

## **OVERVIEW OF WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS**

### **DEVELOPING A COORDINATED STRATEGY FOR ADDRESSING A COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION AGENDA IN AFRICA**

September 2008

*The World Bank Group-IMF African Society, Leadership Africa USA, and the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH) co-sponsored the workshop, "Developing a Coordinated Strategy for Addressing a Comprehensive Education Agenda in Africa," as part of the 2008 Ronald H. Brown series coordinated annually by the Constituency for Africa. The workshop included three panels featuring representatives from Multilateral Development Agencies, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and Private Sector Organizations who provided their perspective on the challenges and opportunities to join together in a common purpose to provide access to quality education throughout Africa. The workshop organizers recognize the importance of collaboration to address poverty reduction and that the needed changes must begin with quality education.*

*The conclusions and recommendations stemming from this education workshop form the basis of this initial report which is intended to influence strategies aimed at developing a comprehensive educational agenda in Africa.<sup>1</sup>*

---

<sup>1</sup> *Disclaimer: This document is a production of Leadership Africa USA and does not necessarily reflect the viewpoints of all the workshop's sponsors. A final report is forthcoming.*

## Developing a Coordinated Strategy for Education in Africa

### Opening Remarks

#### *Keynote Speaker:*

- *Ambassador Edith Grace Ssempala, Acting Senior Vice President, External Affairs, World Bank*

#### *Moderator/Chair:*

- *Ms. Beldina Auma, Chair, World Bank Group-IMF African Society*

In her introduction, Ms. Auma, chair of the World Bank Group-IMF African Society -- a 1,700-member body of Africans and friends who work at the World Bank and IMF-- pointed out that a pool of skilled citizens in key sectors is critical to addressing Africa's wide range of needs. There is no doubt that ultimately, reducing poverty in Africa will require high-quality education.

She added that in the past few years, the United States has been very successful in developing and funding an effective program to fight HIV/AIDS and malaria in Africa. Education is equally important, albeit in a different way. With smart investments in education, the United States has a chance to spur real progress toward sustainable development.

Keynote speaker Ambassador Ssempala, Acting Senior Vice President of External Affairs, World Bank Group, concurred with Ms. Auma's assessment, noting that the G.I. bill, enacted after World War II in the United States, played a major role in building a solid middle class and preparing the country for economic expansion. She added that building on efforts that are working in Africa today, the United States can support the efforts of Africans to gain access to the knowledge and skills that are so essential to long-term economic prosperity and security.

Ambassador Ssempala noted that actions in the education sector need to be balanced and designed in a way to support a process of economic growth which can in turn, draw on an increasingly educated and trained workforce pool and concurrently strengthen the resource base for education and training. According to the Ambassador, The World Bank Group is focusing on the following strategies – (i) to link demand for skills to the required critical output mass of higher skilled professionals in Africa and (ii) to focus on achieving results by improving technology-based quality education, capacity, access, and equity and by aligning both Bank assistance and other international donor support to strengthen synergies and leverage resources.

In commenting on the progress of education policy and delivery in Africa, she addressed both primary and post-primary education needs. Some countries in Africa are on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of universal primary schooling by 2015,

and others are making significant progress toward the goal. As of 2004, 96 percent of African children enrolled in primary school, and of these, 61 percent graduated.

But primary school, while critical, is simply not enough education to prepare people for jobs in a 21<sup>st</sup> -century economy. As more children finish primary school, there is a much greater demand for post-primary education. Currently many African students, particularly girls, do not continue on to secondary school, but this is changing; enrollment in secondary education is rising by 15 percent per year. And enrollment in tertiary education is rising faster in Africa than anywhere else in the world, at 9.5 percent per year.

One key problem in post-primary education, as in elementary schools, is student retention. For example, of African students who enroll in junior secondary school, only 30 percent graduate. And currently, less than 5 percent of Africa's population has a college education.

Ambassador Ssempala pointed out that Africa needs job creators, not just job seekers. Also needed are people who have the skills that employers require. It is critical to link the demand for skills to the educational programs being offered.

Access to technology is critical to competing in the world market and will require a significant focus on revitalizing Africa's universities and research institutions. The World Bank supports 33 programs in 26 African countries to establish and improve secondary and higher education and research institutions.

Ambassador Ssempala noted that the issue of "brain drain" of educated professionals choosing to seek employment outside Africa is an important one to be addressed in the region. While suggested solutions have included compensating developing countries for members of their talent pool who migrate, the bigger issue underpinning the brain drain phenomenon is to create enough growth within these countries so that the educated professionals feel that they have a place where they can make a contribution to their country's development.

