

Project Learning Brief-Somalia

Education Financing Observatory: Pilot Results

February
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This Learning Brief was compiled by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) to share with members the critical findings identified in the Education Financing Observatory pilot project and the lessons learnt for the future rollout of the observatory. The content presented in this Learning Brief is the summary and recommendations that were generated from the presentations made by Ms. Suaad Abdulle and Dr. Muyaka who supported the national coalition, Education for All Somalia (EFASOM), with the pilot in Somalia as consultants and inputs from participants. While the webinar featured other pilot countries, this Learning Brief is developed to share results and findings from Somalia.

About the webinar

On the 28th of February 2023, the GCE convened a webinar entitled ‘Education Financing Observatory: Pilot Results’. The webinar engaged GCE national and regional members, partners and other stakeholders on the findings and key lessons learnt from the implementation of the pilot project. Drawing on empirical evidence from four countries that participated in the pilot phase - Honduras, Georgia, Somalia and Tanzania; the webinar addressed the question of whether and how governments are investing the maximum of resources available to protect and fulfil everyone’s right to education effectively.

The webinar aimed to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. Engage GCE members with its Education Financing Observatory and share lessons and experiences from four countries where the pilot was conducted.
2. Provide evidence of the multiple ways in which the lack of adequate and sustainable financing compromises the right to education for all in general, and those traditionally excluded and marginalised from education systems.
3. Provide evidence of how the lack of investment in education concedes countries of the Global South’s possibility to achieve SDG4.
4. Provide evidence and share good practices of how GCE, specialists in the fields of education and financing, and university students can collaborate to better understand the gaps in education financing and provide recommendations for policy and advocacy work aiming to protect everyone’s right to education.

Audience: GCE national, regional and international members, partners and other stakeholders with a common interest, expertise and passion for issues related to education financing.

Background

In early 2021, the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) launched the Education Financing Observatory (EFO). The overall objective of the EFO is to provide a multi-stakeholder platform to support the GCE movement with generating evidence and strategically guide the use of the evidence and knowledge to inform policy and advocacy on education financing in strengthening and delivering strong public education systems and the implementation of Education 2030 Agenda/SDG4. In order to test the methodology detailed in the [Research Protocol](#), a pilot exercise was planned and put in place in 2022 in four countries: [Honduras](#), [Georgia](#), [Somalia](#) and [Tanzania](#). By the end of 2022, the pilot countries produced the final research report following the guide and structure provided in the [Research Protocol](#) designed by GCE. All the reports addressed the same question: *whether and how governments are investing the maximum of resources available to effectively protect and fulfil everyone's right to education.*

The pilot project was conducted within the 4S framework which frames the processes of data gathering and analysis focusing on the Share of national budgets that governments invest in education; the Size of budgets; the Sensitivity of public investment on education, in particular considering equity and inclusion criteria; and the Scrutiny of education budgets. This approach provides a structure for national initiatives to improve education through gathering and using strategic information; developing evidence-informed policies; scaling-up provision and use of education services; and strengthening linkages with other sectors such as academia, civil society, international donors, NGOs and other government departments. These intervention strategies all come together to try and address SD4 indicators such as the completion rate (primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education), participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training-by sex, and parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated.

Two overarching empirical findings can be found in the reports: (i) Somalia is not investing the maximum of resources available to make progress towards SDG4 and secure the right to education for all; and (ii) Somalia is not fulfilling the 4 to 6 percent benchmark of government expenditure on education as % of GDP and none of them are accomplishing at least 20% of investment on education as % of government social investment either.

