultant, UK)

Sean Coughlan, BBC News, Education, September 2015

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-34174796>

Investing heavily in school computers and classroom technology does not improve pupils' performance, says a global study from the OECD

2012 Paris OER Declaration (From [Abel Caine](#), Communication & Information Sector, UNESCO,

Paris, France)

World Open Educational Resources (OER) Congress, UNESCO, Paris, June 20-22, 2012

http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/Events/Paris%20OER%20Declaration_01.pdf (PDF, 78 KB)

This declaration calls on Governments to openly license all publicly funded educational materials, Foster awareness and use of OER and enabling use of ICT

OER universitas (OERu) (from [David Porter](#), Education Support and Innovation, British Columbia Institute of Technology Burnaby, Canada)

<http://oeru.org/>

Coordinated by the OER Foundation, an independent, not-for-profit organisation, the OERu network of institutions offers free online courses for students worldwide

BC Open Textbook Initiative (from [David Porter](#))

BC Campus, Vancouver, Canada

<http://bccampus.ca/open-textbook-project/>

Making higher education more accessible by reducing student cost through the use of openly licensed textbooks with a collection of open textbooks

White Paper on the Post-school System (From [John Arnesen](#), Chartall Business College, Johannesburg, South Africa)

Government of South Africa, 2013

<http://www.dhet.gov.za/SitePages/DocWhitePaper.aspx>

Paper emphasises directing public resources to meeting national priorities and to provide for the masses of young people and adult learners through public institutions

Reflections on the World Education Forum and Financing Education and Skills. New and Old Modalities: New and Old Partners (From [Aleesha Taylor](#), [Open Society Foundations](#), USA. Offline contribution)

norrag News - Network for international policies and cooperation in education and training, (NN52), August 2014

<http://www.norrag.org/en/publications/norrag-news/online-version/reflections-on-the-world-education-forum-and-financing-education-and-skills.html>

Online journal listing articles on different dimensions of education and skills financing focussing on the outcomes of the meetings in Addis, Oslo and Incheon

From the [Facilitation Team](#)

Financing for Development, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffd3/press-release/unga-endorses-addis-agenda.html>

United Nations General Assembly endorsed global action agenda for financing sustainable development, adopted as a major step toward achieving SDGs

Blended Finance: some simple supply and demand analysis

Paddy Carter, 27 July 2015

<http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/ffd3/blog/blended-finance-simple-supply-demand-analysis.html>

A blog discussing various models relating to domestic, multilateral mechanisms and private sector funding for education, a reaction to Addis financing for development meeting

Development Finance Institutions and Infrastructure: A Systematic Review of Evidence for Development Additionality

Stephen Spratt and Lily Ryan Collins, Institute of Development Studies & Engineers Against Poverty
January 2012

<http://www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/2012IDS-PIDGSystematicReviewFinal.pdf> (PDF, 2.2 MB)

Evidence of the impact of DFI support for private participation-in infrastructure (PPI), on economic growth and poverty reduction

European Report on Development 2015 - Combining finance and policies to implement a transformative post-2015 development agenda

European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), May 2015

<http://ecdpm.org/publications/european-report-on-development-2015/>

This report analyses the focus on the role of ODA vis-à-vis increasing domestic tax revenue and encouraging private finance

Innovative Financing for Global Education

Innovative Finance Foundation, Education Support Program, January 2014

<https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/reports/innovative-financing-global-education>

Practical analysis of current state of innovative financing in global education, like solidarity levies and private sector investments through a global education investment bank

Discussion Question

From: Education Hub Facilitator
Sent: 11 August 2015 17:46
To: The Commonwealth Education Hub

Dear Education Hub members,

Following our recent pilot discussions feeding into the 19th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers, we are delighted to launch a new discussion on the Commonwealth Education Hub exploring **how quality education for all can be financed**.

Last month's adoption of the [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#) on Financing for Development has set a direction for the international community to follow. Commonwealth Deputy Secretary-General Maharaj described [its adoption as a "seminal moment"](#), calling for a focus on inclusivity and [non-traditional sources of finance](#).

As Education Hub community members prepare for further discussion of how to implement the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) agenda at the UN General Assembly in September, the [Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting](#) in November and the [21st Conference of the Parties](#) in December, it seems an appropriate moment to reflect critically on the outcomes from Addis and the implications for Education financing going forward.

The Hub will therefore be hosting the following discussion question:

How can quality education for all be financed?

- **What do you see as the main challenges for financing quality education?**
- **What potential solutions would you identify?**

The discussion begins today and will be open for three weeks. We expect the discussion to cover a range of areas including the types of financing mechanisms available, mechanisms suited to lower and middle income countries and the contribution of policy making to implementing financing frameworks. During the course of the discussion, we will facilitate a particular focus on the role of innovative or non-traditional financing sources and the role of the private sector.

The discussion will close on the **1st September**, when we will synthesise your responses and produce a final summary report. The content of the summary report will be posted on the Hub website and will also inform the production of a Commonwealth Secretariat policy brief on financing the SDG agenda.

To input to the discussion simply reply to this email or email edu-hub@groups.thecommonwealth.info

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We look forward to a productive discussion.

With best regards,

The Facilitation Team
The Commonwealth Education Hub

Full Responses

Responses received with thanks from

1. [Allah Bakhsh Malik](#), Govt. of Pakistan, Islamabad, Pakistan
 2. [Jim Wynn](#), Imagine Education, Bristol, UK
 3. [Pauline Rose](#), University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK
 4. [Ann Fullick](#), Science Writer & Education Consultant, UK
 5. [Jim Wynn](#), Imagine Education, Bristol, UK (2nd response)
 6. [Peter Williams](#), Commonwealth Consortium for Education, London, UK
 7. [Ann Fullick](#), Science Writer & Education Consultant, UK (2nd response)
 8. [Karen Mundy](#), Global Partnership for Education, Washington DC, USA
 9. [Elaine Foster-Allen](#), Ministry of Education, Kingston, Jamaica
 10. [Jim Wynn](#), Imagine Education, Bristol, UK (3rd response)
 11. [Stacey Payne-Mascall](#), Ministry of Education, Antigua and Barbuda
 12. [Ayodeji Morakinyo](#), Detemplations, Nigeria
 13. [Sue Dale Tunnicliffe](#), Commonwealth Association for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Educators, UK
 14. [Mark Bray](#), University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
 15. [Douglas Morgan](#), The Jamaica Education Task-Force UK (JET, UK), UK
 16. [Jim Knight](#), TES Global, UK
 17. [Wathando Mughandira](#), Ministry of Education, Republic of Malawi
 18. [Sheryl Wood](#), Bahamas
 19. [Sue Dale Tunnicliffe](#), Commonwealth Association for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Educators, UK (2nd response)
 20. [Lorna Cork](#), The Jamaica Education Task-Force UK (JET, UK), UK
 21. [Kishore Singh](#), UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Paris, France
 22. [Tata Mbinglo](#), Cameroon Pace Setters Association, Yala, Thailand
 23. [Ann Fullick](#), Science Writer & Education Consultant, UK (3rd response)
 24. [Swati Sharma](#), Nishkam Foundation, Ajmer, India
 25. [Pandora Johnson](#), The College of Bahamas, Bahamas
 26. [Abel Caine](#), Communication & Information Sector, UNESCO, Paris, France
 27. [David Porter](#), Education Support and Innovation, British Columbia Institute of Technology Burnaby, Canada
 28. [Wayne Mackintosh](#), OER Foundation, Dunedin, New Zealand
 29. [Douglas Morgan](#), The Jamaica Education Task-Force UK (JET, UK), UK (2nd response)
 30. [Sheryl Wood](#), Bahamas (2nd response)
 31. [John Arnesen](#), Chartall Business College, Johannesburg, South Africa
 32. [Rory McGreal](#), Athabasca University, Canada
 33. [Douglas Morgan](#), The Jamaica Education Task-Force UK (JET, UK), UK (3rd response)
 34. [George Jonathan Maeltoka](#), Ministry of Education and Training, Vanuatu Government, Port Vila
 35. [Ann Fullick](#), Science Writer & Education Consultant, UK (4th response)
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Allah Bakhsh Malik, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad, Pakistan