In her closing remarks, Ambassador Ssempala reiterated that the World Bank recognizes the myriad of development challenges and opportunities for positive change in Africa, and has thus established the "Accelerating Development Outcomes in Africa: Progress and Change in the Africa Action Plan," to show how the World Bank Group would work in partnership with others to help every African country achieve as many of the MDGs as possible. Responding to demands expressed by countries and taking into account the Bank's core areas of expertise, the Plan contains eight thematic areas of which education is one. She noted that without education, African countries cannot build the skills for competitiveness in the global economy.

## **Perspectives from Select Non- Governmental Organizations**

*The NGO community (international and local) has played a critical role in the delivery of poverty-reducing projects in many African countries. This panel focused on how the NGO community can contribute to a coordinated education strategy for Africa.*

### *Panelists:*

- *Dr. Brenda Arrington, Director of Africa Projects, Academy for Educational Development*
- *Ms. Vivian Lowery Derryck, Senior Vice President & Chief, Global Strategies, Academy for Educational Development*
- *Dr. Clarence Hall, Director of the Office of Health & HIV/AIDS, Africare*
- *Dr. Molly Roth, Executive Director, OIC International*

### *Moderator:*

- *Dr. Julie Sullivan, President, the International Foundation for Education and Self Help (IFESH)*

In making introductions, Dr. Sullivan, who is President of IFESH -- a non-governmental organization which started 26 years ago with the vision of assisting African nations in helping to eradicate poverty, disease, and inequity through self-help partnership programs -- pointed out that when seeking to improve education, it is vital to draw on the knowledge, strengths, and priorities of African countries themselves. After all, they have already been working for some time to strengthen their educational systems. Often outside experts come in with advice on what to do, only to have government officials and education experts explain that they already have detailed plans for teacher training, strengthening the curriculum, and the like. They simply lack the capacity to carry out these plans.

Ms. Lowery Derryck, who is Senior Vice President & Chief of Global Strategies at AED, offered some lessons from her long career in expanding educational opportunities, particularly for girls in Africa. The areas of focus in post-primary education should now be:

- increasing access, particularly for girls;
- improving the quality of classes and programs;
- providing more training and continuing education for the workforce, both for primary school graduates and high school and college graduates.

Ms. Lowery Derryck also emphasized the need to build the political will and commitment to strengthen education in Africa. A sign of hope is the increasing number of public/private partnerships for education, involving the private sector, government, and nongovernmental organizations as equal partners.

Dr. Arrington, Director of Africa Projects of AED, discussed the education situation in Ethiopia. Since 1995, Ethiopia's primary school enrollment rate has risen from 20 percent to more than 90 percent. In general, Ethiopia's focus in primary education is shifting from

“quantity” to “quality” --improving student retention and achievement. Provision of quality education involves addressing the following questions:

- How can teachers manage very large classes? Is holding school in shifts a viable solution?
- Do students have adequate books and supplies?
- Are teacher salaries and working conditions good enough to prevent high rates of absenteeism?
- What are the reasons for student absenteeism and how can they be addressed?

Dr. Roth, Executive Director of OIC International, and other panel participants emphasized the importance of a wider development context. Education does not take place in a vacuum. Some of the related issues are gender equity (e.g. persuading parents that it is important to send girls to school), basic health care and nutrition, sanitation in school buildings, and overall economic progress – necessary in order to stem the “brain drain” of teachers and educated professionals, particularly from Africa’s rural communities.

Dr. Hall, Director of the Office of Health & HIV/AIDS, Africare, offered an assessment of a successful program that Africare is conducting with funding from the U.S. government program PEPFAR (the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief). The program makes school block grants to help orphans and vulnerable children and their schoolmates. Communities with high HIV rates in Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique, and Rwanda are included. Schools receive funding in exchange for waiving school fees for children affected by HIV/AIDS, of whom there are about 137,500 in the project regions. The money can be used to provide support to individual vulnerable children, but also to improve school infrastructure and services. Thus far, the rates of school enrollment and retention among orphans and vulnerable children are very encouraging. Perhaps even more importantly, the block grants – which indirectly help all the children in recipient schools -- are actually less expensive than paying the school fees of individual children.

### **Education Strategy in Africa and the Role of Development Agencies**

*This panel explored how multilateral agencies such as the World Bank have provided support for education reform in Africa and what synergies can be cultivated with a new U.S. education strategy for Africa.*

*Panelist:*

- *Dr. Jee Peng Tan, Education Advisor for the Africa Region, The World Bank Group*

*Moderator:*

- *Ms. Beldina Auma, Chair, World Bank Group – IMF African Society*

Dr. Tan, Education Advisor for the Africa Region, the World Bank Group, said that to help countries achieve the MDG of universal primary education, the World Bank coordinates a “fast track” education initiative. The program is dedicated to the idea that if a country has a credible plan to achieve universal primary schooling, the necessary resources will be made available. So far, 17 donors (not including the United States) and an equal number of

African countries are participating in the initiative. There is encouraging progress on quantitative indicators like average class size and how many students share a textbook.