Below, is the contextual analysis, findings of the pilot project, challenges, lessons and recommendations from Somalia where the project was implemented:

Title of project: Education Financing Observatory in Somalia: 2015-2021

Contextual analysis

To understand the challenges Somalia is having in terms of Education Financing and challenges the country is facing in its education sector, it was noted that:

- Somalia is located in the Horn of Africa and borders three countries; Djibouti along the North-West, Ethiopia to the West and Kenya to the South-West.
- The country experiences natural disasters, recurrent floods and drought leading to flooding, destruction of infrastructure, crops and sometimes, death.
- The last population census was conducted in 2014 and estimated the population to be 12.3million people.
- Unemployment rate is 21.4% in 2019 and GDP growth rate was 2.9% (World Bank, 2018).
- Literacy levels are low, only 49.7% and 25.8% of the adult male and female are literate.
- 60% of the population practice pastoralism (FGS, 2022).
- Education is a constitutional right as articulated under Article 30 of the 2012 Constitution. However, the Education Ministry's 2022 report shows only a quarter of school-age children have access to education. Insecurity and poverty have pushed more than 3 million Somali children out of school.
- The country runs the 8-4-4 system (eight years of primary education, four years of secondary, and four years of undergraduate studies) of education. According to UNESCO, Somalia has the second-highest proportion of school-age children (aged 3–18) in East Africa.
- The right to education has faced considerable and related challenges. One major barrier has been insecurity (major threat being posed by the Al-Shabaab militant group).

Methodology used to collect data

In this project, researchers utilised two data collection approaches in accessing useful and relevant data:

- Desk review: by reviewing various government documents such as Education Sector Strategic Plans (ESSP), Joint Review of the Education Sector (JRES) reports, Ministry of Education publications, project documents by non-State *actors* among others have been reviewed to collate appropriate data.
- Factsheet: designed a factsheet where stakeholders filled the hard data for verification and analysis.

National budget education allocation findings

Through the research, it was discovered that:

- The findings drawn from national funding and international aid and development cooperation indicate that funding allocated to education in Somalia has increased continuously in absolute numbers over the period 2015-2021.
- Commitment to increase the national allocation to education annually is evident. The national target set by the Somalia National Development Plan 2017-2019 was 12% by the end of 2019.
- The average for 2015-2021 was a 3.2% benchmark of government expenditure on education as % of GDP.
- The years 2016 and 2021 experienced a drop in the share of education because these were election years.

Challenges/limitations that were identified through the research project:

- The share of the national budget allocated to marginalised groups was not available.
- Funding for education is still very low, although the Government has pledged to increase it. Public schools are very few in number in Somalia.

- One of the limitations to evidence based decision-making in Somalia remains lack of data. Data was only available for tertiary education sub-sector. This made it difficult to track the overall levels of national funding that went to education and how the funds were utilised.
- Public education in FGS is dominated by the private service providers and in some sub-sectors like education in emergencies and people living with disabilities, the government investment is insignificant. Privatisation of education is a huge problem in Somalia and private sector investing in education is common and profitable. This causes vulnerable households from low-income communities NOT to send their children to school.
- Whereas nomadic pastoralists account for about 60%, only 22% of their children are enrolled, 60% of households in Somalia have at least one child living with disability and only 9% of children with disability are enrolled and participation rate of girls is still low.
- Somalia relies on/receives a significant proportion of its education budget from international aid and development cooperation (IADC).
- Early Childhood Education (ECE) is the least developed education sub-sector in Somalia. No clear national policy framework or quality standards are in place for formal ECE. There are no qualification or training systems in place for ECE teachers; there is no standardised formal ECE curriculum framework and no government certified ECE learning materials for small children.
- In the last education sector support plan 2018-2020, the subsector did not receive any budgetary allocation from the national budget and IADC.
- Current national ESSP 2022-2026, cost estimates for the ECE for the next five years is US\$10.4 million. Financing therefore has been a key barrier to the development of a vibrant ECE sub-sector in Somalia.
- There are no elaborate teacher training colleges for pre-service training, minimal investment in ECE infrastructure, and various private investors implementing different ECE curricula and also mostly in urban centres and attached to fee payment. The financing gap is huge in the ECE sub-sector.
- The majority of the primary school-age going children in FGS are out of school. For instance, the Primary Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) was 23% and the Primary Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) was 16.3%. This is very low compared to an average of 74% in low-income sub-Saharan countries.
- Quality and quantity of teachers remains a challenge.
- Over a half of the teachers in FGS, based on the provided data, are not qualified.
- Due to lack of data, it was very difficult to do comparable analysis throughout the report.
- The funding is given to the various education subsectors, but the data is not kept by a single source for easier retrieval and management. This has meant variations in data that is in custody of various government and donor agencies.
- Furthermore, where the data exists, it is not disaggregated into various categories that are useful for some analysis such as support of the budget that is directed to the minority groups, gender and those living with disabilities.

