EDUCATION STRATEGY 2010-2013
Children and young people’s right to education
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Photo: © Plan / Alf Berg

A volunteer teacher, trained by Plan, teaches English in Cambodia.
Foreword

Plan’s vision of a world in which all children realise their full potential is both powerful and achievable, because human rights and social justice are principles inherent in it. Achieving this vision depends on both girls and boys enjoying their right to good education, since girls especially face various obstacles to realising this right.

For education to be a means of individual and social transformation, we must envisage it as being beyond passive learning that merely helps to reinforce the status quo. We know that millions of children and young people in many parts of the world go through school systems learning little or nothing that can make a difference in their lives. Even so-called ‘quality education’ is often reduced to reading, writing, numeracy and uncritical learning. Plan is committed to holistic education that is rooted in the values of human rights and the promotion of gender equality.

For the next four years, this Strategy commits Plan to three strategic priorities – improving Equal Access, enhancing Quality and strengthening Education Governance. These priorities are interconnected. In addressing them, we will focus on both policies and practices. Education governance issues such as participation, finance, long-term planning, policies and accountability continue to pose challenges to the right to education of girls and boys, young women and men. Our strategies, therefore, must include partnerships and cooperation with duty-bearers, particularly local and national governments, and with rights-holders. Strengthening the voice and capacity of young people and their communities, and especially of children, must be key aspects of our strategy.

Addressing the issues of equal access and quality of education are ongoing priorities for Plan. Many of our current and past education initiatives, such as Escuela Nueva, Active Schools, Quality Learning, and School Improvement Programme, have helped to improve infrastructure, community participation, enrolment and completion for girls and boys. Building on the experiences of those initiatives, we will improve our strategy and strengthen our support to education for two compelling reasons; first, it is a basic human right; second, it is crucial for the empowerment of children, young people and their communities in securing their human rights. I sincerely hope that this strategy will guide our future support to education and help us fully align it with our rights-based child-centred community development.

Nigel Chapman, Chief Executive Officer, Plan, June 2010

Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>BRIGHT</td>
<td>Burkinabe Response to Improve Girl’s Chances to Succeed</td>
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<td>CBOs</td>
<td>community-based organisations</td>
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<td>CCCD</td>
<td>child-centred community development</td>
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<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women</td>
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<td>CSOs</td>
<td>civil society organisations</td>
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<td>CSP</td>
<td>country strategic plan</td>
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<td>ECCD</td>
<td>early childhood care and development</td>
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<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
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<td>EGRA</td>
<td>Early Grade Reading Assessment</td>
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<td>FAWE</td>
<td>Forum for African Women Educationalists</td>
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<td>FTI</td>
<td>Fast Track Initiative</td>
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<td>GMR</td>
<td>Global Monitoring Report</td>
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<td>GRP</td>
<td>Gender Responsive Pedagogy</td>
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<td>INGOs</td>
<td>international non-governmental organisations</td>
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<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>PALS</td>
<td>Programme Accountability and Learning System</td>
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<td>PPP</td>
<td>purchasing power parity</td>
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<td>PTA</td>
<td>parent teacher association</td>
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<td>RBA</td>
<td>rights-based approach</td>
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<td>RTE</td>
<td>right to education</td>
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<td>SIP</td>
<td>School Improvement Programme</td>
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<td>UPE</td>
<td>universal primary education</td>
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Overview

Plan’s commitment to high quality education for children and young people remains as strong as ever. This strategy focuses on Plan’s three education priorities – access, quality and governance – which are based on the right to education for girls, boys and young women and men.

Each strategic priority has a clear set of key actions designed to bring about change, not only for families, schools and communities, but also at national and international levels. The strategy places particular emphasis on the need to eliminate gender discrimination, as well as focussing on other key challenges, such as the inclusion of marginalised children.

This strategy is designed to:
• help Plan country management teams address effectively the most important educational issues of access, quality and governance
• guide the development of context-specific strategies and policies
• improve and increase Plan’s influence on national and international policies and practices in education
• help transform power relations among key stakeholders in education in a way that makes children’s rights the first priority.

It will guide Plan’s education planning process and initiatives at all levels until 2013.

Effective application of this education strategy at different levels will require a deep understanding of Plan’s child-centred community development (CCCD) approach; of education policies and financing, of the role of civil society and advocacy, and how to shape governance and create democratic spaces in the countries where we work. It will also require a critical analysis of discrimination – especially gender discrimination and exclusion. Above all, it will require faith in people’s own capacity to fight for and claim their rights.

