

GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATION

GLOBAL ACTION WEEK 2008

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THEME: "QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL: END EXCLUSION NOW"

**HOSTED BY
ELIMU YETU COALITION**

**STATEMENT BY
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This is a statement by **Elimu Yetu Coalition** representing 120 civil society organizations, professional groupings education/ research institutions Teachers Unions Parents Association and other practitioners in the in the education sector as part of the local efforts to domesticate the Jomtien declarations and the Dakar framework for the attainment of compulsory quality and free basic education in Kenya. The coalition is a member of the **African Campaign Network on Education for All** (ANCEFA) and **Global Campaign for Education** (GCE).

As we celebrate the **Global Week of Action** around the world and here in Kenya today there are close to 8 million people who are not able to read nor write. We also have over two million children (1.8 million as per minister of education) who are not able to access school.

The close to 8 million who are neither able to read nor write and the 2 million children who are not able to access educational opportunities for various reasons. Some do not have access to education because of their personal circumstances, such as disability, while others have been excluded because of poverty, their ethnicity, gender, conflict, geographical location or made vulnerable by orphan-hood or being exploited as child laborers. Some are excluded due to their cultural practices.

It is in recognition of the millions who have missed out on education that is this year 2008 we are focusing on the theme "**Quality education For All: End Exclusion Now**"

(i) Exclusion because of disability

It is estimated that Kenya has a population of 37 million out of this 37 million about 10% or 3.7 million people are said to have various forms of disability. Out of estimated 3.7 million people with various disabilities about third of them or 1.2 million are children who are of school going age. The facilities to cater for this category of Kenyans are not adequate for example there are few special primary schools catering for children with disability, while there are only seven secondary schools catering for the same category. There are integrated schools which also cater for some of the children but are not equipped properly to facilitate the smooth learning of these children. Elimu Yetu Coalition estimates are that the special schools as well as the integrated schools cater for about 20,000 children only. Our concern is what about the 1.2 million children who are catering for them?

The importance of giving special care to persons with disability as a prerequisite for full integration in education is one that is widely recognized and noted by states around the world including our own government. But looking at the above figures, so much remains to be done in ensuring inclusion of people with disability in accessing education. The international convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities (which was negotiated by over 100 countries) and its optional protocol was adopted by the UN General Assembly on the 13th December, 2006 and opened for signatures on 30th March, 2007. On the same day 81 member states and the European Union signed the convention, the highest number of signatures on any human rights instruments on its opening

day. To date 118 countries including Kenya have signed the convention yet only seven countries excluding Kenya have ratified it.

It is impossible for Kenyans to hold the government accountable and therefore obliged to take measures to ensure provisions of the treaty is implemented. The convention's primary aim is to ensure that persons with disability enjoy human rights on an equal basis with others.

Article 24 of the Convention enjoins states to ensure that persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education and that children with disabilities are not excluded from accessing quality, free and compulsory primary education or from secondary education on the basis of their disabilities

It is a sad indictment that an estimated 98% of children with disabilities in this country do not attend school. Difficulties faced include;

- Education facilities are often inaccessible
- Most of the teachers lack training to provide appropriate education for students with disabilities.
- Transport to educational facilities is a major barrier for persons with disabilities
- Parents with children who have disabilities are in most cases poor, uneducated and sometimes illiterate.
- Government officers seem to play a reactive role in identifying children with disabilities
- Identification centers for children with disabilities do not exist and if they do are poorly equipped.

To address the above issues we are calling for the enactment of a National Policy that includes budgetary support with clear guidance on how persons with disabilities will be assisted.

ii) Exclusion by gender

With the introduction of free primary education in Kenya in 2003, primary school enrolment expanded rapidly. The number of girls accessing educational opportunities also shot up tremendously. However, despite the growth in enrollments over two million children are still out of school about 60% of the being girls.

The year 2005 was targeted to achieve gender parity in schools enrolment at primary school level. By that year 59 countries had reached gender parity in primary and secondary education enrollment. Sadly Kenya was not among those countries, why are girls not able to go to school?

- Parents denying children to attend school.
- Child labor
- No money for incidental school costs due to poverty
- Long distance to schools
- Disability of either child or parents
- School conflicts with cultural beliefs
- Poor quality of schools

- Living on the streets
- Lack of proper sanitation in schools
- Girls dropping out due to reaching the age of maturation.

While gender relations may vary from society to society, the general pattern that is women have less personal autonomy and limited influence over the decision making process that shape their society. Educating women has a huge influence on the well being of the family and when a country educates both boys and girls equally, economic productivity rises, maternal and infant mortality rates fall and the health and education prospects of the next generation are improved. More investments on girl's education is needed

iii) Exclusion because of conflicts

Thousands of families in this country have at one time or another had to flee from their homes due to conflict. This has happened in parts of Coast region, North Eastern province, North rift, Mt Elgon and most recently in most parts of Kenya due to post elections violence.