Quality education has many important supply-side factors including quality curriculum, quality textbooks, and quality teaching-learning materials and environment. Qualified teachers of eminence and erudition with secure understanding of the subject knowledge and pedagogical skills are the most essential pre-requisite for quality education. In order to achieve the goals of quality education, it will be important to ensure the provision of supply-side factors. There are serious challenges of financing quality education especially in developing countries.

In order to bridge the deficit gap, there is a dire need to enhance financial allocations at national level and mobilization of more resources than ever before from bilateral, multilateral and UN Agencies. In order to make optimal utilization of resources and ensure value for money, there is an option of low-cost schools and models of public-private partnership in the education sector. For affordable quality education in public-private partnership, the government may finance the provision of education and implementation/service delivery by the private sector. The testing and assessment under this model remains with the Government and the private sector service provider is bound to ensure quality education.

Jim Wynn, Imagine Education, Bristol, UK

I think that Education Systems need to stand back and look at the productivity of the whole process. Just like all other areas of human endeavour have done. Technology has transformed the productivity of everything and the processes used from health to manufacturing have changed dramatically as a result. But not in education. We continue to pay millions of teachers to fill our children's heads with facts and then they don't get employed as the world needs problem solvers now not recall machines.

So education will never be able to afford the scaling up of the anachronistic systems of the past but it should not be trying too. If facts are necessary then let technology REDUCE the costs of that knowledge transfer process. Summative testing costs Governments small fortunes and in itself changes nothing- so a move to take some of that resource by doing less summative testing but enable more formative testing will have massive impacts on productivity and student achievement. I don't think more money is necessarily needed but smarter use of what we have. If we actually knew what was happening day to day in our schools we could direct what resources we have to where they are needed. Just as in retail where the supply chain is made more effective and efficient through technology enhanced Point of Sale (PoS) systems we must think of the same in learning and develop Point of Learning (PoL) Systems. But PoS was itself dramatically improved when loyalty cards were introduced enabling not just the stock to be monitored but the customer too. Is this not a metaphor for learning where the stock is the curriculum and the customer the learner? In other words the systems exist, we just need to apply them to the lack of productivity of learning instead of retail.

What we need therefore is a scientific business/retail/manufacturing approach to the analysis of need to make our education budgets do more, especially in developing countries. We have been asked by the Government in Egypt to design and build such a system- we can't wait to see the results.

Pauline Rose, Research for Equitable Access and Learning Centre, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK

To finance quality education, it is vital to **mobilise domestic resources through taxation**. Pakistan is a case in point: tax revenue is only around 8% of GDP, resulting in only 2% of GDP being spent on education. The government can only achieve its modest target of 4% of GDP spent on education by increasing tax revenue. Links to a blog and paper about this can be found here:

<http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/real/researchthemes/finance/educationfinancing/>

Unless children stay in primary school and learn once there, they will never progress through the system. It is therefore also vital that **governments and donors focus their resources on ensuring all children and young people learn the basics**, with targeted financial support at higher levels (upper secondary and university) to reach the marginalised. It is shocking to hear that Malawi is contemplating re-introducing primary school fees (<http://www.nyasatimes.com/2015/08/16/aford-says-malawi-govt-plans-k5000-primary-school-fees/>). When primary school fees were increased in the 1980s, it had a huge negative impact on enrolment.

Recent calls as part of the sustainable development goals to abolish upper secondary school fees are worthy, but skewing resources towards this level while millions still do not achieve the basics in primary school would merely be a subsidy for the rich.

The private sector has an important role to play, but solutions need to be found to ensure this does not reinforce inequities. Available evidence indicates that, while low fee private schools marginally improve the quality of education, many of the poor who are investing their scarce household resources in these schools are still not learning - for evidence on India and Pakistan see here: <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11125-015-9350-5>. One possibility worth exploring is **how best to mobilise support from the private sector to secondary and higher education**, including to ensure the relevance of education that young people receive.

Ann Fullick, Science Writer & Education Consultant, United Kingdom

A key factor for ensuring that quality education for all can be financed is to have realistic aspirations and goals.

It is unlikely that an all-singing, all-dancing, high end resource-based education can be financed for everyone in the Commonwealth now or in the foreseeable future.

As Pauline commented so effectively, the first important hurdle to overcome is to ensure that children in all countries have access to schools in the first place.

I suggest it is important to consider what the key elements of education for all as a minimum actually are. Perhaps a solid foundation in maths, English (as a common language) and biology (because of all the health, agriculture and environmental implications) might be proposed.

Investment of funds in some basic resources that are accessible to the maximum numbers of students might see the development of core textbooks for these subjects to be used Commonwealth-wide as needed. They would need to deliver strong teacher support material with guidance on activities, to try and address the reality that not all countries have the investment or funding to employ a fully trained teaching force. If these resources could be adapted for each Commonwealth country to address relevant health issues etc., that would be an added bonus.

A relatively modest proposal such as this, which would carry huge economies of scale, might be delivered through a combination of external and internal funding, with countries able to access common core books at much reduced prices.

Online versions could also be developed, to be accessed in areas where computers, smart phones and tablets are becoming widely used. This would be an added dimension that local educators could then marry with other online resources if internet access is reliably available.

Sourcing the external funding, whilst ensuring that individual governments will supply the internal funding, would be crucial. A realistic project could be worked up to demonstrate the value of such an investment.

Jim Wynn, Imagine Education, UK

Ann makes a great point; that it is important to consider what the key elements of education for all actually are. But be prepared for a rocky ride. At the Centre for Curriculum Redesign they have been tackling what a mathematics curriculum should really look like and people like Conrad Wolfram have long argued for technology supporting the use of mathematics so that it can be better applied in other areas such as engineering or medical sciences. At every turn however anachronistic barriers are thrown up as one person or another has a sacred cow in the curriculum that is not allowed to be tampered with. We must however start with the curriculum and then work out how best to construct the learners' experience. We can only then start to tackle the medium, books, online etc. and the method, formal and/or informal schooling and ONLY in that way understand what sort of budget is required.

Since education runs right through the new SDG's is that a place to start? After all they define a purpose to learning, a great place to start.

May I point to this text from 1939? <http://www.amazon.co.uk/The-Saber-Tooth-Curriculum-Classic-Edition/dp/0071422889>

It shows how even then, some $\frac{3}{4}$ of a century ago people were tackling the same issue about appropriate curricula.