This strategy focuses on children and young people between the ages of 6 and 18 years old, supporting formal and non-formal pre-primary, primary and secondary education, including vocational education for children and young people. We also work with youth, 19 years old and above, when this helps to achieve lasting results for those under 18.

Early childhood care and development (ECCD) is one of Plan’s priority programmes. Since early childhood covers the period from conception to age 8, ECCD is a vital foundation for success in school and in life. It includes care and development programmes and early childhood education.

Plan’s summary strategy on ECCD recommends integrating early stimulation, child development and parenting information into prenatal, early health, nutrition and education services. ECCD, therefore, is fundamental to our education strategy.

The strategic priorities and objectives included in this document are based on a comprehensive situation analysis of education trends, challenges, opportunities and actors, including global progress towards Education for All (EFA), education aid and the policy and strategic positions of other INGOs. The strengths and limitations of our own strategies and lessons learned have also been considered in developing this strategy, which is in line with Plan’s Programme Framework (2009).

This strategy includes a set of supplementary materials that have been posted on planet, Plan’s intranet: operational definitions of key words, the process followed to produce the strategy and some examples of good practice and of levels and results areas. They can be downloaded separately and used with the strategy.

Finally, we would like to thank all our Plan colleagues and friends in other organisations who reviewed the draft version of this strategy and provided valuable inputs. Please see page 14 for some basic questions and responses about this strategy.

Advisory Group, July 2010.
This strategy focuses on Plan’s three education priorities – access, quality and governance – which are based on the right to education.

Photo: Plan / Kristie van de Wetering
Children in Plan-supported school in Haiti.
1. External analysis

Global promises and progress

The world’s faith in the power of education to transform individuals and communities has inspired a rapid expansion of education systems. And with globalisation and the world’s increasing focus on a knowledge-based economy, education has become more crucial than ever. There is today a global recognition that individuals have the right to an education that respects their capabilities and socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. The progressive vision of Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are rooted in fundamental human rights.

However, translating this vision into effective programmes remains a challenge. While the conceptual strategy of EFA involves more than simply imparting information, its implementation has been focused largely on access. Relevant learning for children and adults, the acquisition of life skills and values and improvements in capabilities largely remain ideals rather than realities. Huge numbers of learners are not achieving even minimum competencies by the time they graduate. In spite of significant progress in the quantitative aspects of education, both the EFA and MDG goals remain elusive.

The EFA Global Monitoring Reports (GMRs) present mixed achievements for the last ten years.

• Remarkable progress has been made towards universal primary education (EFA Goal 2) and gender parity (EFA Goal 5).
• The number of children out of school dropped by 33 million from 1999 to 2007. But,
• The percentage of girls out of school declined only from 58 per cent to 54 per cent. In sub-Saharan Africa, 12 million girls may never enrol in school.
• If current trends persist, about 56 million children may still not have access to primary education by 2015.
• South and West Asia and sub-Saharan Africa have the largest gender disparities in secondary education.
• Although more girls are now in primary school than ever before, this seldom leads to women’s gainful employment.
• Millions of children leave school without basic literacy and numeracy skills.
• Education quality also suffers from severe shortages of teachers, poor training and working conditions. An additional 1.9 million teachers, especially female teachers, will be required to achieve the goal of universal primary education by 2015.
• Teacher training must also include gender sensitisisation of teachers.
• Much more effort is needed to ensure enrolment and retention at primary school and beyond.
• Good governance is needed to improve accountability and participation and to tackle inequalities.

Discrimination is a major problem in education. Failures in addressing inequalities, stigmatisation and discrimination linked to wealth, gender, ethnicity, language, location and disability are holding back progress towards Education for All.

Children and young people experience both direct and indirect discrimination. All countries promised to eliminate gender disparity in primary education and secondary education by 2005. Although the gender gap in primary education is narrowing in many countries, institutionalised

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1 The six EFA Goals are early childhood care and education, universal primary education, life-long learning needs of youth and adults, adult literacy, gender and quality.

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Photo: Plan / Mary Matheson Teacher in Plan-supported pre-school in Tanzania.
disadvantage for young girls and women persists especially in South and West Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. In 22 countries, fewer than nine girls are in school for every ten boys. Adult illiteracy clearly reflects the persistence of gender gap in education. Two-thirds of the 760 million adult illiterates in the world are women.

