



SUMMARY OF THE KAPUSCINSKI DEVELOPMENT LECTURE

EDUCATION – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR 2015 AND BEYOND

delivered by Julia Gillard

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Guaranteeing access to quality education to all children remains a broken promise that requires a renewed commitment by the international community. This was the basic message of Julia Gillard during her Kapuscinski Development Lecture.

Education is not a privilege, but a right for all. Education matters because of its power to transform and improve our world and humankind. Through education people can develop their full intellectual potential and thus contribute to the transformation of their society. Education is a tool for personal development, economic development and social transformation (including the creation of more gender-just societies). In countries that nurture education, living standards are higher, disease is lower, life expectancy is longer, women have more choices, children are better nourished, governments have more revenue, etc.

The biggest challenges of education

However, in many parts of the world children still can't expect education to be a given. About 58 million children of primary school age today do not go to school. Most of those 58 million are to be found in the overlapping spheres of four threats to education: poverty, conflict, fragility or emergency. Girls in sub-Saharan Africa in particular face the greatest risk of exclusion. More generally, Africa faces most strongly all four challenges playing havoc on children's ability to attend school. Offering access to quality education becomes even more difficult when two or more of those threats occur at the same time in the same context. Think of natural disasters or diseases occurring in countries afflicted by governmental fragility (as happened with the Ebola outbreak in West-Africa).

Faced with this particular challenge, it is good to remember that change is possible. Since the adoption of 'Education for All' and the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, the world has made real progress in education. The number of children not in schools has dropped by more than 40 million over that period of time. In many countries participation of girls in schools in particular increased significantly. In Afghanistan for example 42% of all enrolled students today are girls, a revolutionary change from the time when the country was under Taliban control.

What is needed for change?

Giving the 58 million children that are not in school today access to education will demand a new commitment from the international community. The new sustainable development agenda that will be adopted later in 2015 offers the ideal framework for this. To galvanize education efforts, this agenda needs to include goals that lift ambition on providing access to

education and learning: increasing the quality of education for all on the one hand, and extending schooling beyond primary to lower secondary school on the other.

But with these goals also needs to come new financing. Aid to the education sector has declined by almost 10% since 2010. This trend needs to be reversed in order to meet the challenges. Getting the missing 58 million children into school will require new thinking on how to enable the delivery of education in an emergency response, for displaced children, in the face of conflict, etc. But it will also demand the necessary funding. In humanitarian situations specifically, education must come higher on the priority list. In 2012, only 1.4% of global humanitarian funding was allocated to education.

Quality of education must be re-considered

However, additional financing is also necessary to face the learning quality crisis and ensure learning actually happens at school. 250 million children currently are unable to read or perform basic calculations even though they may have had four years of schooling. Addressing this crisis will require all stakeholders to engage in a complex learning process. It needs to take into account the specific nature of education, which is not a global standard good, but a locally delivered service. But it needs to start by defining what quality is and how to measure it. Keeping progress on measuring quality and equity will not only improve children's learning, it will also unlock more money for education.

The role of the Global Partnership for Education

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) is perfectly suited to answer this double challenge: reducing the number of children out of school and increasing the quality of learning. It is the only multilateral organization solely devoted to getting all children into school for a good quality education, and its unique partnership model has been celebrated by the UN as the development model of the future. More than just a global fund, it brings together donors, governments, teachers, civil society, the private sector and multilateral organizations. Since 2002, the GPE has allocated \$US 4,3 billion to strengthen the education systems of developing countries; since 2009 it has become the largest international funder of education in the countries affected by conflict. The European Commission and its Member States have supported the GPE initiative since its creation in 2002. The European Union is to date the largest single contributor to the GPE.

The GPE not only works to mobilize financing by donors or to increase developing countries' education budgets, it also enables sharing know-how. Increasingly that technical expertise is being shared between developing countries, a real exchange of learning between peers rather than the more usual flow of technical capacity from the global north to the global South.