Peter Williams, Commonwealth Consortium for Education, London, UK

(submitted in an individual capacity)

Vacuous as I and doubtless many others find the expression 'quality education', this promises to be a useful discussion. Pace Ann Fullick's interesting contribution, isn't it right to couch it in terms of universal access to education of good quality rather than to schools of good quality? It isn't realistic to expect every child to have schooling - issues of population distribution and distance, or of disability, stand in the way. And as for older age-groups, it is learning opportunities and not institutional attendance that should be the aim.

One major factor determining the feasibility of affording access to a good education for all children is of course trends in birth rates. Where these are falling at all rapidly a country may find itself in the happy position of experiencing temporarily a beneficial shift in the dependency ratio of children to adult workers engaged in the production of goods and services (and generation of taxes) that will sustain education programmes for the young. For a reasonably long period the improved dependency ratio in respect of children will not be cancelled out by the deteriorating dependency ratio in respect of old people who have passed through their working life to retirement; thus the provision of formal education to the young will, other things being equal, be more affordable.

For a number of countries, therefore, the prospect of more manageable child-worker ratios does offer some hope of greater affordability of good schooling. But it is very difficult to see how states with a continuing 3% p.a. growth in population size can readily provide an adequately resourced education for all children; given that 50% or more of the population is then likely to be in the age ranges from birth to the end of the formal tertiary-education cycle.

Of course if we are looking to achieve access to good education opportunities for everyone, including adult members of the population rather than just children, then the optimum ratios among pre-school infants, school age children, working-age population, and the retired would need rethinking; and the traditionally used dependency ratios lose some of their salience. The reduced relative cost of educating children would be offset by the increased burden of attempting to provide greatly extended education opportunities to adult groups - though many would cogently argue that work-related education and training for adults potentially has a very rapid pay-off in increased productivity and output, and can soon 'pay for itself'.

Even now there are countries that fail to accord sufficient priority to education within their budgetary expenditures. But very frequently the problem is not so much one of budget share as size of the overall budget. It seems to me that Pauline Rose is completely right to highlight the importance of increasing the tax-take if education budgets are to grow to the required extent. This will certainly require more efficient tax collection mechanisms and smart analysis of potential revenue sources - but even more importantly a change in culture and values. There needs to be some

drawing back from today's worship of individual rights, personal choice, competition, and maximisation of individual gain; and a re-emphasis on a sense of community, interdependence and mutual responsibility with taxes being seen not as a 'taking away from' but as a 'contributing to' the good life. It is not just fools who pay their fair share of taxes.

Must we revert to global wars, catastrophes or ecological disasters to bring about this rethinking of fundamental values? Humankind must learn to live together and cherish one another, and in that context education has a key role to play. So while Jim Wynn's call for 'a scientific business/retail/manufacturing approach to the analysis of need to make our education budgets do more' may perhaps be a necessary part of the answer to the conundrum posed to us in this discussion, one suspects that changes in culture and values, backed by strong political and moral leadership, are going to be needed even more.

Three final brief thoughts that hopefully others may develop

1. The way many countries have actually 'afforded the unaffordable' in the past has been to achieve rapid education expansion by allowing the real value of teachers' salaries to erode.
2. Per contra, expensive education is not necessarily 'good education'. Commitment and concern on the part of teachers, a stable staff team, and a strong school ethos are all key.
3. In very many cases the resources that foreign aid provides - substantial as they may look in dollar terms - make only a small dent in the domestic budgetary gap for education in developing countries. So much aid tends to go on services priced in First World markets - experts, equipment, or scholarships for study abroad.

Ann Fullick, Science Writer & Education Consultant, United Kingdom

Lots of good points!

I would suggest again though that we have to be pragmatic and realistic and have achievable aims - we cannot educate everyone, but maybe we can improve access to education for the next generation.

One further thought - Peter is so right about the population balance - and all the evidence shows that the most effective way to bring down the birth rate in a country is to educate the girls and women!

Karen Mundy, Global Partnership for Education, Washington DC, USA

The challenges in financing quality education are clear - hundreds of millions of children are not learning, resources are not reaching the most marginalized, 59 million children remain out of school and the sector faces a substantial external financing gap. According to UNESCO, an estimated US\$39 billion per year is needed for lower and upper secondary education to achieve the Sustainable

Development Goal 4 (SDG4) on education by 2030. In addition to this huge gap, aid to education has been declining since 2010, resulting in lower per capita spending.

To achieve the ambitious new global education goal more funding must be generated, and everyone must step up. The Global Partnership for Education is a multi-stakeholder partnership and funding platform committed to fulfilling the right to education by ensuring access to inclusive, equitable, quality education for all children - as reflected in the ambition of the post-2015 education agenda. As a core partner of SDG4, the Global Partnership is actively seeking a substantial increase in funding from all sources including governments, donors, foundations and the private sector.

Domestic financing continues to be the most critical source of financing for education. Low-income countries have increased their spending on education since 2000 with a 5% increase in government spending among countries in sub-Saharan Africa. However, less than half of countries spend the recommended 15% to 20% of national budgets on education. The Global Partnership developing country partners have focused a lot on how to mobilize more domestic resources, and there is promising progress in this area. Developing country partners have increased their spending in education by 11 percent, on average, after joining the Global Partnership. From the Global Partnership's experience, countries that invest more in education lead to stronger education outcomes, especially when this is situated in strong government-led national education plans.

The Global Partnership is committed to mobilizing investments from non-traditional sources, including the private sector, new and emerging donors and private foundations. To achieve our education goals we must link efforts within developing countries to create functioning taxation systems and transparent government accounting with work on domestic resource mobilization. But getting to the resource level needed to educate all children will also require a new strategy to bring new donor governments to education and engagement from the private sector and private philanthropy. Within this there is a critical need to develop innovative financing solutions that will work at scale. For example at the Global Partnership Replenishment conference in 2014, for the first time a private foundation - the Children's Investment Fund Foundation - provided funding to the GPE Fund, and Dubai Cares made a financial pledge. The Republic of Korea also joined the Global Partnership last year and others are expected to join showing a growing interest from emerging donors.

The development and adoption of the new post-2015 education agenda provides an unprecedented opportunity for the international community to lift its ambition and ensure that inclusive, equitable quality education for all is achieved by 2030. Throughout 2015, the Global Partnership is [developing a new Strategic Plan for 2016 to 2020](#), which will enable the partnership to align its goals with the new Sustainable Development Agenda for education. As part of this agenda, the Global Partnership has been actively engaged in high-level discussions at the [World Education Forum, the Oslo Summit on Education for Development and the Third International Conference on Financing for Development](#).

At the Financing for Development conference, heads of state and government and high level representatives from 193 countries agreed to *“scale up investments and international cooperation to allow children to complete free, inclusive and quality early childhood, primary and secondary*

education, including through scaling up and strengthening initiatives such as the Global Partnership for Education.” The Addis Action Agenda is a concrete symbol of the support and belief that the global community has in the power of partnership; and recognition that a scaled up and strengthened Global Partnership is a prerequisite for successful implementation of SDG4.

At this year’s UN General Assembly the global community is expected to adopt the SDGs, and the education community to endorse a [Framework for Action: Education 2030](#) in November at the UNESCO General Assembly. This is our moment to agree on concrete financing targets for the implementation and realization of SDG4 to ensure we target the most marginalized children in the poorest countries. The key overarching question we must face is whether together we will rise to the ambition behind the Post-2015 education agenda. Whether we will ensure that the financing from all sources is made available to put us on a path toward achievement of the new goals fifteen years from now, including our new goal for education. At the Global Partnership we are optimistic that the answer to this question is: yes we can.