Most official claims of progress towards EFA are based on official gross or net enrolment figures. Despite gains in enrolments at all stages of education, many learners are not achieving even minimum competencies when they graduate. Therefore, the current monitoring process does not provide a true picture of education and its multiple challenges, especially those impacting on girls’ ability to access education and succeed. The process generally excludes aspects such as improvement in economic security of families, personal safety and security of girls and boys, working conditions of teachers, gender sensitivity of teachers, relevance of teaching and learning methods, learning achievements and participation of children and parents in education governance and management.

Progress towards the EFA goal of expanding and improving early childhood care and education also continues to be very slow. In addition, out-of-school populations are a serious problem in Burkina Faso, the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Kenya, Mali, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger and Pakistan. Many governments have paid little attention to the learning needs of young people and adults. As a result, the EFA goals of lifelong learning and literacy remain elusive.

A knowledge-based economy depends not only on equal access to education, but also on the quality of the education that learners receive. Addressing the poor quality of education remains a major challenge in most developing countries, despite public and private investment, education aid flows and numerous innovations aimed at improving the quality of education over the last fifty years.

Public expenditure and education aid

The financing gap is cited as one of the main reasons for failure to address many of the education challenges in the developing world. Although the EFA Framework of 2000 called for a target of government spending on education of at least 6 per cent of GDP, 38 Plan programme countries spend an average of only 3.6 per cent of GDP on education (based on figures available for the years 2002 to 2005). It must be noted that a large proportion of government expenditure on education goes to teacher salaries leaving very little to spend on other resources.

There is a real danger now that the global financial crisis may slow progress towards achieving the EFA goals or even reverse the gains achieved in many countries.

Civil society and the right to education

In line with the Declaration of Human Rights and international agreements, a wide range of civil society organisations (CSOs) and their networks are supporting education: community-based organisations faith groups, teachers unions, parent teacher associations, local and International NGOs. Many of them work at multiple levels. Traditionally, their main role involved provision of technical and material support to state education systems either directly or through partners. In some cases, CSOs also supported parallel or complementary education programmes especially for marginalised groups of children, youth and adults.

With the economic liberalisation and democratic consolidation in many developing countries since the 1990s, CSOs are increasingly involved in national and international activities such as research, networking, advocacy and campaigning. They help to push education up the international donors’ agenda, support the development of national education plans, influence education policies and track education budgets.

2 Direct discrimination refers to treating someone less favourably than others in the same circumstances. Indirect discrimination is a less obvious form of discrimination. It occurs where the effect of certain requirements, conditions or practices imposed by an education system has an adverse impact disproportionately on one group or other.
3 GMR 2010 estimates the financing gap for low-income countries at US$16 billion annually.
2. Supporting the right to education: Plan’s position and approach

Plan has been supporting children’s education for a long time. Until 2003, our education strategy focused almost entirely on support to, and improvement of, individual preschools and primary schools in our programme areas. More recently, Plan has recognised the links between issues of access and quality and national policies on education and accountability, and supported initiatives such as Quality Learning and the School Improvement Programme (SIP) in many countries. These initiatives have helped to implement a more holistic and participatory approach to improving quality and accountability. We understand that the fulfilment of education as a basic human right depends on the realisation of rights to health, nutrition, gender equality, participation and protection.

A number of reviews and evaluations conducted between 2003 and 2008, including a primary education thematic evaluation (2008), recognised the strengths of Plan’s CCCD approach – in particular, the emphasis on children’s rights and long-term work with families and communities to address important local and national issues. Plan’s global advocacy initiatives have strengthened Plan’s national and international work on children’s rights and highlighted the disproportionate challenges faced by girls and young women in relation to gender equality in education.

The right to education and the role of governments

Every individual, irrespective of race, gender, nationality, ethnic or social origin, religion or political preference, age or disability is entitled to education. States have a statutory duty to guarantee this right.

- Governments must promote, protect and fulfil the rights of all children to education without discrimination and exclusion of any kind.
- The right to education includes all levels (pre-primary, primary, secondary and post-secondary) of both formal and non-formal education.
- Children’s education from pre-primary to grade eight and basic life skills education of youth and adults, including literacy and numeracy, should be free.
- Governments must also commit to making secondary and higher education free within a realistic period of time.
- The learning environment, curriculum and process of learning should develop the human personality, promote gender equality and respect human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- Governments must ensure that educational institutions are learner-friendly, safe places and have norms and procedures in place to deter gender-based violence.
- Rights holders as individuals, groups and communities must develop their capacities to counter gender and other forms of direct and indirect discrimination and the denial of their right to quality education.

