

Mobilising Resources for the Most Marginalised Children: Expanding Private Sector and Non-traditional Funding

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Foreword

The purpose of this occasional paper is to describe Educate A Child's approaches and strategies to, and experience in, finding and focussing resources to ensure the most marginalised children have access to quality primary education. Despite many global commitments over the last 30 years, large numbers of children are not able to realise their basic right to an education. And many children who are in school are not completing primary level or are not achieving academic learning standards. With just 10 years to go, the world may not meet the UN Sustainable Development Goal #4 (SDG 4) target that aims to: *“By 2030: ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.”*

Educate A Child (EAC), a programme of the Education Above All Foundation (EAA), is a global initiative launched in 2012 by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser. The programme is aimed at significantly reducing the number of children worldwide who are missing out on their right to education. EAC acts from a rights-based approach to education and envisions a world where all children have the opportunity to access a quality primary education. It pursues this global endeavour by supporting and expanding direct interventions that target the barriers preventing out of school children at the primary level to enrol and stay in school. By working in partnership and emphasising innovation, scale and sustainability, EAC imagines that every child is able to fulfil his/her right to an education.

When established in 2012, EAC had an ambitious goal of enrolling 10 Million Out of School Children (OOSC) into a primary level education. In April 2018, EAC had achieved this milestone with partnership legal commitments in place reaching 10.4 million children. Since large numbers of OOSC still exist, EAC continues to work in partnership with other organisations in target countries to further reduce the number of OOSC.

Many countries struggle to provide quality education for children already enrolled in school and do not have the resources to ensure full universal primary education (UPE), even though commitments to UPE are included in most country 2030 national strategy for education. One of the persistent challenges to meeting SDG 4 targets is insufficient financial resources. Section I of this occasional paper briefly describes the current situation, both in terms of the unmet commitment to meet the objective of education for all and the funding gap necessary to achieve it. Section II makes the case for increased spending on primary education, in particular for the most marginalised children. Section III briefly explores the concept of “innovative financing” and how EAC applies this approach. Section IV describes EAC and partner approaches and strategies to ensuring the availability of additional sources targeting the most marginalised out of school children. Section V offers concluding remarks and a call to action.

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Contents

Foreword.....	2
I. The Context.....	4
The Global Commitment: The Universal Right to Quality Education	4
Who is Out of School? The Reality.....	4
II. The case for increased funding for the most marginalised	6
What are the costs/benefits of education for children?	7
The benefits to education.....	7
The cost of not educating all children.....	8
Quality education is key to achieving other SDGs	8
The increased costs associated with educating all OOSC.....	9
III. Innovative Financing – What does it mean?.....	9
IV. Increasing Resources for the most marginalised – EAC’s Approach.....	11
Public-Private Partnerships.....	11
Supporting Government	12
Private Sector Engagement.....	12
Community Engagement - Volunteers – A low cost sustainable solution	13
V. Conclusion and Call to Action	17
VI. References	19

I. The Context

The Global Commitment: The Universal Right to Quality Education

Education is a basic human right. The global community has repeatedly committed to ensuring all children are afforded their right to a quality education.

This was first articulated in Jomtien in 1990 through Education for All, reiterated in the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 in Dakar, and reaffirmed more recently in Incheon in 2015, with the UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). SDG4 Target 4.1 aims to ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes. This includes the *“provision of 12 years of free, publicly-funded, inclusive, equitable, quality primary and secondary education – of which at least nine years are compulsory, leading to relevant learning outcomes – should be ensured for all, without discrimination.”*¹

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the world’s most widely ratified human rights treaty in history, specifically Article 28, states that all children have the right to a primary education, which should be free.

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights also states that *“Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory.”*

Who is Out of School? The Reality

Despite these multiple global commitments, according to UIS data for the school year ending in 2018, about 258 million children and youth are out of school, including 59 million children of primary school age. And many more who are enrolled fail to complete or finish school and not achieving expected learning outcomes. From 2000 until 2007, significant progress was made in reducing the number of out of school children (OOSC). The number of OOSC was reduced by almost half. By 2008, however, enrolments started to stall and progress stagnated, and in some countries the number of OOSC increased. With many countries involved in protracted conflict and the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, the number of OOSC is likely to dramatically increase over the next few years.

OOSC are the most marginalised children, facing multiple and overlapping barriers to access. These barriers include, for example, children in poverty; those facing social or cultural barriers to education; and children burdened by crisis and conflict.