Elaine Foster-Allen, Ministry of Education, Kingston, Jamaica

The potential exists for us to approach the financing of quality education by using a co-funding arrangement of public and private funds, here private funds generally means parental contribution. However, in order to ensure equity, it would be important to target more public funds to schools where parental contributions are negligible and less funds where parental contributions are size-able. In the case of Jamaica, the possibility exists to formalize this model of financing education even where there could be major implications for policy and politics!

Jim Wynn, Imagine Education, UK

Same as last email. Insights into what Caribbean ministers are saying about technology in schools.

Stacey Payne-Mascall, Ministry of Education, Antigua and Barbuda

In my opinion, technology offers a solution in making quality education affordable and accessible. What we have failed to do is to capitalize on it by planning how to use the technology efficiently and how to sustain efforts that are implemented.

The issue of planning was suggested by Ann also which I am in agreement. We may not be able to do everything but we can agree to focus on specific things which are common and paramount for quality education to be experienced by most. What I have observed as an educator, in a developing country, is, too often there are great Strategic Plans written but never followed, great visions and mission statements developed but not known by key players on the team and resources allotted- be it internally or externally but never used appropriately.

Sustaining efforts is one of the greatest challenges. Many great initiatives in my country have struggled because there were challenges to sustain efforts - for example, equipping each child with a tablet. In most cases it is the lack of funding which contributes to this reality. Karen and a number of the other presenters make that point that we have to launch out and have greater contributions coming from the private sector and the increase in taxes. I also think that Governments have to show greater commitment to education as they prepare annual budgets. Simply put, Initiatives that has to be continued must be resourced adequately for proposed results to be achieved. This requires commitment from everyone.

As Jim mentioned it may not be more money but the smarter use of what we have. Minimum, for quality education we need content, infrastructure and the provision of continuous and quality training for teachers. As it relates to content, technology has given us access to Open Educational Resources, the World Wide Web where the sky is the limit. This can significantly reduce the cost of education since in many countries such as mine, large portions of the budget is spent on purchasing textbooks. In the case of infrastructure, a physical space is not an absolute must. Connectivity and hardware availability has now taken priority. This is especially true for training of teachers. Via the internet teachers can connect readily to networks which support best teaching practices, engage in online courses for continuous professional development or even to obtain degrees without leaving the service/country. This can significantly improve the quality of teachers and also reduced the cost of training teachers. Money saved can then be reallocated to other areas in education which now becomes priority such as the development of local content/educational materials by teachers and students, hardware infrastructure to facilitate LMS, EMIS and content repositories.

Tertiary institutions are experiencing some of these realities using technology to deliver their educational product. More people now have access to tertiary studies and prices are lower. But there is that conversation of quality assurance that must be had.

One major reality which technology has afforded us is the development of independent learners. Our 21st Century learners are digital natives and every day they are engaged with the many tools such as web 2.0 tools, smart phones etc. They are continuously engaged in learning new things. It comes effortless to them once they have an interest. Hence once we can engage them with the technology, pushing the content in a manner that is receptive to them we can reach a high percentage of learners and perhaps will come pretty close in the realization of the goals established.

Ayodeji Morakinyo, Detemplations, Nigeria

There are 53 member countries in the Commonwealth at present. These include a mixture of highly developed, moderately developed, and hardly developing nations spread across 5 regions (or continents namely Africa, Asia, Europe, Caribbean and Americas and the Pacific). To foster economic development in less developed Commonwealth countries, the Commonwealth in conjunction with partner bodies such as the United Nations should create channels of rapid and sustainable development for youths in member countries. Since youth constitute the majority of the most energetic, inventive and productive proportion of the workforce in most countries,

intergovernmental bodies such as the Commonwealth should create diverse ways of ensuring their development. Creating non-interest education loans for youth from less developed countries to undertake quality education in developed countries is one way to achieve this.

Young people who desire to gain dynamic education experience and critical skills for building their own economies usually face challenges when the issue of funding arises. The traditional means of funding for quality education are inefficient relative to the population and standard of living of skilled young people in many less developed countries. Most times, scholarships are difficult to win and non-interest education loans are usually inaccessible to international students that are yet to arrive in school or commence studies at foreign destinations. In fact, it is easier to access scholarships and loans as an enrolled international student than as an incoming student. For instance, I have gained admission to advance my education in highly equipped schools without the privilege of accessing non-interest loan to support scholarship options. I have also been in situations where no scholarship is received after the eventual admission offer. If young people, with vision and dreams, can have access to non-interest loans to study in developed economies, they would be able to earn proper income in their study zone and repay their loans before returning to their countries or even gain scholarships to offset their loans once enrolled. As such, it would be easier for them to assist in transferring vital technology and development ideologies to their own regions and bring about more even, rapid and sustainable development across the Commonwealth.

Therefore, in its efforts to explore and ensure the financing of quality education in member countries, the Commonwealth should create avenues for accessing non-interest education loans to skilled Commonwealth citizens as this would help improve access to quality education, sustainable development and inter-regional advancement.

Sue Dale Tunnicliffe, Commonwealth Association for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Educators, UK

This discussion is very interesting but we should not forget that the key to effective and quality education from the earliest years (both pre-school and in communities) is skilled teachers, assisting learners to develop skills and practices as well as knowledge, that benefits our societies and provides viable people to contribute to it. Thus, as businesses keep lamenting lack of skills in school leavers, surely they could contribute more in assisting us produce effective outcomes?

Mark Bray, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

I am much in agreement with Pauline Rose, Peter Williams and others that domestic taxation revenue is the key starting point. This requires attention to the efficiency of taxation systems as well as to the allocation of revenues received.

At the same time, I note the inclusion of *quality* in the question. We increasingly see the operation of parallel shadow systems of private supplementary tutoring in rich, middle-income and poor

countries. Much of this shadow education is driven by parental dissatisfaction with the quality of public (and sometimes even private) schooling.

At the extreme, in the Republic of Korea expenditures on private tutoring have been estimated as equivalent to about 80% of government expenditures on public education for primary and secondary students. Data are less readily available elsewhere, but we know that shadow education is increasingly visible across continents e.g. in Bangladesh, Jamaica and Kenya.

Globally we need better statistics on the scale and impact of household expenditures in order to understand existing patterns of financing for education and to chart future directions.

Douglas Morgan, The Jamaica Education Task-Force UK (JET, UK), UK

The topic 'Financing a quality education' is indeed an important aspect for global quality education. I believe it can be achieved through a collective commitment. Comrades we are working towards eradicating global poverty - ensuring a better quality education for all of our children on a global level is an aspiration that must be achieved.

Fundraising events for '[Financing for Quality Education Developments](#)' should be planned and executed, some initiatives may be discussed through the 'Commonwealth Education Hub'.

At the Diaspora Conference in Jamaica in June 2015, which was very positive, I had the opportunity to visit schools and a popular Teacher Training College to discuss the importance of Quality Education for teachers and pupils - indeed one complements the other. I came away humbled by the experience, the energy and drive to improve their education system in Jamaica is a credit to the country but finance was a key factor in reaching those identified goals.