Plan’s position: the importance of quality in education

The challenges of exclusion of marginalised children and young people, especially girls, poor quality of education, poor governance and under-financing must be tackled urgently to ensure Education For All. But improved access to education and increasing enrolment are only the first steps toward the right to education.

Governments, UNESCO, donors and NGOs must take the quality of education much more seriously. Retention in and completion of education depends on practical considerations, such as how well children and young people, both girls and boys, are respected and taught, how much they learn, and how learning helps them to be responsible and active citizens. In addition, gender-sensitive policies and practices are crucial for challenging discrimination and exclusion, especially where formal education may reinforce cultural beliefs and practices. Aspects such as infrastructure, curricula, teaching and learning materials, school leadership and the professionalism of teachers also affect quality. Participation of children, families and communities in education governance plays a vital role in influencing and improving education quality.

Plan will work with local governments and communities to complement their initiatives to improve education...

Plan’s approach

We will work locally, nationally and internationally to influence and improve both education institutions and the systems that govern them. We will address the institutional and systemic causes of access, quality and education governance issues. We will promote and support child-friendly and gender-sensitive learning environments through strategic partnerships with communities and other stakeholders.

CCCD will remain Plan’s overarching approach to the right to education, based on an understanding that gender inequality is an underlying cause of child poverty and that gender equality in education depends on the empowerment of girls and women. We will work in solidarity with citizens, especially with marginalised children, young people, their families and communities. We will pay particular attention to discrimination and the exclusion of girls, boys, young women and men in education systems.

Our approach will include three core, interconnected elements: service delivery, organising and empowering and advocacy.

Service delivery

Plan will work with local governments and communities to complement their initiatives to improve education, always sensitive to child poverty and deprivation of basic needs and of education. However, we will apply service delivery as a means to achieve long-term, strategic change.

We will provide support with infrastructure, curriculum, learning materials, teacher training, etc. in the following circumstances.

- Where inadequate or lack of such support contributes to the denial of the education rights of children and young people in the short-term.
- When the process of providing the support empowers children, families and communities and helps them claim their right to quality education.

Organising and empowering

Organising and empowering rights-holders is crucial for the transforming power relations between individuals, families, communities, citizens and the state. We will work with families and communities to increase the value they attach to the education of girls. Plan will support the capability development of rights-holders, particularly those who experience discrimination, to claim their right to education. To enable people to have a voice and influence their own development, Plan will support the building of civil society through networks and social movements.

Advocacy

Grassroots participatory advocacy, including research, campaigning and lobbying, is essential for influencing education policies, financing and practice. Plan will support advocacy and campaigns for the implementation of all of the goals and strategies of Education for All included in the Dakar Strategy for Action. Plan will also undertake relevant research on key issues concerning the right to education, including research from a gender perspective, to strengthen the evidence base for influencing and improving education policies and practice.

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8 Capability is the opportunity to achieve a valuable state of being and functioning. Amartya Sen and others have written much on the capability approach to development. Education, for obvious reasons, is important in the capability approach.

3. Plan’s goal, priorities and strategic objectives

The goal, priorities and strategic objectives presented in this section will be the focus of Plan’s work in education until 2013. The key actions listed under each objective, however, are not exhaustive. The list can be modified as appropriate, based on analyses of situations and opportunities at the local and national levels.

**Goal**

To empower children and young people to claim and enjoy their right to education.

**Priorities for action**

Plan’s support to formal and non-formal education at the local, national and international levels in pre-primary, primary, secondary, post-secondary formal and non-formal education will focus on three interlinked priorities:

- equal access to education
- the quality of education
- education governance.

Plan has many years of experience of working on the issues of access and quality. Our current advocacy campaigns, Learn Without Fear and Because I am Girl offer significant opportunities to mobilise organisational resources and interest to promote these priorities. More specifically, the focus of the Because I am a Girl campaign on education has enabled us to align it with Learn Without Fear and to use both campaigns as important drivers to work on these three priorities. Plan will work towards achieving gender equality in all three of our strategic priorities to help girls, boys and young women and men realise their full potential.