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, in developing countries children from the poorest families are four times more likely to be out of school, compared to the richest 20% of households.² The poorest

¹ Sustainable Development Goal 4: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
<https://sdg4education2030.org/the-goal>

² UNESCO EFA GMR. *Education for All: Achievement and Challenges*. Cited in *Global Education Campaign. September 2016. Financing Matters: A Toolkit for Domestic Financing for Education*. 2015.

are five times less likely to complete a full cycle of primary education than the richest in the developing world.³

More than 150 million children aged five to 17 - half of them under 11 - are victims of forced labour. These children often miss out on education.⁴

The UN estimates that 130 million girls between the age of six and 17 are out of school and 15 million girls of primary-school age - half of them in sub-Saharan Africa - will never enter a classroom.⁵ Girls are four times more likely to be out of school than boys from the same background.⁶ Fewer than two in three girls in low-income countries complete primary school.⁷

According to UNHCR, education data analysed in 2019, indicates that overall enrolment rates for refugees has remained largely stable since UNHCR synthesised education data in 2016. The first annual global report on education, found a net enrolment rate of 63% (a Gross Enrolment Rate of 77 per cent⁸) of refugee children at primary school⁹ - compared to 91% of all children across the world.¹⁰ Less than half of refugee children who start primary school make it to secondary school.¹¹

Almost one in five children live in countries affected by conflict. Children living in conflict-affected areas are 30% less likely to complete primary school.¹² Girls are almost two and a half times more likely to be out of primary if they live in conflict-affected countries, according to Education Cannot Wait.¹³

TheirWorld reports that, *“Around 37 million children have their education disrupted each year because of environmental threats. In South Asia, 18,000 schools were shut in 2017 following damage or destruction in the region’s worst flooding in years.”*¹⁴

According to UNESCO (2020), at one point during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, 191 countries had implemented nationwide or localized school closures, resulting in over 91 per cent of enrolled students, or 1.5 billion people, not being able to go to school. An analysis by UNHCR and the Malala Fund has estimated that half of all refugee girls in school will not return when classes reopen.¹⁵

³ Ibid.

⁴ Watt, Ewan. “20 reasons why, in 2020, there are still 260 million children out of school.” Their World. 7 February 2020. <https://theirworld.org/news/20-reasons-why-260m-children-are-out-of-school-in-2020>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ UNHCR. *Coming Together for Refugee Education*.

⁹ UNHCR. *Refugee Education 2023: A Strategy for Inclusion*. 2019.

¹⁰ Watt, Ewan. “20 reasons why, in 2020, there are still 260 million children out of school.” Their World. 7 February 2020. <https://theirworld.org/news/20-reasons-why-260m-children-are-out-of-school-in-2020>.

¹¹ UNHCR. *Coming Together for Refugee Education*.

¹² Watt, Ewan. “20 reasons why, in 2020, there are still 260 million children out of school.” Their World. 7 February 2020. <https://theirworld.org/news/20-reasons-why-260m-children-are-out-of-school-in-2020>.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ UNHCR. *Coming Together for Refugee Education*.

Children with disabilities face challenges in education access. According to Their World¹⁶:

“Children with disabilities are more likely to miss out on school than other children. Even if they go to school, they are more likely to leave before finishing their primary education. For children who are already marginalised, such as girls and children living in rural areas, a disability creates an additional barrier to accessing education.”

The UN's **2018 Disability and Development Report** finds, *“Persons with disabilities are less likely to attend school and complete primary education and more likely to be illiterate than persons without disabilities.”* Available data shows that, on average, one in three children with disabilities of primary school age is out of school, compared with one in seven children without disabilities.¹⁷ In a sampling of 23 countries, on average, persons without disabilities have seven years of schooling and persons with disabilities have five years.¹⁸

These are just a few of the many barriers to education. Other barriers often cited include safety and security in school and on the way to school; insufficient educational infrastructure, shortages of qualified teachers and teaching and learning materials; discrimination based on ethnicity or language; and insufficient sanitation and hygiene facilities and materials.

The mismatch between the educational reality that children experience around the world and what governments have committed to through global commitments and human rights treaties is what Human Rights Watch calls the “education deficit.”¹⁹ Their report cautions, *“This [education deficit] not only undermines the fundamental human right to education, but has real and dire consequences for global development, and entire generations of children.”*

II. The case for increased funding for the most marginalised

If the global community is to meet its commitment of universal basic education (which would include primary and lower secondary) by 2030, in line with SDG4, then more financial (and other) resources are needed and more efficient use of available resources is required.

In 2015, UNESCO estimated an annual gap of USD\$39 billion for the SDG 4 targets.²⁰ The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity (2016) has estimated it to be even higher, at USD\$1.2 trillion.²¹ These estimates, however, come before the full impact of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic is realised, and other stressors such as climate change resulting in forced migration, economic distress, and education deficits.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. ***Disability and Development Report: Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities.*** 2018.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Human Rights Watch. ***The Education Deficit: Failures to Protect and Fulfill the Right to Education in Global Development Agendas.*** 2016.

²⁰ UNESCO. ***Pricing the right to education: The cost of reaching new targets by 2030.*** (Policy Paper No.18). Education for All Global Monitoring Report. 2015.

²¹ Education Commission. ***The Learning Generation: Investing in education for a changing world.*** A Report by the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity. 2016.

What are the costs/benefits of education for children?