In all the above cases, over 80% of those who were affected were women and children. Women and children also face a heightened risk of sexual assault and other forms of gender based violence which is sadly often downplayed as unfortunate but inevitable side effects.

As was noted recently in conflicts taking place in Kenya children are increasing participating as combatants. This we saw in the media, children with bows and arrows and pangas.

As happens, these children could be missing out on education. We have stated previously that over 2 million children are missing out on accessing education. The recent conflict displaced close to 150,000 children. We are however happy to note that the government and concerned civil society organization were quick to assist in setting up IDPs schools and settling some of the children in normal schools in order to continue with their learning.

Kenyans should try to understand the causes of some of these conflicts and avoid them or ensure these causes do not occur.

Children cannot wait for the coalition government to settle down before they get an opportunity to get decent quality education.

iv) Exclusion because of poverty

It cannot be overstated that low levels of investments in educating and development of disadvantaged children translates into poorer outcomes. Households with higher levels of education are less likely to be poor. Children born into poverty have a lower birth weight, high infant mortality and poorer health. They are less likely to stay in school and will have fewer qualifications. In adulthood they will be paid lower, experience unemployment and are likely to die young.

The population of those living below the poverty line in Kenya was estimated at 46%. . This widespread poverty effects both student's performance and their availability to attend school. Poor quality education leads to low income, which in turn perpetuates poverty. Low levels of education affects growth through low labour productivity.

v) Exclusion because of child labour

Child labour exploits children physically, mentally, morally or by blocking them from accessing education. Child labour is wide spread in Kenya. Despite the legislative and policy measures which have been put in place in this country, Kenya is estimated to have 2-3 million working children ranging from harmful to worst forms of labour.

Commercial agriculture employs 34% of children, subsistence agriculture and fisheries employs 23.6%. Domestic and related services employ 17.9 % of the children.

Children also known to work in hazardous factories like handling dangerous chemicals.

Child trafficking although not well documented exists in this country. This is an issue that should be addressed in order to protect our children from exploitation. If these children are not enabled to achieve their full development and educational potential then what will become of them? They will form the masses of unskilled labour or will be unemployed.

Despite the formulation of a National Children's Policy, the Policy on Guidelines for child Participation, the National Policy on Orphans and Vulnerable children and draft National Child Labour Policy, the lot of the children in this country continues to worsen.

What Kenya is witnessing today in forms of illegal militia gangs and other illegal activities is as a result of ignoring for a long time proper development of the country's children and implementation of the many policies that continue being churned out every year.

vi) Youth and adult illiteracy

Uneducated children grow up to be illiterate adults. Illiterate adults are often an ignored category of people because of preoccupation with children's education. This should not be the case because Education for All means 'Just that For All'.

According to the Kenya national adult literacy survey (2007) 38.5 % (close to 8million) Kenyans (15 years and above) are illiterate. What does this mean? There are almost 8 million adults who cannot read, write, or solve simple mathematical problems and integrate information effectively in order to fulfill their potential. In this country it is reflected in the millions of unemployed people and child labourers with a whole host of other social and health problems. Currently Kenya does not have a

national policy to guide curriculum, content delivery and certification in the adult education sub-sector.

The budgetary allocation to the sub-sector is extremely low as to negate any positive developments. Recruitment of adult education teachers has decreased by 40% between 2004 and 2006 (KNALS 2007 survey).

Elimu yet coalition believes that they are five compelling reasons to invest in adult literacy

- Literacy is vital in reducing gender inequalities
- It is critical for healthy development and education of children especially girls
- It is vital to human economic development.
- It is vital for fighting HIV/AIDS
- Adult literacy programmes work.

vii) Orphans and vulnerable children

Orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) are those children most at risk of increased negative outcomes compared to average children. Any discussion OVCs cannot be separated from the impact of HIV/AIDS. Since its discovery in 1981 more than 3 million Kenyans have lost their lives to the virus and over 20 million people worldwide have died. In Kenya over 2 million people are currently living with HIV/AIDS including 500,000 children under the age of 15. Close to 1.5 million children under the age of 18 have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS.

Orphaned children may be found to leave school, engage in labour or engage in risky behaviour that makes them vulnerable to contracting HIV/AIDS. Impoverished children living in households with one or more ill parents are also affected as funds for education, food and other purposes are diverted to treatment hence depleted rapidly.

Significant growth in orphaned children has led to increase in child labour, prostitution, street children and families. Vulnerability to crime, to militias and a growing population of uneducated and unskilled labour.