**Strategic objective 1: Equal access to education**

To ensure free and equal access to education at all times, including in emergencies, and equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes for young people.

Plan supports improving access to education through the enrolment of both boys and girls in all programme countries. The SIP Evaluations (2006 and 2007), the Primary Education Thematic Evaluation (2008) and the more recent BRIGHT evaluation (2009) confirm that Plan’s inputs have contributed to increased enrolment and a reduction in the drop-out of boys and girls. However, the inclusion of marginalised children and young people, especially those with special needs, remains a major challenge. Therefore, the Primary Education Thematic Evaluation rightly highlighted the importance of reaching out to these groups. “Factors that limit inclusive access are complex, embedded in cultural practices and beliefs, institutionalised and nearly always constrained by resources. Nonetheless, the evaluation recommends that Plan take a strategic approach at the global level to reach marginalised and vulnerable pupils.” Hence, our work towards improving equal access to education must also take into account the availability of educational opportunities for all children and young people, as well as retention and completion.

**Key actions for equal access to education**

A. As part of the Country Strategic Plan (CSP), analyse the local and national situation in terms of equality of access to education, including the availability of learning opportunities, retention and completion by gender; include appropriate policy and programme responses in the CSP.

B. Support local, national and global campaigns for Education for All.

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10 The Right to Education Project defines right to education in terms of four As – Availability, Accessibility, Adaptability and Acceptability. A fifth ‘A’ for Accountability has been added recently. The right to education is also interpreted in Plan’s thematic evaluation and explained in terms of Access, Quality and Respect. Please see Annex 5.1 for our recommendation of Equal Access, Quality and Education Governance.


C. Support demands for increased government spending on early childhood care and development, quality primary, secondary and adult education.

D. Support context-specific and time-bound interventions that will improve the access and participation of marginalised children and young people, especially girls and those with disabilities.

E. Support family and community initiatives to promote positive attitudes toward education and to overcome the challenges to equal access to education of children and young people, especially girls and those with disabilities.

F. Support the education of children and young people in disaster or emergency situations and during recoveries. Where necessary, advocate for national policies on education in emergencies and for displaced people.

**Strategic objective 2: The quality of education**

*To secure children and young people’s right to quality education that helps them develop their full potential.*

Education quality is a dynamic and fluid concept, intricately linked to access. The right to education underpins the quality of education. Quality implies the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviours and values essential for realising human rights and freedom. Since global education policy has emphasised gender parity in access to education, gender parity is associated with enrolment numbers rather than with the quality of education girls receive and how it helps them when they leave school.

The quality of education depends on a number of inputs. The following are the most basic.

- Safe, inclusive, learner-friendly school environments. Both the physical and psychosocial environments of learning must help learners feel confident and safe. The environments must also enable them to contribute in meaningful ways to decisions that will affect their physical, mental and emotional development.
- Relevant curricula.
- Qualified and motivated teachers.
- Teaching and learning process, rooted in the principles of equality, inclusion, respect and accountability.

Both the content and process of learning must encourage learners to ask questions, gain relevant skills and think critically about themselves and their environment. Teachers’ attitudes towards girls can greatly influence their participation and learning outcomes.

**Key actions to promote education quality**

A. Support and lobby governments to keep their promise of improving all aspects of quality of education, made in EFA goal 6.

B. Support initiatives aimed at improving teacher quality and school leadership through teachers’ professional bodies.

C. Support national governments to participate in independent evaluations of learning achievements of children and young people.

D. Align initiatives to improve education quality with Plan’s *Learn Without Fear* and *Because I am a Girl* campaigns and promote respect for human rights in families, communities and schools.

E. Work with governments, teachers and their trade unions to improve the working conditions of teachers and gender parity of qualified teachers, and to develop/implement teacher ethics and gender-sensitive codes of conduct.

F. Facilitate and support the introduction and/or expansion of learner-friendly and gender-sensitive schools and classrooms.

G. Work with governments to ensure that curricula and textbooks are free from gender stereotypes in both text and images and to adopt an appropriate language policy.

H. Work with governments to ensure that curriculum contents include disasters, conflicts, disaster preparedness, disaster risk reduction and conflict resolution.

I. Work with governments and teachers to strengthen gender skills at all levels.

J. Work with families and communities to claim an acceptable and adaptable education system aligned with the culture of children and young people, particularly in those contexts where ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin live.
Strategic objective 3: Education governance

To improve citizens' active participation in educational decision-making at all levels.