The benefits to education

Extensive literature exists on the economic, social, health, and other benefits of education, with primary education being an important foundation for further learning. For example,

- The private average global rate of return to one extra year of schooling is about 9 percent a year and very stable over decades.²²
- Private returns to schooling are higher in low-income countries by about one percentage point relative to high-income countries.²³
- Research suggests education can make communities less vulnerable to climate shocks.²⁴
- Women's education is strongly and significantly associated with a decline in malnutrition.
- Increasing girls' primary school enrolment by 20% is expected to decrease infant mortality rate before age one by an average of 4 deaths per 1000 births.²⁵
- Fertility rates decrease by 5-10% with every additional year of school a girl attends.²⁶
- African women with seven or more years of schooling tend to marry 5 years later than women with no education.

The economic returns to education are even higher for disadvantaged groups and low-income countries. For example,

- Women continue to experience higher average rates of return to schooling.²⁷
- A dollar invested in an additional year of schooling, particularly for girls, generates earnings and health benefits of USD\$10 in low-income countries and nearly USD\$4 in lower-middle income countries.²⁸
- Returns are higher in low-income countries.²⁹
- Investing in out of school children can increase GDP by up to 7% in poor countries³⁰; providing remedial education to the out of school children of past generations can further increase these gains.³¹
- 171 million people can be lifted out of poverty if all students in low-income countries left school with basic reading skills.

²² Psacharopoulos, George and Harry Antony Patrinos. *Returns to Investment in Education: A Decennial Review of the Global Literature*. Policy Research Working Paper No, 8402. April 2018.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Milan Thomas, Nicholas Burnett, and Kenza Bouhaj. *The Price of Exclusion: The Economic Cost of Out of School Children in Colombia*. Qatar: Educate A Child, 2015.

²⁵ UNICEF, *Quality Primary Education: The potential to transform society in a Single Generation*, 1999.

²⁶ Psacharopoulos, G. and H. A. Patrinos, *Education: Past, Present and Future Global Challenges* World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 5626. 1994.

²⁷ Psacharopoulos, George and Harry Antony Patrinos. *Returns to Investment in Education: A Decennial Review of the Global Literature*. Policy Research Working Paper No, 8402. April 2018.

²⁸ Education Commission. *The Learning Generation: Investing in education for a changing world*. A Report by the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity. 2016.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ EAC and Results for Development, *A Moral Obligation, An Economic Priority: The Urgency of Enrolling Out of School Children*. Qatar: Educate A Child. 2013.

³¹ Ibid.

The Chronic Poverty and Education Policy Guide notes “*Education policies and programmes that succeed in reaching and teaching children from chronically poor backgrounds are associated with faster and more equitable economic growth, more inclusive and cohesive societies, and social transformations, including greater gender equity.*”³²

The cost of not educating all children

EAC commissioned Results for Development (R4D) to conduct research on consequences for not educating children.³³ They found that it is more expensive to not educate a child than it is to educate a child. When children do not benefit from primary education, OOSC will earn significantly less over their lifetimes. This economic loss is far greater than what it would cost to achieve universal primary education in developing countries. In some countries, the economic loss due to OOSC exceeds a full year of national average economic growth. The economic cost of OOSC tends to be highest in countries that have experienced slow growth in the past decade, suggesting that providing a quality primary education for all could contribute to reducing economic inequality between and within countries.³⁴ In a study of 20 countries, R4D showed that the estimated economic gain from achieving universal primary education exceeds the estimated increase in public spending required to enroll those children in primary school.³⁵ They concluded that “[U]ntil Universal Primary Education is reached, out of school children will continue to represent a costly underinvestment in developing countries.”³⁶

Quality education is key to achieving other SDGs

Education is not only an end in itself, but also a means to achieving a broad development agenda, as outlined in the UN Sustainable Development Goals. How can one talk about achieving many of the SDGs without equitable access to education and in particular to primary education, which is the foundation for further formal learning and lifelong learning, improved quality of life, and decent work?

For example, the following SDGs are dependent on access to quality education:

- SDG 1: the elimination of poverty and prospects for a better economic future;
- SDG 3: improved health;
- SDG 5: gender equality;
- SDG 8: decent work and economic growth;
- SDG 10: reduced inequalities; and
- SDG 16: peace, justice and strong institutions.

³² Hossain, Naomi, et al. **Education Policy Guide Chronic Poverty and Education: A guide to what works in policy and practice.** Chronic Poverty Advisory Network. Policy Guide 1. 2017.

³³ See for example, ***A Moral Obligation, An Economic Priority: The Urgency of Enrolling Out of School Children, Exclusion from Education: The Economic Cost of Out of School Children in 20 Countries, The Price of Exclusion: The Economic Cost of Out of School Children in Colombia, The Economic Cost of Out-of-School Children in Southeast Asia***, and a Results for Development Infographic entitled “*Hidden Burden: How much do developing economies lose due to out of school children?*”

³⁴ EAC and Results for Development, ***A Moral Obligation, An Economic Priority: The Urgency of Enrolling Out of School Children***. Qatar: Educate A Child. 2013.

³⁵ Thomas, Milan, with Nicholas Burnett, ***Exclusion from Education: The Economic Cost of Out of School Children in 20 Countries***. Qatar: Educate A Child, 2013.

³⁶ Results for Development. *Costs of Not Educating OOSC, Infographic: Hidden Burden: How much do developing economies lose due to out of school children?* 2013.