Learning aspects/best practices of the project:

- The Coalition built a partnership and alliance with civil society groups, locally and internationally, to mobilise people to take action in lobbying for an increase of the education budget. For example, EFASOM and ACEA jointly conducted an education financing campaign in 2022 and influenced more education stakeholders to take actions.
- Share of the donor funded projects in education increased in Somalia after CSOs continuously lobbied during Local Education Group (LEGs) meetings.
- Evidence based advocacy research in education financing is more influential as compared to the one-on-one meetings to influence policy makers.

- Pre-developed data collection templates for education financing observatory are more important to increase sector collaboration in this endeavour.
- Influencing line Ministries in the education financing observatory increased value to provide more evidence.
- The development and allocation of the national budget to various sectors requires public participation in Somalia.
- To address some of the challenges highlighted above, the number of schools in Somalia are growing steadily, but at a low rate to guarantee access to education.
- In 2023, the Government of Somalia is investing the maximum of resources available to effectively protect and fulfil everyone's right to education. There will be an increase in the Somali Ministry of Education's budget for 2023 increased up to USD\$34 million.
- The Government of Somalia is currently hiring a record 3,000 new teachers to try to bridge a wide education gap. With the 2023 education budget, these teachers will be under the Government payroll and will be trained to join public schools.

Way forward

- The Coalition is building partnerships and alliances to lobby decision-makers and to influence an increase of the education budget in Somalia.
- The Coalition will kick-start public campaigns in 2023 to increase awareness of the importance of increasing the sector budget.
- The Coalition is developing an online campaign to mobilise other stakeholders to take action towards the increase of education financing in Somalia.

Recommendations

To Government bodies:

- The Somalian government should continue allocating more of its national budget to education to reach the commitment made in the National Development Plan of 2017-2020.
- The country, through the Ministry of Education, should endeavour to finalise the various national policies and frameworks that call for and need to effectively respect, protect and guarantee the right to education in the country.
- Data on key indicators was either lacking or not disaggregated in forms that can allow utilisation. Therefore, the report recommends that the government forms a special Unit for collection and collation of financing data for both donor agencies and government. In addition, where possible to disaggregate the data into allocations set aside per sub-sector in education.
- The government should continuously invest in taking control of the education sector from the private sector in order to invest in policies that can allow provision of free education progressively.

To the National coalition:

- Continuously lobby the Federal Government of Somalia to allocate at least 4-6% of GDP to education as recommended by the Education 2030 Framework for Action.
- National policies and frameworks are at different levels of development. The recommendation that the national coalition partner with the government to support in the completion of the regulatory frameworks that are necessary in holding every education stakeholder accountable to provision of education to all.

- Availability of data on financing remains a challenge. The National coalition should consider developing a central point/archive for collection of funding data that allows easy collation and comparison with other countries.
- The findings of this research should be used beyond this pilot exercise to influence and call for more funding towards the promotion of education to share the resource and engage with universities, government departments, and other stakeholders showing where there are gaps in terms of PWDs, gender, children, lifelong learning, teacher's welfare, among other things realised in the research.

To the GCE secretariat:

- To develop a country specific template that allows collection of comparable, but country specific data.

In conclusion:

- The GCE looks forward to the development of similar strategies and rolling-out of the EFO project in other countries so as to promote data collection and evidence-based intervention Education Financing.
- GCE members should use such tools for advocating for the right to education and engagement with other stakeholders to utilise other tools to secure more funding for education.

Resources:

You can access the webinar recording: [here](#).

You can access the project presentation: [here](#).

You can access the detailed report: [here](#).