Education governance refers to the distribution of power in decision-making at all levels of the education system, from ministry to school to pupil. This is crucial to ensure that educational institutions address effectively the issues of equal access, quality and accountability through a participatory process of decision-making that respects the voices of children, families and communities.

Education governance, equal access and quality are closely linked. In fact, neither the promise of the right to education nor states’ commitments to equal access and quality of education can be fulfilled if education institutions and systems are not accountable. For example, despite public expenditure and education aid, corruption can lead to hidden costs of education and discourage families living in poverty from sending children to school. Poor school leadership and motivation of teachers can lead to weak management and low quality of teaching and learning, and in its worst form to the exploitation of girls and boys by school staff. Education governance at the local level involves ensuring that children and young people have equal access to well-funded formal and non-formal education opportunities with well-trained and motivated teachers.

Although central governments are primarily responsible for ensuring the accountability of educational institutions, given the challenges of governance and the level of corruption in public sectors in many countries, civil society organisations must apply appropriate strategies to influence governments to improve education governance. Plan is in a unique position to do this because of our strong presence and work at all levels. We must utilise this advantage and work in coalitions to enhance citizens’ participation and strengthen accountability, as well as to advocate for girls’ rights and gender equality. Improving education governance is critical for tackling persistent inequalities, apathy of learners and families, poor quality and accountability. It requires actions at all levels by all actors.

Key actions for improving education governance

A. Advocate for a national education law and citizen’s charter system that also includes accountability standards for education services.

B. Support civil society tracking of education aid and public expenditure on education and verify whether public spending matches policy commitments and is gender-sensitive.

C. Advocate for the adoption and implementation of legislation or policy strategies that prohibit gender-based violence in and around schools.

D. Promote and assist education management committees or parent teacher associations to work democratically and parents and learners to participate actively in decision-making.

E. Assist education management committees or parent teacher associations at the school/community level to develop sub-national and national coalitions.

F. Promote and support approaches to school-based management that empower learners, parents and teachers.

G. Support UNESCO, donors’ and civil society initiatives to improve education governance and management at different levels.

H. Support the participation and leadership of children and youth, especially girls, in school governance through childrens’ and parents’ associations at the local and national levels.

Improving education governance is critical for tackling persistent inequalities, apathy of learners and families, poor quality and accountability.

Photo: © Mahmoud M. Altayeb
Haj Kabashi, Chairman of a PTA in Sudan which is supported by Plan.
4. Monitoring, evaluation and research

Monitoring, evaluation and research related to this strategy focuses on the key expected outcomes listed below. In line with Plan’s Programme Effectiveness Framework, these are the results of changes brought about at different levels by Plan’s direct and indirect actions or Plan’s sphere of influence. In addition to the outcomes below, specific changes at the level of rights holders, duty bearers and civil society organisations have been posted on planet, Plan’s intranet. They can be also used for monitoring, evaluation and research.

Expected outcomes

**Equal access**

- Free, compulsory and state-funded formal and non-formal basic education opportunities guaranteed by appropriate national legislation; for example, Right to Education Act.
- Public policies and practice that promote equal access to education of children and young people during normal times and in emergencies.
- One hundred per cent enrolment and completion of children and young people, especially girls and young women, in formal or non-formal primary education institutions.

**Quality**

- Both the physical environment and teaching and learning processes are learner-friendly and children and young people are not subjected to any kind of discrimination or abuse.
- All children and young people in all grades achieve the expected learning outcomes, especially in language, mathematics and science.
- Increased opportunities for those who complete their education successfully at one level to progress to higher levels.

**Education governance**

- The Dakar Strategy of Action for EFA is effectively implemented by national governments.
- Local, national and international organisations and associations of children, young people and parents influence governments and donors to honour their policy and financial commitments to EFA.
- Children, young people and parents’ organisations and associations participate actively in education governance at all levels.

Children, young people and parents’ organisations and associations participate actively in education governance at all levels.
5. Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What value can this strategy add to our support to education?**

Depending on interpretation and application at different levels, it will:

- help us address effectively the most important educational issues of access, quality and governance
- guide the development of context-specific strategies and policies
- improve and increase our influence on national and international policies and practices in education
- help to transform power relations among key stakeholders in education.