Street children

UNICEF estimates that around 100 million street children in the world. Elimu Yetu coalition estimate is that there could be about 500,000 street children in Kenya with Nairobi alone having close to three hundred thousand street children. These children are involved in increasing cases of petty crime eventually graduating to serious crime as they mature.

Gender exploitation

The rapid spread of HIV/AIDS is fueled by gender inequities. Since girls tend to be educated at lower rates than boys, they are vulnerable to survival sex. It is estimated that close to 20% of commercial sex workers in Kenya are under the age

of 15 years and of these nearly 50% are under the age of 18. UNAIDS reports in "Children and young people in a world of AIDS" the upsurge in the number of girls who turn to older men to pay school expenses has not helped

viii) Ethnic minorities

Discrimination on the basis of ethnic or social origins is a source of social injustice and social exclusion.

According to UNESCO, ethnic minorities like indigenous people have historically been the poorest. Examples in Kenya are the Ndorobos or the Ogiek and other communities inhabiting parts of Northern Kenya and Coast (The BONI of Lamu district) provinces have been historically the poorest, most vulnerable and excluded social sectors. Their access to social services such as education and health are severely limited. Earlier in 2003 it was noted by UNESCO at its ministerial roundtable meeting on quality education that quality education particularly for indigenous people was most elusive the 2000 Dakar goals and that the government needed to develop responses to the diversity of needs and access of indigenous people.

ix) Geographical location

Infrastructure and social services are not evenly distributed. In far flung rural areas access to education is a great challenge because of long distances that learners have to travel in order to find the nearest school.

According to UNESCO, three quarters of the world's poor majority of who are female live in rural areas. Non attendance in school, early drop-out of learners, adult illiteracy and gender inequality in education are disproportionately high in rural areas. There is urgent need to redress the urban rural disparities in educational development and in the quality of teaching and learning. For this country to succeed in the war against poverty it must ensure that rural development is a priority

✚ Why educate?

Education is a human right. Human rights are inherent, every person is born with them and cannot be given or taken away. Other rights include the right to shelter, food and security.

Education is not only an entitlement, it is also crucial to tackling poverty, improving health, halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and enable people to form a full active part in their communities.

✚ Education empowers

A single year of school increases a woman wages by 10 to 20 percent.

✚ Education saves lives

Seven million cases world wide could be prevented in the next decade if every child receives an education.

 **Education builds the future**

A child born to a literate mother is 50% more likely to survive past the age of five years.

What is Elimu Yetu Coalition asking the Kenya Government to do?

- Ensure that at least 20% of our National budget and 6% of GNI are allocated to education.
- Put in place specific measures to reach marginalized and excluded learners such as orphans, vulnerable children, ethnic and language minorities, children with disabilities, children internally displaced, refugee communities and working children
- Introduce policies and practices to achieve gender equality in education, such as gender sensitive curricular, ensuring an adequate number of female teachers (especially in northern Kenya). Making schools safe and hygienic for girls and encouraging girls by giving them stipends
- Abolish all fees and charges in education (make basic education truly free).
- Put in place specific measures to improve quality of education such as ensuring that all children are taught in a class no bigger than 40 by a professionally trained teacher, spending at least 25% of the current budget on non salary inputs such as teaching and learning materials and enshrining the right to Free Basic Education including Early Childhood Education into Law.
- Ensure the speedy enactment of the proposed Education Act (Kamunge commission)
- Set up a social protection fund for the poor and marginalized families.
- Ensure that inflation is reduced to single digits and controlled to ensure that the poor do not continue to face skyrocketing food prices.

What is Elimu Yetu Coalition Asking of Rich Country Governments?

- Increase the total overseas development assistant (ODA) to education to at least \$16 billion per year, ensuring that 60 low – income countries' plans are fully funded through the Education for All First -Track initiative
- Guarantee that ODA is predictable over a 10- year period
- Fund countries' full Education for All strategies through harmonized sector or budget support to ensure that cash can be spent on co-recurrent costs such as teachers salaries
- Specifically commit some of the resources to financing social protection for poor and marginalized families
- Encourage the development of inclusive education strategies in dialogue with partner countries which will achieve a quality education for all
- Develop innovative financing mechanisms to fund public education provision in conflict affected fragile states
- The EFA-Track initiative should publicly state that country plans addressing the full agenda are eligible for approval and financing through the initiative.
- The World Bank should ensure that its lending is aligned with the EFA-FTI principles of supporting one country, one sector one plan which predictable and harmonized.

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Statement by Mr. Chapman Nashan Kisiero, National Coordinator
Elimu Yetu Coalition - Kenya

- The IMF should drop policies such as imposition of public sector wage caps which prevent countries from increasing domestic spending on Education For All.
- The UN should use its mandate under special procedures to prioritize action on education and take concrete steps to urge member states to do the same.