*Education Transforms Lives*³⁷ and *The Investment Case for Education and Equity* provide an overview of the numerous ways in which education advances the Sustainable Development Goals, “underscore[ing] the notion that sustainable development for all countries is only truly possible through comprehensive cross-sector efforts that begin with education.”³⁸

The increased costs associated with educating all OOSC

While some OOSC are expected to eventually enter school in the future, in most cases one or two years late, additional financial resources are needed to accommodate them. For example, qualified teachers (training and salaries); education infrastructure; teaching and learning materials, and food security will be needed.

In addition, there are increased costs to reach the most marginalised OOSC, who, without targeted interventions may never enter school. Specific interventions might include cash transfer programmes for children living in poverty, school grants, specialised teacher training to address issues of discrimination and psychosocial health, targeted enrolment campaigns and house-to-house outreach, among others. More funds are needed to implement these kinds of targeted interventions.

OOSC are the most marginalised children, facing multiple and overlapping barriers to access, including children in poverty; those facing social or cultural barriers to education; and children burdened by crisis and conflict. According to *Financing Matters: A Toolkit for Domestic Financing for Education*³⁹,

“Increased and better targeted financing is a prerequisite for equitable education – and, fundamentally, the realisation of the right to education. The failure of governments to address equity has led to unequal education experiences in most countries. There is a recurrent pattern of exclusion of some learners such as girls and women, persons with disabilities, racial, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, and those living in underserved areas. Those who lack a quality education are almost always drawn from the ranks of the poorest, most marginalised and hardest-to reach groups.”

To realise the vision of quality education for all and bridge the education financing gap to achieve that, there is a lot of discussion currently about the need for “innovative financing,” or calls for reaching out to “non-traditional donors,” and “engaging the private sector.” What does this all mean? And how does this relate to EAC’s work?

III. Innovative Financing – What does it mean?

Strained national budgets, and decreases in international aid for education, has led to growing interest in using “innovative financing” mechanisms for the education sector. A number of financing instruments and arrangements in education have been proposed, with some recent experimentation. However, there is no formally defined definition of “innovative financing” in the education sector and a “*lack of empirical research supporting the claim that innovative financing mechanisms can address the education funding gap*”.⁴⁰ Organisationally defined definitions, though, are available and informative.

³⁷ UNESCO. *Education Transforms Lives*. 2013

³⁸ UNICEF. *The Investment Case for Education and Equity*. 2014

³⁹ Right to Education, *Financing Matters: A Toolkit for Domestic Financing for Education*. 2017

⁴⁰ Avelar, Marina, Arushi Terway, and Marina Dreux Frotte. *Innovative financing for education: a systematic literature review*. NORRAG Working. Paper No. 11. July 2020.

According to the *Education Commission Innovative Financing Recommendations: Background Paper for the Learning Generation*, innovative financing refers to “new or novel ways to generate predictable, additional and sustainable finance” (Filipp, 2014) and “the raising of funds from unconventional sources or mechanisms to make existing funds ‘go further’” (Rose & Steer et al, 2013; interviews with Steer, Gustafsson-Wright, Atinc, March 2014).⁴¹

In its July 2020 working paper, *Innovative financing for education: a systematic literature review*, Norrag defines innovative financing as an “approach [that] looks for non-traditional ways to raise new funds and to spend existing funds in more efficient and effective ways through the use of market-like practices.”

Despite the enthusiasm of some, that same Norrag policy paper notes, “Alongside the enthusiasm, there also exists skepticism and polarizing debates, primarily around the engagement of the private sector in financing and delivery of education as a public good.”⁴²

What is relevant for the focus of this occasional paper are the general principles embedded in definitions of “innovative financing” and how in their own ways, EAC and its partners are innovating to ensure the most marginalised children are able to access a quality primary education by ensuring additional targeted resources. Key principles include:

- creating targeted methodological approaches to reaching marginalised children;
- mobilising more financial resources by involving nontraditional donors;
- making education a shared responsibility; not just a public sector responsibility;
- focussing on outcomes; and
- using available resources more efficiently and effectively.

EAC’s multi-faceted approach to ensuring quality primary education for all includes seeking out new sources of funding and focussing those resources on the most marginalised children. EAC and partners do this by:

- making available Qatar government funds and funds mobilised from EAA resource partners;
- using a “co-funding” model with implementing partners to leverage additional funding;
- establishing partnerships (in some cases multi-party) with bilateral and multilateral organisations, not only to share the financing burden, but improve the effectiveness of how available resources are deployed through better coordination;
- supporting innovative EAC partner approaches to mobilise additional financial and other resources; and
- advocating for specialised financing of innovations designed to maximise results.

Many proponents of “innovative financing” believe the for-profit private sector are important sources of additional financing and innovation. However, the not-for-profit sector can also provide important sources of additional funding, with innovation and outcomes as the focus.

⁴¹ Education Commission. *The Learning Generation: Investing in education for a changing world*. A Report by the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity. 2016.

