

Main Outcomes of Roundtable on Education

On March 31st, 2014, IBIS hosted an Alliance2015 Roundtable on **Education** in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Sixty **policy experts, practitioners and partners** from across the **EU** and from partner countries in **Africa** and **Latin America** gathered to engage in a dialogue and joint thinking on how to **scale up the impact** of the EU on education across the globe. UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Kisore Singh, kicked off the event by reminding everyone that **education is a basic human right**, which should underpin any future development framework. He called on Europe to play a leading role in ensuring the fulfilment of the **right to quality education** for all, a demand which was also emphasized by Camilla Croso, President of the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) and coordinator of the Latin American Campaign for education (CLADE). Lars Engberg Petersen then presented findings from the desk study on the EU's support to Education, which researchers from the Danish Institute of International Studies (DIIS) had prepared for Alliance2015. The study develops the following **10 key recommendations to the EU** on how to scale up its impact on education post-2015:

1. Mobilize alternative sources of financing
2. Significant EU contribution to GPE when hosting its replenishment in June 2014
3. Balance direct EU aid to education with increased support through Global Partnership on Education (GPE).
4. Redirect aid for education towards low-income countries
5. Broaden equal access and specify quality
6. Hire more education expertise
7. Systematize coordination
8. Use the strengths of member states at country level
9. Simplify procedures for CSOs to apply for financial support
10. Strengthen information to the EU public about the importance of education.

The presentation of the analysis and conclusions of the study provided a basis for the following presentations, panel debates and Roundtable discussions, which focused on the two major conference themes 'Education quality and improved learning outcomes' and 'Education finance, policies and governance.'

Ms. Michelle Wilson, assistant country director for CONCERN in Sierra Leone spoke about the need to improve teaching quality and teacher training. Everyone involved needs to address the issue of Gender Based Violence (GBV) in the education system and must work with governments to create incentives to overcome the deficit of teachers in rural areas.

Mr. Umaru Bâ, District Education Manager in Sierra Leone, described the enormous challenges of developing functional education systems with very limited resources. The EU was advised to give priority to primary education and learning outcomes around literacy and numeracy and to promote the use of native languages. It is necessary to look at *attendance* rather than just *enrolment* and decentralized structures' need to improve their ability to monitor and evaluate their schools.

Mr. Zakaria Sulemana, IBIS education Director in Sierra Leone, highlighted the massive tax evasions (through normal commercial deals, fraud and corruption) in countries rich in natural-resources and demonstrated how the oil- and mining industries hold a great potential for financing education and social development in Sub-Saharan Africa. He called on the EU to push for global regulation in order to strengthen transparency and end capital flight. The EU should work towards installing fair tax systems and building capacity, e.g. among civil society so that it can demand accountability, monitor agreements and track funds.

The **well-designed conference** enabled a **vibrant exchange**, confronting the challenges in countries such as Sierra Leone with the **worrying trends of reduced education financing** globally. The conference offered a variety of perspectives, ideas and possible solutions in relation to enhancing the EU's impact on education. Participants generated a **rich list of key action points**, motivating everyone to plan and act together on a progressive, human rights-based and ambitious agenda for education in the Post-2015 development. The next step is to make sure the ideas from this Roundtable are heard at the GPE (Global Partnership on Education) replenishment event in Brussels in June 2014 and to contribute to the UN process on the post-2015 framework.

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