2. **How was the strategy produced?**

The process included systematic reviews and evaluations of our support to education; internal consultations; analysis of global trends; comparison of policies and strategies of other INGOs; a Plan-wide survey of strategic priorities and an Education Workshop that brought together Plan colleagues and other organisations.

3. **Who produced it?**

A small advisory group that includes colleagues from Plan Country Offices, Regional Offices, National Offices, IH and representatives of external organisations and networks. Here is the list of members of the advisory group:

- Mr. Alfari Djibo, Country Learning Adviser, Plan Niger
- Ms. Anne-Marie Davies, Regional Learning Adviser, Plan Asia Region
- Ms. Camilla Croso, Co-ordinator, Latin American Campaign for Education
- Dr. Codou Diaw, Director, Forum for African Women Educationalist
- Dr. Francis Sathya, Senior Policy Adviser, Education, Plan International Headquarters
- Mr. Joseph Mushalika, Country Learning Adviser, Plan Zambia
- Ms. Kate Ramsay, Senior Programme Manager, Plan Australia
- Mr. Ndungu Kahihu, Director, Technical Policy and Advocacy, Plan Canada
- Ms. Sandra Cusato, Regional Learning Adviser, Plan Americas Region
- Mr. Sven Coppens, Regional Programme Support Manager, Plan West Africa Region
- Ms. Trine Eriksen, Plan Netherlands

4. **What does this strategy replace?**

The strategy replaces the Learning Domain Guidelines that were part of our Programme Principles and Domain Guidelines (1999), Core Programme (June 1999) and Policy Position Statement, Achieving Quality Education for All (September 2002).

5. **What specific changes can we expect from the application of this strategy?**

- All children and young persons accessing, staying in and progressing in free and compulsory basic primary and secondary education in our programme areas.
- Primary and secondary schools and non-formal education ‘centres’ practicing learner-centred and gender-responsive teaching and learning processes.
- Preparedness of local and national governments for education in emergencies.
- Programme countries participating in international evaluations of educational achievements.
- Associations and networks of children, young people and parents at local, national and international levels, participating actively in education management and governance.

Please see the tables on planet, Plan’s intranet for specific changes expected as a result of the application of this education strategy.
The promotion, protection and fulfillment of citizens’ right to education are impossible without tackling the challenges of governance at all levels.

6. Will Plan continue to construct classrooms?

It is not within the scope of this strategy to specify what Plan should or should not do. This strategy includes a set of actions under each priority as suggestions only. What Plan should do, should not do or should stop doing in each country or programme unit to achieve the objectives included in this strategy must be guided by plans and policies developed locally based on a thorough analysis of the following and in line with Plan’s Programme Framework (2009).

- The priorities, strategies, policies and plans of other actors, especially national governments in programme countries and international donors.
- Value addition of Plan in terms of the capacity building of rights holders and the transformation of power relations among various actors in education at all levels.

7. Why doesn’t this strategy include the 4As (accessibility, availability, adaptability, and acceptability) or AQR (access, quality and respect) as strategic priorities as some UNESCO and UNICEF documents on the right to education do?

The Advisory Group considered these two options and the reasons for not recommending them are as follows:

- The concepts that the 4As stand for are repetitive. In fact, the 4As can be explained in two ‘As’ – Accessibility and Acceptability – since availability and accessibility cannot be separated. Similarly, acceptability and adaptability can be combined into one A.
- In most Plan programme countries, access and availability are not major problems, whereas equal access is.
- Acceptability and adaptability can be captured in quality. Although the word ‘quality’ may mean many things to many people, it is better understood than acceptability and adaptability.
- Another reason for our recommendation of quality as a priority is Plan’s consistent work in all countries on quality. Quality can also entail respect.
- Neither the 4As nor the AQR includes the important issue of governance. Improvements in access to, and quality of, education depend a great deal on how education institutions and systems are governed and on their accountability to children and communities.

The promotion, protection and fulfillment of citizens’ right to education are impossible without tackling the challenges of governance at all levels.

8. Who should be contacted for further information about this strategy and/or to give feedback, if any?

Please contact any member of the advisory group or the particular member representing your region, national office or International Headquarters.
About Plan

Founded over 70 years ago, Plan is one of the oldest and largest children’s development organisations in the world. We work in 48 developing countries across Africa, Asia and the Americas to promote child rights and lift millions of children out of poverty. Plan works with more than 3,500,000 families and their communities each year. Plan is independent, with no religious, political or governmental affiliations.