⁴² Avelar, Marina, Arushi Terway, and Marina Dreux Frotte. *Innovative financing for education: a systematic literature review*. NORRAG Policy Paper No. 11. July 2020.

IV. Increasing Resources for the most marginalised – EAC’s Approach

Educate A Child’s mandate is to trigger significant breakthroughs and a material difference in the lives of children who have no access to quality primary education, in particular for the most marginalised segments of society. EAC specifically targets out of school children and children at the primary level of education. The most marginalised segments of society, while most in need, are often the ones with the least access to quality public services, including education. As noted earlier, these include children experiencing different forms of discrimination, including girls, children with disabilities, and ethnic/language minorities; children living in areas of conflict or disaster; children living in rural areas, urban slums, or in extreme poverty; mobile populations including refugees, internally displaced people, and economic migrants; among others.

To achieve its mandate, EAC works with a variety of implementing partners, including multi-lateral agencies like the United Nations, and international and national NGOs. The partnerships are established to implement projects which provide education opportunities for the most disadvantaged OOSC. For the last several years, EAC collaborated more directly with bilateral and multilateral aid agencies and multilateral development banks to mobilise additional resources for the most marginalised. This helped to ensure available resources target OOSC and are used more efficiently to coordinate interventions. EAC and its partners also work directly with the private sector.

EAC partner approach to mobilising additional financial resources

EAC recognises that funding for primary education, in particular for the most marginalised OOSC, is insufficient. EAC’s overall approach to address this challenge is a dual one – allocating education financing to support innovative approaches, and ensuring creative approaches to apply resources for the most marginalised children. EAC and its partners utilise a variety of funding models and approaches to leverage additional monetary and other resources to reach the most marginalised children.

Since launched in 2012, EAA/EAC’s direct financial commitment of nearly USD\$681 million has leveraged funds of more than USD\$1.1 billion in partner co-funding. Total funding for EAC-supported projects now exceeds USD\$1.85 billion. EAC’s co-funding requirement drives partners to find additional funds, in some cases, in innovative ways.

Public-Private Partnerships

Building Tomorrow, an EAC-project partner in Uganda, utilises a “public-private hybrid schools” model. Co-funding is sourced from individuals and families, organisations, universities, and business from the U.S., and local in-kind contributions for school construction such as volunteer labour, and donations of land, sand and water from communities in Uganda. A tri-partite Memorandum of Understanding was negotiated between Building Tomorrow and the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development. The agreement ensures that Education District Councils provide qualified teachers, school furniture, and textbooks to all newly constructed Building Tomorrow schools, as well as maintain the schools once constructed. Thereafter, schools are handed over to the communities and funded through the government’s universal primary education budget as public schools.

Supporting Government

All EAC-supported projects must align with government policies and programmes, and work closely with them to ensure more education opportunities for OOSC. The **buildOn** organisation, operating in six EAC countries, works with community members to help them build their own schools, while local governments play an active role in supporting the schools with teachers, supervision, curriculum, and school materials, as well as planning/supporting the growth of the schools by allowing additional grades and providing teachers. Like Building Tomorrow, **Plan International** has an MOU with the Ministry of Education in Ghana to cover teacher salaries, teaching and learning materials and furniture to primary schools where the project operates.

Private Sector Engagement

In addition to the “public-private hybrid schools” model of Building Tomorrow described above, EAC and partners have directly engaged the private sector to support projects. For example, Exxon/Mobil Foundation funding helps support projects with **UNICEF** in Nigeria (reaching over 500,000 OOSC) and **RISE/Angola** (to reach 24,000 OOSC). RISE also receives co-funding from BP/Angola.

Bharti Foundation in India, the philanthropic arm of Bharti Enterprises, not only implemented an EAC co-funded project, they also provided financing for five other EAC projects in India, and in Nigeria and Uganda.

EAC partnered with **Oando Foundation**, part of a large oil company, Oando PLC, in Nigeria to reach over 60,000 OOSC. Staff and some other project costs were covered by Oando PLC. Oando also worked with local and international companies to support project objectives, which included provision of sanitary ware for latrines built by the project, and solar-powered ICT centers. Oando PLC supported advocacy for education through its participation in the Global Business Coalition on Education.

Girl Child Network, an EAC partner working in Kenya, has an agreement with a private firm which provides them with sanitary towels to distribute to schools. A salt company provides salt to schools and also supports 20 girls each year with school fees. And a local mobile phone service provider, constructs latrines and water tanks in selected schools.

During the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, some governments and EAC partners were able to work with local mobile phone service providers to offer free or subsidised data packages to ensure the continuation of learning through online platforms.

The Power of Local Ownership - Recognizing and using financial and in-kind government and community contributions

EAC recognises and values in-kind contributions from government and communities as part of a partner’s co-funding obligation. These funds are an important source of additional project funding and also ensure local buy-in and commitment. In-kind contributions are capped at 25 percent of the total partner co-funding contribution to ensure that additional financial resources are mobilised to support the project.