Jim Knight, TES Global, UK

This has been an interesting discussion and I have no great disagreement with the points made. What comes through strongly is the need for more resource and to prioritise. I would add to re-imagine. Clearly the starting point is elementary education, and the resources to deliver that as a universal entitlement across the globe. But we must also be clearer as to what that is. As a former education minister I know how easy it is to be distracted away from the basics by the need to announce activity. Distractions include technology, buildings, curricula and text books. The focus should be teachers and parents. Initial teacher recruitment, preparation and continuous development are key. They then need to be equipped to lead teaching in their communities and to win parental support. The root of success is teaching as a high status profession that our best and brightest aspire to.

Textbooks can be replaced by free open education resources; schools are no more important than home; connectivity may be more important than transport; what is learned is in many ways less

important than fostering the love of learning - these are all secondary choices. First and foremost, with limited resources, is to focus on teachers and then re-imagine the education system around what they need and what can be afforded after building the best workforce that is practical.

Wathando Mughandira, Ministry of Education, Republic of Malawi

Quality education is a fundamental right to all children of the world. In most developing countries, primary school Net Enrolment Ratios (NERs) are still significantly below 100% implying that universal access to primary education remains but a colourful dream. Thus, the education agenda 2030, through [Sustainable Development Goal 4](#), rightfully emphasizes expanding equitable access to basic education and providing life-long learning opportunities to all global citizens. In Malawi, primary education has been free since 1994 and NER is currently at 87% projected to reach 93% by 2018 (final year of the National Education Sector Plan).

Over the past decade, the education Sector Wide Approaches (SWAPs) have been instrumental in mobilizing and pooling financial resources from various sources to finance country level education sector plans. There's a significant amount of evidence showing that in most of the developing countries where SWAPs were implemented, improvements have been made primarily in achieving access to basic education. Quality education remains a big challenge in spite of the general increases in education financing over the past 15 years. In most developing countries, Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS) have essentially revealed that financial resources have not necessarily reached the intended beneficiaries. Thus, weak Public Finance Management systems in most developing countries make it systemically impossible to achieve effectiveness in the utilization of resources in the education sector. There's an urgent need to address issues of corruption in most developing countries and hopefully revert back to collectively adopting important instruments like 'pool financing' and 'sector budget support'. These can only be achieved if developing countries urgently address various public finance management challenges.

Public Private Partnerships are potentially a viable but less sustainable option to increase education financing. Poor countries can introduce a special education tax (levy) which every profit making corporation would be liable to pay. This could significantly increase the domestic revenue base and ultimately increase subsequent allocations to the education sector.

All in all, developing country governments must significantly increase budgetary allocations to the education sector. But there must be corresponding improvements in governance systems so as to achieve effectiveness in utilization of resources in the education sector. Additionally, the budgetary targets set in the Education 2030 framework cannot be achieved through domestic financing alone. Development partners, non-governmental organisations, and civil society organisations must play a key part in mobilizing resources for the new agenda on education.

Sheryl Wood, Bahamas

The question posed makes the assumption that quality education may only be achieved by channelling vast amounts of money into the educational system.

Money is essential to make many things happen in a society but it does not have as huge a position as we think on the totem pole when you take into consideration everything that is required to produce any kind of quality program.

There is a song with a catchy phrase that says "people make the world go round" and the same holds true for any project in any generation. People propel progressive programs. The essence of 'quality' has more to do with positive attitudes, a willingness to embrace new philosophies and innovative ways of thinking, valuing the work of others and working in a spirit of collegiality. Quality has something to do with being resourceful and thinking creatively under peculiar and extraordinary circumstances. We may already have what we need to 'finance' quality education- Educators who have a keen sense of pride in the end product - their students. Educators who are knowledgeable about the content of what must be taught and educators who will put egos aside and keep it child centred. Academicians must remain passionate about creating an educational community where children will thrive and succeed whether you have all the finances you need, mediocre financial resources or very little money.

Many of us who are forty something or over fifty came from an era where education had more to do with a sound tested tried and proven curriculum coupled with teachers who were determined to give their best to students.

Money was necessary but great teachers were the driving force behind education. Throw money behind it but are we sure that this will solve the problem. You can have all the money you would like to have but if you don't have the best and brightest minds to bring out that which is best and brightest in children then you have to next to nothing. All that glitters and look pretty may only be window dressing on occasion. We can dazzle and blind and fool ourselves with science, but is that quality education?

Invest in quality minded people and the programs will follow. Teacher training programs today should emphasize diversity and versatility. If a teacher is trained to teach the most difficult child then that teacher can teach any child.

I have not deviated from the questioned posed. It has been my experience that money will come looking for successful quality programs. If you know what you are doing and your program has committed quality people who are not glory seekers - then the possibilities accrue. Think about yourself and your own educational journey. What got you where you are today? Money yes but also.

Sue Dale Tunnicliffe, Commonwealth Association for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Educators, UK

Absolutely agree

It is people that make it work. Unless they are motivated competent and enthusiastic and understand learning from earliest years.....the money is wasted

Lorna Cork, Jamaica Education Taskforce, UK (JET UK)

A collaborative commonwealth approach to financing quality education for all would necessitate continued negotiations with the IMF and other such bodies with a view to allocating a portion of interest repayments to fund sustainable quality education for all.

A key requirement would be the development of a commonwealth policy to provide cast iron guarantees that these monies cannot be used for anything other than this purpose.

Kishore Singh, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Paris

Commonwealth Education Hub discussion on financing equitable quality education in the context of the upcoming SDG commitments

A major limitation on achieving education-related Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All Agenda has been resource constraint. Quality has been sacrificed while expanding access to primary education. Recurring expenditure consumes quasi-totality of education budget in developing world, with scant resources for quality. Students learning achievements remain very low, on account of dismal quality of education, due to lack of resources for development of quality education.

Instead of mobilizing domestic resources for education, Governments turn to donors, non-governmental funding and private sector to overcome resource constraints. One can witness disinvestment in public education in many developing countries, resulting from privatization and public-private partnerships. The realization of the right to education is jeopardized by decreasing investment in education.

Financing of Education: A human rights obligation

We must always recall that in accordance with international human rights treaties, States are responsible for providing resources to ensure the enjoyment of human rights. Providing the necessary resources for the right to education is all the more important, as both the individual and society are its beneficiaries. Moreover, the right to education is essential for the exercise of all other human rights. States have obligations under human rights law to devote maximum possible resources to education, recognizing the right to education as a foundation for development. Public investment in education as high development priority is not only a legal obligation of governments, it is also their moral obligation resulting from collective political commitments for international development agenda. Following the [Incheon Declaration](#) adopted at the World Education Forum (May 2015),

governments should commit between 15 and 20% of national budgets, or between 4-6% of GDP for education.

The main challenge for governments in developing countries is how to mobilize maximum resources for education rather than relying on private financial support to education. Public policy should respond to the challenging task of mobilizing domestic resources for education from governmental as well as non-governmental sources.

(i) Resource Mobilization for Education: Governmental sources

The right to education, like other human rights, is a matter of progressive realization, which extends over time. It also implies that measures to promote its fulfilment must be adopted with a view to ensuring a sustainable expansion of its enjoyment across the country. Support to education must be driven by measures aimed at the gradual expansion of the education sector. As recognized in the [Oslo Declaration](#), made at the Oslo Summit on Education for Development (6-7 July, 2015), “the provision of education is a national responsibility.”

Mobilizing additional resources through special taxation schemes can be crucial in reinforcing budgetary provisions. Legal instruments can enable such mobilization. For example, a 2 per cent education cess on all central taxes levied in India resulted in expanding significantly funding for the elementary education.