The World Bank also supports analytical work aimed at helping governments evaluate policy tradeoffs, formulate workable policies, and implement them effectively. There is currently insufficient analysis on post-primary education, but the World Bank has recently produced a collaborative study, Accelerating Catch-Up: Tertiary Education and Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Dr. Tan described the agenda for education in Africa as the classic example of the three blind people who each describe an elephant differently, depending on which part of the body they are touching. No one has the whole picture, so working together is much more likely to be effective.

Encouraging policy dialogue within each country is also important. The World Bank emphasizes the need to engage parts of the government that are not directly involved in education – for example, finance ministers. Where does the strategy or program fit into the country's overall economic development plan? Is there consensus that it is a high priority? Engaging with local communities and constituent groups like parents is important as well.

Two other principles of the World Bank's education programs are to encourage donor coordination (for example, the 17 participating donors in the Fast Track Initiative discussed by Ambassador Ssempala), and to promote south-south cooperation. For example, a meeting held in Singapore in 2006 allowed African education ministers to engage firsthand with their counterparts in East Asia to learn how the latter countries have overcome obstacles to build strong educational systems.

Following Dr. Tan's presentation, there was a discussion with audience members focused on the role of the United States in promoting education in Africa.

It was pointed out that there are at least six U.S. government agencies working on education, so the potential for duplication or diffused focus certainly exists, absent a conscious effort to coordinate efforts. Also, the U.S. government now provides only about 30 percent of the development assistance coming from the United States – down from 70 percent in the 1970s. This means that coordination with other U.S. donors, such as foundations, private charities, and diaspora communities, should be a high priority.

Regional cooperation and U.S. participation in international coalitions is another sign of an effective approach. For example, a U.S. ambassador has now been named to the African Union, and USAID has signed a memorandum of understanding with the African Development Bank.

Collaboration can potentially bring many new insights and "best practices." In April 2008, for example, USAID held a summit on higher education that included more than 300 vice chancellors and presidents from all over the world as well as representatives of the private sector, foundations, and governments. The summit offered a chance to see how countries

can collectively use our best efforts and available resources to solve some of the most critical problems.

## **Unleashing the Potential of the Private Sector**

*The private sector, both international and local, is an important source of critical and innovative technologies and programs that can greatly assist in the delivery of quality education in Africa. This panel highlighted a few such projects and discussed the scope for more private sector involvement in a coordinated education strategy.*

### *Panelists:*

- *Ms. Tracey Duffy, Program Director, World Cocoa Foundation*
- *Ms. Terri O'Connor, Director of Global Government Affairs & Public Policy, Motorola*
- *Dr. S. Rangarajan, Senior Vice President of Engineering Solutions, World Space*

### *Moderator:*

- *Mr. Walker Williams, President & CEO, Leadership Africa USA*

Mr. Walker Williams, as moderator, introduced the third panel, which featured leaders from the U.S. private sector. Leadership Africa USA aims to promote leadership skills among African youth, particularly in post-conflict areas, so that the ongoing peace and reconciliation processes in these zones achieve successful results. LA USA currently works with students and youth in 10 African countries.

Ms. O'Connor, Director of Global Government Affairs & Public Policy, Motorola Inc., said that Motorola, Inc. has been working to provide sustainable ways of connecting poor communities in Africa to the Internet through wireless broadband. A great deal of educational content is available free online, so the benefits of connecting schools to these resources are significant. For example, many South African communities face significant teacher shortages. The Ulwazi eLearning Partnership brought together Hewlett Packard and Motorola to provide technology (including webcams and audio communication) that enables a single teacher to teach students in several classrooms in different communities.

Another South African project is being carried out in conjunction with the pan-African organization NEPAD (the New Partnership for Africa's Development). It connects several very remote rural areas to the Internet; in fact, one of the wireless links stretches for more than 180 kilometers. A similar rural connectivity project is now underway in Mozambique.

Ms. Duffey, Program Director, the World Cocoa Foundation, described her organization, the World Cocoa Foundation, which is composed of 70 companies (in many cases, competitors) dedicated to promoting a sustainable cocoa economy. Foundation members Mars Inc. and the Hershey Company started a project in West Africa to provide training for teachers and support to continue teaching in rural communities. Later, the project became a public/private partnership bringing USAID, IFESH, Winrock International, two Scandinavian chocolate producers, and local government officials together with Mars and

Hershey to provide teacher training and vocational training for youth in rural areas of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire.