Several EAC partners require communities to provide monetary or in-kind contributions to the project, in particular for school/classroom construction. In Ethiopia, **imagine1day** works with communities to construct, refurbish and renovate additional classrooms, and equip schools to create new access to

education and improve education quality. **Building Tomorrow** has a similar approach and requires the partner community to commit to donating three acres of land and approximately 15,000 cumulative hours of unskilled volunteer labour and materials (water, sand, and gravel) to build their school. **buildOn's** school construction process follows a clear methodology that ensures strong involvement of communities from the site selection to the actual building.

This sense of ownership in many cases has led communities to contribute beyond what is required, with many EAC partners reporting that communities are funding construction of additional classrooms, offices, teacher housing, and WASH facilities; or paying for additional community teachers. These contributions often go well beyond what is required from the partner by EAC and is a sustainable approach to ensuring education provision is assured for the long term.

Community Engagement - Volunteers – A low cost sustainable solution

Many EAC partners identify key individuals within communities in which they work and engage them directly to be key agents of change within the project. This is a low or no cost investment in human capacity, in particular to assist in identifying, enrolling, and monitoring student retention. Some EAC partners use local community members as volunteers; or in some cases provide small stipends. The **British Council** in Pakistan mobilises *Mohalla* Committees who serve as the liaison between the education department, schools and communities. They train and deploy community members as *ILMBASSADORS* (Education Ambassadors) who actively recruit OOSC into schools.

Building Tomorrow (BT) taps the often un- or under-utilised resource of recent university graduates. They train them as Fellows to provide two years of capacity building support for head teachers and school management committees at each newly constructed school, as well as at government schools. These Fellows also train parents, retired civil servants, and influential community leaders as Community Education Volunteers (CEVs) deployed at all project schools. BT Fellows and CEVs identify, enrol, and ensure the retention of OOSC through community mobilisation efforts and house-to-house visits. CEVs with the required academic background also provide support to teachers in the classroom. Once activated, CEVs become the lasting connection between the community and school, working closely with head teachers and the school management committees, outlasting the two-year tenure of Building Tomorrow Fellows and thus a key element of sustainability. Near the end of their two-year fellowship, the Fellows design and implement social entrepreneur projects, to further support school-communities. Several of these projects have evolved into stable civil society organisations. The training provided to the Fellows and the experience gained from starting up and implementing a social entrepreneurship project helps them to develop the skills necessary for their further employment. BT Fellows are paid a stipend, but the CEVs are volunteers.

When EAC partner **Girl Child Network/Kenya** (GCN) first enters a community, they immediately identify “Key Community Gate Keepers”. These include religious and community leaders. The Gate Keepers map the leaders’ areas of influence, work with them to gain their support, and then use them (based on their circles of influence and power within communities) to mobilise communities. The Gate Keepers also engage in “community conversations” to challenge social norms and identify barriers to access and retention, find pockets of large numbers of OOSC, and establish monitoring and tracking committees as part of a “social contract” with communities. GCN also identifies, trains and works with other volunteers such as “positive social deviants,” and “male champions.” These are individuals who have overcome some

of the adverse effects of adverse cultural practices to become important advocates for change in their communities.

Building on traditional Ethiopian Coffee Ceremonies, **imagine1day** uses “coffee conversations” with school communities. They discuss the relevance of education, strategies for enrolling OOSC, retention, improving school attendance rates, school improvement plans, and community contributions.

In India, **Educate Girls** has a team of volunteers known as *Team Balika*, who are trained on skills such as problem solving, decision-making, and communication to identify, enrol and support OOSC. Educate Girls also uses the *Team Balika* volunteers to establish girls’ clubs known as the *Bal Sabha* in target schools. The girls learn skills such as leadership, decision making, confidence building, public speaking, interpersonal skills, empathy and personal health hygiene. Members of the *Bal Sabha* clubs gain confidence and then undertake child-to-child sensitisation to persuade those still out of school to enrol.

imagine1day and **Girl Child Network** establish and build capacity of girls’ clubs through training and provision of supplies, with the aim to enrol and retain OOSC girls through peer influence. The girls’ club members serve as girls advocates and advisors. The clubs interact with the community by attending community gatherings and visiting homes of OOSC girls to convince parents to send their girls to school. In the case of imagine1day, the clubs will present poems, songs and perform drama to create awareness on girls’ right to education, the value of education, and parent’s roles in their daughter’s education.

Engaging communities in project implementation helps to ensure local commitment, reduce project costs, expand the size of the “project team,” and facilitate sustainability.

1. Targeting funding for the hardest to reach at the primary level

EAC has a singular focus on enrolment and retention of children at the primary level; in particular the hardest-to-reach. This specialisation allows EAC to concentrate efforts to maximise impact, without spreading resources too thin by trying to cover many levels of education. This may include added financing for OOSC, which requires a co-funding match, within a much larger education project, i.e., Global Partnership for Education (GPE) or the World Bank. An emphasis on creative ways to increase access and quality for marginalised children presents interesting options for targeting specialised funding support.

2. Supporting and scaling up projects with proven success

As noted, EAC believes partnerships are critical to its operational framework. EAC recognises that there are many organisations already actively working to enroll and keep children in quality primary education programmes. These organisations have extensive on the ground knowledge about the challenges that out of school children face in their particular context, and implement effective solutions.