A consolidated national budget for education can be instrumental in mobilizing resources for education from various concerned ministries. The budget for education mainly comes from the ministries of education. But other ministries such as health, agriculture, social welfare, women empowerment, rural development also invest in education as part of their work. Budgetary allocations at national level can be consolidated to impart synergy to spending on education, recognizing that any development agenda has educational dimensions.

Quality imperatives should be a central concern in mobilizing national resources for education. Government should earmark at least 20-25 per cent of national education budget for quality as against recurring expenditure.

National and international mechanisms must be strengthened in order to ensure that governments comply with their core obligations for devoting maximum resources to education. In providing subsidies and financial support to private providers, Governments in fact neglect or abandon their core responsibility for education. States should put an end to market-driven education reforms that encourage ‘for-profit’ education.

Governments can undertake a number of measures to enhance public investment in education. For instance, instead of giving subsidies to private providers of education, they should provide the maximum possible resources to public education, with equity-driven initiatives to expand educational opportunities for the marginalized and the poor. As recommended in the OXFAM briefing paper “[Working for the Many: Public Services Fight Inequality](#)” (2014) Governments should abolish voucher

systems which support private providers at the cost of public education system. Instead, States should assume their responsibility in line with their obligations for the right to education, including through the introduction of schemes of financial support to the marginalized students.

(ii) Non-Governmental Sources and Resource Mobilization for Education

Education is a core public service function of the State. It is also a social responsibility. As a noble cause, it can generate social support and induce public contributions in a philanthropic spirit, if properly encouraged by policies of good governance in the education system. All those valuing education as a public good and a noble cause should be encouraged to contribute to the development of education with innovative ways aimed at maximizing national investment in education. Additional resources can be mobilized from contributions of local bodies, private donors and communities through institutional mechanisms that supplement Government funding. At national level, governments can adopt innovative mechanisms such as Trust Fund to which contributions can be made in a philanthropic spirit. It must be ensured that the modus operandi of all such institutional mechanisms is fully respectful of transparency and accountability.

True philanthropy is devoid of private interest, and can support and supplement government investment in education as well as provision of education under public-private partnerships (PPPs) arrangement. Educational establishments for philanthropic purposes which are not profit driven but promote education as a social good are valuable for generating social support for education. Public policies can foster foundations of public utilities devoted to the cause of education.

The [Report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing](#) (15 August 2014) acknowledges that “Philanthropy, i.e., voluntary activity by foundations, private citizens and other non-state actors, has significantly expanded in its scope, scale and sophistication.” The Report mentions that policymakers have recently shown considerable interest in a class of development financing opportunities called “blended finance” that pool public and private resources and expertise like structured public-private funds and innovative “implementing partnerships” between a wide range of stakeholders – including Governments, civil society, philanthropic institutions, development banks and private for-profit institutions. As the Report states, “It is important to note, however, that poorly designed public private partnerships and other blended structures (that pool public and private resources and expertise) can lead to high returns for the private partner, while the public partner retains all the risks.” Careful consideration needs to be given to the appropriate use and structure of blended finance instruments.

Sustainable Development Agenda and National Investment for Education Goal: Government Responsibility

It is necessary to take a critical view of the euphoria for global partnerships in future Sustainable Development Agenda and to focus on government responsibility for achieving education goal. The final draft of [“Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”](#) (July 2015) includes goal 4 on Education: “By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.” It

also stipulates: “Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships” (...) and “Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.” Responsibility of States for the right to education is of paramount importance: they must reverse the trend of disinvestment in education. They must also enhance national resources for education. This is indispensable for achieving the goal of universal secondary education of good quality, free of costs for all. At the same time, States must safeguard education against its commercialization and preserve it as a social good. They must live up to their political commitments, which are founded in State obligations for the right to education enshrined in international human rights treaties.

Enhancing significantly public funding for education is essential prerequisite for the future development agenda. Achieving universal free secondary education of good quality for all as a development goal does not admit of any partnerships with private sector which undermines or compromises imparting education free of costs. This is critical as regards PPPs which are increasingly promoted as a way to finance development projects. Donor governments and financial institutions, such as the World Bank, have set up multiple donor initiatives to promote changes in national regulatory frameworks to allow for PPPs as well as provide advice and finance to PPP projects.

Concern has been expressed that “Without clear lines of accountability”, there is an “imminent risk” for development agenda to be unduly shaped by private sector financing, activities and priorities: there is need to “Establish and enforce *ex ante* eligibility criteria for private sector partnerships and the governance of UN partnerships with business ... rooted in the international human rights framework.”

Learning from the devastating impact of structural adjustments on education as an essential public service and in the face of the prevalent market ideology and privatization in education, countries must recognize the paramount importance of public investment in education as an essential obligation of the States and as a foundation for development. Innovative responses are required for a paradigm shift in which financing education is a social responsibility.

Tata Mbinglo, Cameroon Pace Setters Association, Cameroon

A developing country like Cameroon in Africa has a lot of challenges when it comes to financing quality education as there is a high rate of marginalization where by the high class citizens send their kids to very durable and costly schools while the poor are left at the mercy of the government. I think there is an absolute need to restructure the educational system and make learning free for all.

Students from all backgrounds should have equal opportunity to study in state institutions. Scholarships be given to meritorious students. Schools should be equipped with library materials and also computer science be included in the school program. Students should be provided with text books and research facilities. Good staffing also determines the outcome of performance. Schools should be well staffed to effectively impart knowledge to students. When scholarships are made

available for meritorious students they will all strive for academic excellence. Thus I suggest these points.

Ann Fullick, Science Writer & Education Consultant, UK

Sheryl reminds us of an absolutely fundamental point - good, enthusiastic, inspirational teachers are the key to successful education at all levels and in all countries. An effective teacher changes lives - and poor teachers can turn a generation of children away from learning. Developing good teachers isn't easy though, even in countries where money is no problem. But hubs of talented and inspirational teachers in every country who can spread good practice might be an achievable aim.

Swati Sharma, Nishkam Foundation, Ajmer, India

Governments are going to commit to the future Sustainable Development Agenda (July 2015) to ensure that by 2030, all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education. Skills development is a major challenge in quality imperatives. The future agenda also recognizes the need for enhancing the global partnership, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships and encouraging and promoting effective public-private partnerships.

Governments alone are not able to meet demands on quality education for all. They will not be able to fulfil their commitments unless huge resources are mobilized for education. It is understandable that the need and the importance of public-private partnerships (PPPs) are being increasingly recognized as a way to finance development projects resulting in maximizing national investment in education. This aspect of capability building is also important as regards the future agenda for education development.

In this respect, one area that is particularly important is that of Corporate Social Responsibility. [The Report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing \(15 August 2014\)](#) mentions it but this deserves much more reflections to expound on enormous potential for its contribution to education.

The Corporate Sector as a key player should assume its responsibility for education in a philanthropic spirit. It can contribute in various ways to expanding and improving education system. The sector involvement can have its impact through community initiatives for complementing government efforts in building and improving school infrastructure, content creation, digitisation and training. It can also make important contribution in expanding educational facilities through a general increase in resource mobilisation This is crucial as quality remains a daunting challenge in education system - more so in public schools.