Dr. Rangarajan, Senior Vice President of Engineering Solutions, World Space, explained that in the area of education, WorldSpace, which works with satellite communications technology, has focused on providing connectivity that is not dependent on the quality of a local Internet connection and can be solar-powered if necessary. The goal is to "make every computer a classroom."

Pilot projects have shown that the technology can work to deliver data under varied circumstances in Africa. Its potential is great: for example, it could help ease the need for printed textbooks, enable teachers to get updated information, allow scientists in the United States and elsewhere to give lectures to students in Africa without having to travel there, and reduce the need to bring people from far-flung locations to a central point like an African capital city for training. The service could be self-sustaining if, for example, schools make it available evenings and weekends for outside paid classes (e.g. computer training).

### **Concluding Remarks**

Following the panel sessions, Mr. Stan Straughter, former Chairman of the African-American Unity Caucus and Board member of the Constituency for Africa, highlighted some of the general themes that emerged from the workshop.

- Emphasize the need for a creative and flexible approach in addressing education reform in Africa.
- Emphasize the creation and development of public/private partnerships which bring governments, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector together as equal partners in carrying out a successful project.
- Promote broad consultation and coordination within African countries themselves, including among different government ministries, at the local government level, and between officials and project participants and beneficiaries.
- Ensure that U.S. government agencies working on education in Africa are coordinating their efforts and that increasingly significant nongovernmental donors, such as foundations, private charities, and diaspora communities, are also invited to collaborate and coordinate programs.
- Encourage strong coordination among international donors in coalitions and task forces dedicated to coordination on specific issues or in specific countries. Provide opportunities for educators and government officials in various countries to compare experiences and draw out best practices.
- Develop strategies to link development efforts in complementary sectors with education programs. Seldom can the success of an education initiative be divorced from other



factors, such as nutrition, sanitation, gender equity, and a standard of living that can attract and retain professionals.

### **Select Recommendations for a Coordinated Strategy for Addressing a Comprehensive Education Agenda in Africa**

- Invest in post-primary education - secondary, vocational and tertiary education
  - Teacher training & attendance
  - Retention & learning
  - School entry
  - Adequate facilities
- Allocate resources to other issues affecting quality education delivery and consumption
  - Promoting gender equity in the classroom (enrollment and completion rates of girls dramatically decline after primary school)
  - Increasing access to adequate sanitation
  - Stimulating infrastructure development
  - Increasing access to quality nutrition
- Support innovative financing mechanisms for education policy reform
- Support regional African institutions and their education reform policies through providing technical & financial assistance if needed
- Implement smart and efficient development assistance & donor agency coordination
- Provide incentives to private sector players to make smart investments in industries which have positive spillover effects in the education sector
- Consider joining the Education For All – Fast Track Initiative

## **Appendix: List of Participating Organizations**

The Africa Society  
African-American Unity Caucus  
The African PAC Organization  
Africa Unbound  
African Chamber of Commerce  
African Mundus  
ASK Foundation  
Atlas Economic Research Foundation  
BIG-Africa Partnerships Secretariat  
Bureau of African Affairs  
CANF Foundation  
DC Government  
Discovery Channel Global Education Partnership  
Embassy of The Gambia  
Embassy of the Republic of Namibia  
Embassy of the United Republic of Tanzania  
Embassy of the Republic of Mauritius  
Embassy of the Republic of Uganda  
The George Washington University  
GLAD-North America & the African Mundus Project  
Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva  
Howard University, School of Business  
The HOME Initiative  
Hoops for Africa  
Howard University  
Howard University School of Business, Department of Management  
IBM Global Business Services  
International Education  
International Finance Corporation  
The International Foundation for Education and Self Help  
Khabo-mabe On Time, Inc.  
Lansing MI-Dar es Salaam Tanzania  
Leadership Africa USA  
The Lincoln Group  
Macro International Inc.  
Miss Africa International Pageant, USA  
Monmouth College  
Motorola  
National Council of Negro Women: Bethune Program Development Center  
Office of the City Manger

Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa  
Potomac Job Corps Center  
Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.  
Roger Miller Restaurant  
Sister Cities International Project Partnership  
South African Jewelry Consortium  
Star of Bethlehem AME Church  
Unirights  
Universal Patient Record  
University of Delaware  
U.S. Agency for International Development  
Waste Wise  
The West African Women Association  
The West African Women Association Lagos chapter, Nigeria  
World Space

For more information contact: Shehnaz Rangwala, Leadership Africa USA. Email: [Shehnaz@leadershipafricausa.org](mailto:Shehnaz@leadershipafricausa.org) or  
Karelle Samuda, Leadership Africa USA. Email: [Karelle@leadershipafricausa.org](mailto:Karelle@leadershipafricausa.org)  
[www.leadershipafricausa.org](http://www.leadershipafricausa.org)