EAC identifies partners with proven success and provides technical and financial resources to scale up workable models, rather than piloting programmes that may or may not succeed. EAC’s investment in partner local knowledge and experience provides the opportunity to scale effective solutions quickly and more efficiently, with reduced start-up costs. EAC supports and scales programmes that can enrol large numbers of OOSC (at least 10,000 per year). By building on existing capacity and programmatic infrastructure already in place, EAC is able to keep costs down and expedite service delivery. This frees EAC resources to fund more projects and reach more OOSC. Scaling effective models also brings to light

the issues and challenges with OOSC, the barriers impeding access to education, and possible effective solutions, thus serving both advocacy and resource mobilisation functions.

3. Mobilisation and Integration of different funding sources

EAC utilises a co-financing model where EAC and other donor funds are jointly used to leverage other resource providers and implementing partner organisations. Sharing the financial burden ensures wider buy-in and commitment and enables EAC to stretch its financial resources even further and reach more OOSC. For example, EAC has co-financed projects with KOICA, the Korean Development Agency, using two different funding models. For three projects, KOICA and EAC each provided 25 percent of total project funds, to match the 50 percent contributed by the implementing partners. In the second model, EAC and KOICA each funded 40 percent of total project funds while the Korean NGOs contributed 20 percent of the total.

In some cases, EAC coordinates with multiple partners, sometimes utilising several different funding mechanisms, including co-financing with bilateral and multilateral aid agencies and multilateral development banks. In Mali, EAC partnered with the Islamic Development Bank, Qatar Fund for Development, the Government of Mali, and an **Education Development Centre-led NGO consortium** through a combination of grants and loans to fund a project to reach almost 600,000 OOSC.

Some EAC projects actively build capacity of schools and communities in mobilising resources themselves which aids in the sustainability of the school

EAC partners **ZOCs** (Zambia Open Community Schools) in Zambia and **Save the Children** in Cote d' Ivoire build capacity of and supply seed funding to school-communities or parents. They implement Income Generating Activities (IGA) to provide additional resources to schools or families. ZOCs provides school managers with management and entrepreneurship training. They also offer vulnerable community schools revolving loans with start-up capital for income generating activities. IGAs help to sustain the operations of the school, thus easing the pressure on families to provide for school expenses.

imagine1Day, EAC partner in Ethiopia, directly supports the guardians of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs) with training and seed money for income producing schemes. One example is animal breeding, which enables them to pay for school supplies. They also train PTA members from target schools in school management, leadership and income generation activities. Schools and the communities use the profits from IGAs to improve infrastructure, equip and furnish classrooms and purchase teaching and learning materials.

4. Multi-sector linkages

The barriers which affect educational access and retention are varied and often include sectors besides education, thus requiring multi-sectoral solutions. Many EAC partners find other implementing partners to support complementary or supplementary interventions to address the holistic needs of OOSC. Other EAC partners have strategic partnerships and direct referral links to complementary services to support OOSC and their families to address barriers to access and retention.

EAC partner, **ALIGHT**, has a strategic partnership with Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), the largest social safety programme in Pakistan, to enroll and retain children in the formal school system. BISP, through the *Waseela-e-Taleem* programme, enrolls poor families' children in formal schools and provides them a quarterly stipend on the condition of meeting the 70% attendance criterion each month.

School Management Committees and Parent Teacher Associations are linked to BISP district office to refer deserving OOSC to BISP *Waseela-e-Taleem* programme.

An intended outcome of **Girl Child Network's** project in Kenya is to improve OOSC access to social protection schemes and services. Although the government has in place laws and policies supporting social protection for vulnerable members of the society, including orphans and vulnerable children from resource-poor households, GCN reports that very few community members are aware of these programmes. The project conducts policy mapping, develops policy briefs and creates awareness in target communities regarding government run social protection programmes supporting education of children.

Government-run protection schemes in Kenya include: Older Persons Cash Transfer (OPCT), the Cash Transfer for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CT-OVC), the Hunger Safety Net Program (HSNP), the Urban Food Subsidy Cash Transfer (UFS-CT), and the Persons with Severe Disability Cash Transfer (PWSD-CT) and social insurance such as NHIF and NSSF.

5. Consortia – the power of working together

Two important requirements for eligibility of EAC funding is scope (the ability to reach at minimum 10,000 OOSC per year) and co-funding. To accommodate local NGOs who might not be able to meet these criteria on their own, EAC has encouraged organisations to work collaboratively through consortia. EAC's project in Mali, headed by the **Education Development Center**, is implemented through a partnership of 12 local and national NGOs in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education. Aide et Action partnered with as many as 23 other international and national NGOs in Cambodia. Consortia of international and local NGOs offer an opportunity to capitalise on the thematic and geographic expertise of each organization, help smaller NGOs access funding for OOSC they would not otherwise have, and expand the scale of effective practices.