When we consider the challenges of quality in education, skills development is most demanding in almost all countries across all regions in the world. It is of utmost importance to devise innovative ways of skills development programmes in close collaboration with industry. Skills development

requires transforming the technical and vocational educational and training (TVET) fundamentally so that it responds to the fast emerging needs of industry and economy in today's globalizing world. Devoting more resources to education is absolutely necessary in any scheme for placing TVET on a higher profile. The Corporate Sector and industry is primary stakeholder in this.

While private sector should be harnessed for imparting education and skills development, it is also important to ensure that the focus is on approaches and programmes which contribute to empowering the marginalized sections of society, especially women. In today's globalised world, with growing social disparities, we should recognize the need and the importance of CSR and ethics in the context of our reflections on ways of overcoming social exclusion and marginalisation and fostering equity-based sustainable development financing. They can thus play a crucial role with a schematic of Public Private Partnership which is crucial in addressing the skills gap as well as issues of inequities and disparities in education.

The perception of CSR is being transformed under human rights approach and responsibility of business. The Corporate Sector, like the State, is considered increasingly as being accountable. This is important as regards their contribution to sustainable development and indispensable role of education.

For example, in India the provision regarding CSR in the [New Companies Act 2013](#) has brought within its ambit all the companies with at least Rs. 5-crore (about 750,000 USD) net profit or Rs. 1,000-crore (about 150 million USD) turnover or Rs. 500-crore (about 7.5 million USD) net worth, making it mandatory for them to spend 2 per cent of the three years' average net profit on CSR activities. As I have been emphasizing in my work, it is not just corporate or organizational responsibility; but it is also personal social responsibility of every individual. As such, we should also stress the importance of both corporate and personal social responsibility for contributing to development of education.

We must also recognize the importance of the CSR in the context of the [UN Global Compact](#) involving a large number of companies, many of them large transnational companies, from all continents. This is the leading global voluntary initiative for CSR that addresses the issue of business and human rights. A huge potential lies for mobilizing resources for education with a properly devised approach of encouraging environment and social accountability alongside human rights standards.

Pandora Johnson, The College of Bahamas, Bahamas

This question is an extremely important one for a country like The Bahamas, whose funding model I believe is in need of restructuring. At the moment there is no levy imposed on citizens for education. Education, which is extremely labour intensive and requires considerable material and physical resources, competes with all other public services for its budget.

Exacerbating the problem for the delivery of quality education is the archipelagic nature of the country and the mandate for equality of opportunity in education.

This funding model along with the delivery model of face to face instruction undermines equality of and quality in education.

What models are in place in other parts of the commonwealth?

Abel Caine, Communication & Information Sector, UNESCO, Paris, France

I'd like to strongly highlight the role of Open Educational Resources (OERs) in reducing the costs of access to high-quality educational materials especially through the engagement of the global OER Community that increases teacher solidarity and sharing of knowledge.

Open Educational Resources are any type of educational materials released in the public domain or with an open license that allows a user to freely and legally use, copy, adapt, and redistribute the materials. OERs provide a strategic opportunity to improve the quality of education as well as facilitate policy dialogue, knowledge sharing and capacity building.

The decision by MIT (USA) in 2001 to release a large number of its teaching materials with an effective open license and the subsequent similar release by many ivy-league global universities signalled a key moment in the historical evolution of freely sharing educational knowledge. UNESCO organized a global forum in 2002 that created the term Open Educational Resources to describe this phenomenon.

By the end of the Decade, UNESCO and the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) organized the [1st World OER Congress in June 2012](#) at UNESCO Headquarters which released the [Paris OER Declaration](#) calling on Governments to openly license all publicly funded educational materials.

There are now many Governments and institutions with OER policies, hundreds of institutional repositories and projects, and hundreds of thousands of very high-quality OERs available. Teachers and students can find and adapt these materials to alleviate curricula gaps, or to now offer new areas of study for students. The materials can be translated into local languages to increase attractiveness and retention for students. Significant local input can also be incorporated into the original work allowing the authors to share and be recognized for their knowledge and contribution.

To conclude, a major component of the high cost of education delivery is the cost of purchasing materials. By allocating resources to effective the search, evaluation and adaptation of OERs, Governments can save a considerable portion of increasingly scarce funds.

David Porter, Education Support and Innovation, British Columbia Institute of Technology, Burnaby, Canada

I wish to emphasise the potential for open educational resources (OER) and open textbooks to make an impact on affordability and the financing of education.

What comes to mind are bold initiatives such as the Open Education Universitas (oeru.org), a consortium of universities worldwide that proposes to provide higher education courses for free and allow learners to count them towards real qualifications. This is a much different approach than the MOOC-style education providers. Interestingly, the OERu consortium is dominated by institutions from Commonwealth countries such as the UK, New Zealand, India, Australia and Canada. Clearly Commonwealth institutions are seeing the role of OER in affordability contexts.

Other initiatives that are targeted directly at education financing include government programs aimed at lowering instructional resource costs for students. The British Columbia (Canada) open textbook program is a prime example. See: <http://bccampus.ca/open-textbook-project>, and also see how government characterizes the program as a direct link with affordability http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2012AEIT0010-001581.htm. Government re-emphasized the affordability point again last week as students prepare to return to classes for 2015-16 academic year, <https://news.gov.bc.ca/factsheets/back-to-school-for-bc-post-secondary-students>.

I hope that the Commonwealth Secretariat will cast a wider net and will look at the range of open education initiatives globally that are directly addressing affordability and financing in the education sector.

Wayne Mackintosh, OER Foundation, Dunedin, New Zealand

Promoting open policy and corresponding adoption of Open Educational Resources in education will widen access while promoting more sustainable and scalable models of education provision. With specific reference to the forum questions:

What do I see as the main challenges for financing quality education?

Education is a fundamental human right and should be supported and funded as a public good. A key challenge facing the financing of quality education is the sustainability of the current model. In most industrialised countries around the world, the cost of tuition to students in higher education has been increasing in excess of the inflation index for the last decade. These models are not sustainable.

It is important to note that the provision of education does not function as a perfect economy. If it did, would observe a radical reduction in price and expansion of supply given the magnitude of the unsatisfied global demand for education. Consequently it is fallacy to think that the private model will remedy the financing challenge in the absence of a robust and healthy publicly funded system. Moreover, complicating the financing challenge in higher education is the fact that the more successful the sector is in expanding access, the greater the demands on the state coffers.

What potential solutions would I identify?

The marginal cost of replicating digital knowledge is near-zero. Therefore it is possible to expand access to high quality courses based solely on OER at no cost to the learner. The single most important lever for reducing cost while widening access is for governments to implement open policies. Specifically, if educational materials are funded using public money, they should be released under an open license.

In this way it is possible to expand access to world class courses at no cost to the learner. Existing public institutions can provide assessment services on a cost recovery basis. This is the OERu model. It is conceivable to widen access to all learners who are currently excluded from the tertiary education system without requiring new money or new investment simply by mandating an open license for publicly funded education materials. On a cost recovery basis, assessment services are provided to learners for an average of 20% of the comparable cost of full-tuition without government being required to increase educational spend.

As noted by David Porter, the OERu international network has a large number of partners from Commonwealth member states spanning six regions of the world. In addition, the open model adopted by the OERu innovation partnership is not mutually exclusive in that we are building an ecosystem where non-commonwealth partners contribute to the sustainability and scalability of the model.

