

# **Expanding Secondary Education for Development**

## **DFID Support for Expanded Secondary Schooling**

**Eva Oberg**

**0800 Monday 7th March  
Sheraton Vancouver Wall Centre, 1088 Burrard Street**

**Grand Ballroom A**

### **DFID support to expansion of secondary schooling**

**My co-presenters have convincingly set out the rationale, current trends and unmet need for expanding secondary education globally.** It is clear that based on current cost structures, realistic economic growth rates and historic trends in allocation to education it will not be possible to finance this expansion in DFID partner countries (estimates based on the 2015 GMR indicate a \$38bn financing gap for GPE countries).

**3 issues for DFID to consider...**

**ODA cannot fill this gap but DFID sees an important role for our financial and technical assistance in the expansion of secondary education.** As countries grow and secure foundational skills (reading, writing, basic maths) for basic education, DFID will provide support to higher levels of the system, including secondary and tertiary. The timing of this transition will be dependent on country context, led by DFID's in country diagnostic work. In many countries there will still need to be support at primary level, especially for marginalised groups, for years to come. In countries where there is a clear case for supporting secondary DFID has a number of options: 1) programming, where it fits with strategic objectives in the country and funds are available; 2) providing TA advice to government; 3) influencing other donors to support secondary.

**Reaching the SDG target represents a huge scale of ambition in many DFID partner countries and we are looking to develop practical solutions that can help countries shift to better trajectories.** DFID can play a critical role in shaping markets, driving innovation in quality and delivery, and addressing the social norms that act as barriers for girls and marginalised groups to access secondary education.

**DFID's approach to secondary education is evolving.** DFID takes a lifecycle approach to support young people around the transitions that they make into adulthood. DFID aims to take a people centred approach, focusing on critical phases of adolescence, rather than

education level. Two key stages have been identified: (i) early adolescence (10-14 years) and (ii) transition from education to work (15-19 years). In early adolescence DFID will focus on addressing the multiple pressures that converge during adolescence to influence the opportunity cost of remaining in school, and where gender inequalities open up. To support youth in the transition from education to work DFID will support youth to develop foundational education and vocational/technical skills, build networks and secure opportunities to transition to productive work.

**The new UK ODA strategy will shift how and where DFID works.** This will include a concerted shift away from direct budget support and increasing our focus on fragile and conflict affected states. Plans are currently under development for the next 5 years of DFID programming, which will address these broader shifts on approach and strategy. It is likely that future secondary will look different to current major programming on secondary which is focused on MICs (India) and budget support. There are however critical lessons from DFID's major investment in India for expanding secondary education, particularly around the role of technical assistance.

**Case Study: The sector wide approach in India.** DFID has been providing financial (£60m) and technical assistance (£20m) to support the Government of India's £7.4bn investment to expand the provision of quality secondary education to an additional 10 million children within 5 years. DFID's investments are focused on reforming learning assessment, strengthening management information systems, improving planning processes, teacher management, school improvement and expanding girls' participation. The programme aims to deliver change through: (i) pre-defined discrete system change e.g. cash transfers to incentivise girls' education, new school quality framework, (ii) discrete system change with associated behavioural change (e.g. systems for training teachers) and (iii) progressive innovation leading to comprehensive and large scale reform (TA component). Key lessons include:

- Centrality of reforming teaching practice for educational change and ensuring equitable outcomes. This goes beyond interventions focused on teaching and learning (e.g. assessment) but also those where an adequate teaching environment is essential for success.
- Technical solutions are necessary to develop complex systems but not sufficient to drive change without a complementary focus on sustainability, cultural change and capacity transfer. Technical concepts can be set at the outset, but need to be broadened in the course of implementation and greater understanding of these supporting issues.
- Need for high quality, experienced staff resources to design and manage technical assistance components.

**DFID's future support to secondary education will likely fall under four inter-related areas.**

1. Supporting transition from primary to secondary
2. Expanding provision
3. Increasing equity of access and learning
4. Improving quality and labour market relevance of secondary education.

**Supporting transition from primary to secondary.** DFID's new lifecycle approach identifies early adolescence (age 10 – 14) as a critical period for remaining in school and where gender inequalities increase. Data from the Girls Education Challenge shows that work has to begin at the last years of primary level to support girls to transition successfully into secondary. At this stage direct and opportunity costs of school begin to increase and there is evidence that

schooling decisions are more sensitive to cost for girls. Social norms and the impact on female agency and autonomy can also limit girls' gains from schooling. DFID is testing a range of holistic approaches to support transition for girls including cash transfers and role models (Child Centred Schooling, Zambia), community involvement in learning and teacher apprenticeships (Steps Towards Afghan Girls Education Stages) and support in refugee communities (Kenya Equity in Education Project).

**Expanding provision to secondary education.** DFID is supporting PEAS in Uganda to test cost effective and sustainable models for expanding provision of free secondary schools to marginalised communities through a combination of subsidies from a Public Private Partnership with the Ugandan government, boarding fees and income generating activities (school farms). PEAS build schools in marginalised communities and target children who would could not secure places in government secondary schools. There is potential for DFID support to shape the market for low cost secondary providers, where there are currently limited providers but where we see significant potential.

**Increasing equity of access and learning.** DFID programming to ensure marginalised groups are able to access secondary education include a range of demand side interventions. These include scholarships for marginalised pupils in Pakistan and Ghana, alongside innovative models for non-formal and catch up education. In Pakistan DFID supported Community Coaching Centers in rural villages of Sindh provided girls with the opportunity to bridge the gap between primary and secondary grades, enabling them to achieve secondary school certificates recognized by the Government of Pakistan.

**Improving quality and labour market relevance of secondary education.** The economic returns to secondary education are based on education systems delivering higher order skills. Countries in resource constrained contexts are looking to expand access to education, whilst increasing the quality of education for all (including marginalised groups). This will require new, cost effective approaches to delivering improved teaching and learning environments. In Pakistan DFID is piloting the use of video, tablets and mobile phone technology to train teachers, support classroom instruction, provide out of hours tutoring, and increase parental engagement to improve learning. The programme aims to leverage existing technology to improve learning outcomes in grades 6- 8 of government schools.

**DFID will continue to build the evidence base.** We need to know more about what works to upskill youth through secondary education and broader skills programming. DFID is making a concerted effort to ensure that research programmes address questions at all levels of the education system. The £20m DFID-ESRC Raising Learning Outcomes partnership is open to research at all levels of education, including secondary, whilst DFID's £27m Research on Improving Systems in Education (RISE) aims to look at all levels of the system to understand linkages and trade-offs. DFID are also funding up to 15 RCTs through JPAL's Post Primary Education initiative from 2014-2017. Findings from one study are already being used in discussion with policymakers in Zambia on curriculum reform. Together with our economic growth colleagues we are also co-financing a strategic partnership with the World Bank, to generate rigorous evidence on the relationship between childhood opportunities, skills and job opportunities in early adulthood.