6. The Power of Partnership

Partnerships are central to EAC's ability to reach over 10 million OOSC in just a few years. This accomplishment shows that through partnerships even the most intractable global challenges can be addressed. EAC's co-funding model, perhaps its most defining feature, promotes and necessitates partnerships, ensuing a shared commitment and an opportunity to leverage limited financial resources.

But partnership to EAC is more than just a financial contribution. EAC leverages the expertise, experience, capacity and relationships of our partners. There are organisations with expertise in raising awareness of issues, developing widespread networks and mobilising resources. Therefore, partnerships come in many forms within EAC: implementing, strategic, resource and advocacy. Each partner adding different, yet complementary value. At the heart of each partnership is the desire to reach the many millions of children worldwide who are out of school. It is only by bringing together the combined knowledge, skills and experiences of these organisations that we will be able to help millions of children realise their basic human right to receiving an education.

Partnerships create greater impact – EAC could not have achieved its goal without harnessing the power of partnership.

V. Conclusion and Call to Action

EAC's approach to finding and focussing resources for the most marginalised OOSC offers a number of opportunities, as enumerated below.

- Scaling-up existing projects can be more effective and efficient than starting a new project as they build on experience, existing capacity, and programmatic infrastructure already in place to keep costs down and expedite service delivery.
- Scaling-up of successful models promotes collaboration around effective practices, highlighting solutions to reach the most marginalised OOSC.
- EAC's co-funding and co-financing models ensures a wider spread of EAC resources reaching more countries and more children, as the funding burden is shared.
- A singular focus on primary level OOSC ensures resources are targeted for the most marginalised.
- Early engagement and co-financing with bilateral and multilateral aid agencies and multilateral development banks helps to ensure resources are used in a coordinated way to maximise reach and impact.

EAC's approach, however, is not without its challenges. These include:

- Finding the "right" partners with overlapping institutional mandate of and experience in enrolling and retaining the most marginalised OOSC at the primary level, with the ability to mobilise the required minimum 50% co-funding.
- Co-funding must support activities either complementary or supplementary to what is supported by EAC and available during the life of the proposed EAC project. Therefore the "timing" of the co-funding must align with the proposed project.
- Aligning programme development, administrative, and reporting processes and procedures between organisations, in particular with bilateral and multilateral agencies and development banks, takes time.
- The length of time required to identify and develop these kinds of partnerships often requires new types of legal of agreements and financing instruments. Sometimes this requires multiple agreements and different kinds of financing arrangements with different partners for the same programme.
- Many OOSC are in conflict-affected countries. Resources for children in these areas generally come from a donor's Education in Emergency/humanitarian funding envelopes, which are often allocated on an annual funding cycle. However, many conflicts or crises are protracted, requiring funding over many years. EAC provides multi-year funding, but its co-funding model requires potential partners to secure co-funding for the life of the project. Annual funding cycles make it challenging for partners to commit co-funding beyond the first year of a project.

With many millions of children not receiving a quality primary education, the number is likely to increase in the short term due to the continuation of protracted conflicts, the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, and increases in climate-related disasters. It is critical more resources be targeted to the most marginalised children, if the world is to meet the globally-approved objective of Education for All by 2030 and realise the economic and social benefits that accrue. "Innovative financing" holds core principles inherent in EAC and its partners' work. EAC and its partners have gained invaluable experience in finding and focussing funding for the most marginalised, while recognizing more needs to be done. In summary:

- EAC has brought and mobilised USD\$680 million and leveraged an additional USD\$1.1 billion in co-funding and co-financing, specifically targeted to educating the most marginalised out of school children in more than 50 countries since 2012.
- EAC and its implementing partners have mobilised additional financial and technical resources from the private sector.
- EAC and its implementing partners have entered into partnership with governments supportive of the need to reach the hardest-to-reach to combine resources and share the burden, ensuring more education opportunities for OOSC.
- EAC's coordination with other funders, such as bilateral and multilateral agencies and development banks, has multiple benefits. Resources can be used to build on effective practices, which avoids the need for organisations to invest in pilot activities or duplicate activities, but rather use available funds to expand on the good work already being done. This coordinated approach can be more cost effective and allows each institution to extend the use of their respective resources to reach more children.
- EAC and partners have actively engaged school-communities in project implementation, through establishing and strengthening School Management Committees/Parent Teacher Associations; requiring communities to provide monetary or in-kind contributions to the project; and identifying key individuals within the community to act as change agents within the project at low or no cost. Engaging communities in project implementation ensures commitment, can reduce project costs, expand the size of the "project team," and facilitate sustainability.
- EAA, EAC and partner resource mobilisation and global and national advocacy efforts specific to out of school children have highlighted and kept the spotlight on the needs of the most marginalised. In line with the Incheon Declaration and Framework of Action, *"Education systems should reach out to, attract and retain those who are currently excluded or at risk of being marginalised."*

Moving forward, key strategies need to be employed, including,

- Development of more and diverse partnerships;
- Additional financial commitments specifically targeting OOSC;
- Identification and scaling-up of innovative and cost-effective programmes, which are sustainable; and
- Supporting a Global Agenda for addressing the issue of OOSC.

Stronger together, the global community is capable of educating all children.

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