Douglas Morgan, The Jamaica Education Task-Force UK (JET, UK) UK

I read in the national press on how the UK government budget cuts have serious implications for various education sectors: schools, further education and institutes of higher education in the UK. There is no doubt that the UK government wants our local economies to be supported and well served by their education institutions.

In Jamaica we also have a situation where we want our world class education system to reach its goal, in accordance to Jamaica development plans for schools. The Jamaica Ministry of Education knows that funding is an important issue for schools improvement and is developing new strategies for funding education.

The Jamaica Education Task-force UK (JET, UK) is a Diaspora initiative working in partnership with the Jamaica Ministry of Education.

Sheryl Wood, Bahamas

This is an interesting concept being proposed by David Porter.

John Arnesen, Chartall Business College, Johannesburg, South Africa

South Africa Context

The South African (SA) Government White Paper on the Post-school System (November 2013 - <http://www.dhet.gov.za/SitePages/DocWhitePaper.aspx>) in referring to private education providers states: “While recognising and appreciating the role of private institutions, the Department believes that the public sector is the core education and training system. The government’s main thrust therefore should be to direct public resources to meeting national priorities and to provide for the masses of young people and adult learners through public institutions.”

The net result of this is that courses offered by public higher institutions (23) are highly subsidised from taxes while courses offered by private higher institutions (110 plus) are fully paid for by the client.

What is notable is that the quality of education of both private and public higher education institutions ranges. In both instances there are some great institutions, a fair amount of good institutions and then a few institutions needing remedy.

It is therefore not reasonable, in the SA context, to conclude that one funding model is more effective than another when it comes to quality of education.

This is an important point to be made as general SA public perception is that private is better than public.

An approach to understanding quality

It is more reasonable to state that quality SA higher education is a function of:

1. The institutions track-record
2. Education and administrative management and staff
3. Course design and content
4. Delivery modes and location
5. Teaching and learning facilities
6. The student
7. The student’s context and environment

With these factors in mind it becomes much easier to identify why the great SA institutions are great and where the poor ones are falling down.

Here are some thoughts on each factor:

1. Track-record cannot be bought. It's earned over time. Some of the long standing public institutions such as the University of Cape Town has a very prestigious track-record. There are newer private institutions such as Monash that are making strong progress in establishing their status as a quality education provider in SA.
2. People are the ultimate differentiator. Funding facilities and resources need the right people working together to be effective and efficient. Selecting developing and caring for good people is where investment really pays off.
3. This is another area where institutions can really excel. So much content is available - how this is packaged and delivered makes a huge difference in the teaching and learning process.
4. Innovative delivery is challenging the old paradigms. It is a learning revolution currently. Investment is needed to stay ahead.
5. What a campus is and how it serves students is another area of rapid change. The traditional campus is rapidly becoming the exception rather than the norm!
6. Time spent up front on selecting and guiding students is essential. Throughput in SA higher education is disappointing. This can be improved by spending more time on providing quality career advice prior to allowing student to make qualification choices.
7. Understanding the student's context and environment is vital in developing and delivering education. This is especially true for South Africa with its multi-faceted diversity. Once the student is well understood the easier it becomes to facilitate effective education.

Closing Remarks

I concur with the commentators that suggest quality education is not simply a function of how much funding is directed to the institution. Of course there is a point where too little funding will have a negative effect on quality; however, once sufficient funding is secured, continuous quality improvement is much more related to the 7 factors identified above.

Rory McGreal Athabasca University, Canada

OER are gaining in popularity and are now being effectively introduced into schools and colleges in many regions of the world. Educators at all levels of education have found OER useful in their practice, demonstrating a need for continued OER development. Open licences add significant value to content that has been developed and/or acquired with public funds. Licensing publicly-funded content as OER, makes them more accessible to the public who pay for them.

There are many benefits to using OER other than just the lower costs. Although lower costs are real and substantial. OER also provide pedagogical and technological benefits. Pedagogical benefits

include their accessibility, and reusability for personalisation. The main technological benefit of OER is the ability to easily port the device between computers without digital locks or licensing restrictions.

Accessibility to and usability of content are enhanced through OER and this can be seen as one important quality measure. OER are also essential for learning analytics that is emerging as an important source of information about students and activities in the schools. OER are also an essential component of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) that are being used to deliver learning to thousands of learners, living in diverse jurisdictions. MOOCs grew out of the OER movement and their effectiveness depends heavily on the open access that OER provide. There are many ways to approach building an OER ecology and there are different ways of initiating the process.

For supporting OER, these policy recommendations are suggested:

- All content created by government employees, teachers or anyone using public funds must be openly licensed.
- OER must be seen as a priority and allowed at least as much consideration as commercial content and preferred when equal in quality or better.
- Governments should establish professional development programmes aimed at informing and training teachers and administrators to understand the benefits and uses of OER.
- Governments should trial the adoption of tablet computers and other mobile devices in schools for accessing online digital OER and other learning materials.
- Governments can evaluate and adopt content based on evaluations of teachers and content experts.
- Government budgets should allow for support of a sustainable environment for the development, assembly and maintenance of content and not just be for textbook purchases.
- Governments should establish permanent OER specialist positions with responsibility to oversee all OER-related activities.
- Any OER initiative must be monitored and evaluated using real student achievement and financial indicators.
- Greater synergies among these policies can be used to ensure effective OER implementation; synergies become essential in overcoming problems and barriers

Douglas Morgan, The Jamaica Education Task-Force UK (JET, UK) UK

Presently we have seen in the United Kingdom an increase in private organisations that donate funds to schools particularly to our academies and foundation schools. I do not personally advocate that the shortfall of funding needed for schools should not be solely shifted to local companies nor should this be an expectation from governments and parents: however, I believe that local private organisations in each local authority can play a fundamental role in supporting local schools and indeed the other education sectors.

The government is now looking at developing a national funding formula for schools making sure funding is distributed more fairly to schools. Clearly it is unfair that a school in one part of the country may attract 50% more funding than an identical school in another area in the same country.

The sustainable development agenda is a United Nations action plan falling under the headings: people, planet, prosperity and peace. “Determined to end poverty and hunger in all their forms and dimensions and to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment” (UN Development Sustainable Agenda).

Members of the Commonwealth Education Hub working together can play a crucial role in ensuring that the sustainable development agenda is fully met. It starts with making sure the continuation in financing high quality education remains one of the government top priorities leading to all children having access to a high quality education.

George Jonathan Maeltoka, Ministry of Education and Training, Vanuatu Government, Port Vila

Dear Author, Rory McGreal,

Thanks for the suggested policy recommendations.

For Vanuatu, a country in the South Pacific Ocean, schools are still very tradition in their approaches in terms of pedagogy and curriculum design and development.

But however, few individuals such as Central Secondary School in Port Vila, Matafanga primary school in Torba Province with Vanuatu Institute of Education along with a few teachers are already using education resources from the internet.

Hence, our vision is to get all our tertiary and higher education institutions to plan and start budgeting on this new opportunity between now and 2020. In saying this, we will need coaching and technical support since we have a system of education that is bilingual and management of these is challenged with distance between different islands throughout the archipelago.

Ann Fullick, Science Writer & Education Consultant, UK

I know this thread is now closed but when thinking about funding and what it should be used for, we MUST consider the just published findings of the OECD that technology is NOT the universal panacea and does not necessarily improve learning. Good teachers with simple effective resources are the best route to raising educational standards. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-34174796>

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