

International Development Committee

Oral evidence: [DFID's work on education: Leaving no one behind](#), HC 639

Tuesday 1 November 2016

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Members present: Stephen Twigg (Chair); Fiona Bruce; Dr Lisa Cameron; Stephen Doughty; Pauline Latham; Jeremy Lefroy; Wendy Morton; Albert Owen; Paul Scully; Mr Virendra Sharma.

Questions 1 – 50

Witnesses

I: Alice Albright, CEO, Global Partnership for Education.

II: Joseph Nhan-O'Reilly, Head of Education Policy & Advocacy, Save the Children, Susan Nicolai, Head of Development Progress, ODI, and Dr Hamed Al Hammami, Lebanon Country Director, UNESCO.

Examination of witness

Witness: Alice Albright.

Q1 Chair: Good afternoon, everyone. This is our first oral evidence session as part of our inquiry into DFID's work on education. I am delighted to have as our first witness today Alice Albright, Chief Executive of the Global Partnership for Education. Alice, we have about a dozen questions that we want to cover in an hour. Different members of the Committee will ask each question. Roughly we need about five minutes of discussion on each and there is a lot of ground to cover. Can I kick off with an opener? Please feel free to say something by way of introduction as part of your answer. Sustainable development goal 4 sets the world a huge challenge in terms of both the quality of education but also access to education. Can it be achieved?

Alice Albright: Thank you. Before I answer the question, let me thank you all so much for giving me an opportunity to be here. I have very fond and warm feelings for coming to speak in your Parliament. I used to live in London many years ago. I am delighted as always to come back.

The other thing that I have great regard for is the leadership that the UK has shown in the development space, not only in the job that I hold now but in the job that I held a couple of jobs ago when I worked at GAVI. It is a great delight to get to visit with you all. Thank you so much for including me.

To answer your question, Mr Twigg, there is no doubt that SDG 4 is a far more complex goal than MDG 2 was. In particular, on top of the question of access to primary school, which was the key goal of MDG 2, it adds three new things: quality, equity and lifelong learning. Our new strategic plan—not so new—from about a year ago is very much centred around those goals.

It would be naive of us to think we are going to accomplish SDG 4 in short order—a matter of a few years. Often when I speak to parliaments, congresses etc., I say, "Do not think that we are going to wake up tomorrow and think that all these problems are fixed." We need to attend ourselves to what is going to be a generational approach and a set of expectations to making these changes. We have to be in this for the long game and we have to begin to put in place all the different bits and pieces.

We can go into a bit more detail on that about what it is going to take to get the poorest and most underserved education systems in the world to start educating children in a way that is quality based. When I say "we", I mean in particular in our case the 65 developing country partners. It is not a we/they thing. It is an us thing.



In terms of going about it, I would not so much frame it in, "Can we get there?" I would frame it in, "We must get there." Depending on what numbers you talk about and what numbers you look at, there is a vast crisis in the world right now regarding access for so many young people, whether or not it is primary school, lower secondary school, girls, kids that live in rural areas, kids with disabilities, youth or people who should have gone to college but did not. There is a crisis in the world in that there are so many children who are not getting access to any of that. When you think about the implication of that for the world and you think, "What is the world going to do with hundreds of millions of children who are not learning anything? How do they become meaningful and productive adults?", it is a crisis, and we have to attend ourselves to it.

Q2 Chair: You praise the UK's leadership role. Do you think there is a particular aspect of education where DFID can take a lead?

Alice Albright: They have their own areas of interest. I know that they are interested in gender, for example. They have made some good choices. We would encourage them, and I say the same thing to every other G7 government that I talk to, to also at the same time take a real interest in education multilaterally. Why do I say that? Governments along the lines of the UK, the US, Canada etc., particularly the really big governments, have a choice to make between engaging in development initiatives bilaterally or multilaterally.

I would argue that it ought not to be an either/or choice. I would just as an aside congratulate you all so much for being committed to the 0.7%. Rah—it is just fantastic! With resources of the magnitude of those of the UK, you do have a choice. You can go at development initiatives in a bilateral way and that will enable you, in the most humble way that I can say it, to pursue certain interests that are of strategic nature to you.

That is fantastic, but there are also development initiatives, and I would argue that education is one of those right now, where the world needs a galvanised approach, particularly at the G7, because we have such a crisis in education at the moment and because we are now so aware that education is at the heart of achieving all the other SDGs. It is at the heart of the peace and security agenda. It is at the heart of the health agenda in many ways and the climate change agenda. There is an urgency that faces us right now that demands a multilateral approach.

As a second point, I would note that we think at least, and this has now been affirmed by the work of the Education Commission, that the way to fix the problem is to fix the education systems. That is very much what the countries demand. It is not so much project orientated. It is very much fixing all the different pieces of the system, and we can talk a bit more about that later. That type of approach is very fitting with a multilateral approach to education.

I would encourage the UK Government and others to really complement their bilateral activities with a very strong multilateral approach. Think of



what we have seen in the health sector, for example, and of the Global Fund replenishment. When the world, principally the G7—and throw in Norway and the European Commission as well—decides that a problem is of such urgency that they all have to act together, the problem tends to be solved. I would encourage a multilateral approach by the G7, by the UK Government, to complement its bilateral work.

Chair: Thank you very much indeed.

Q3 Pauline Latham: The recent Education Commission report highlights the need for a huge increase in investment in education, both from national governments and the international community. Do you think there is a funding crisis in global education? If so, why do you think this is and how can it be addressed?

Alice Albright: Yes, there is a funding crisis. I can talk about the reasons in just a moment. That is not the only crisis. There also need to be some real changes in the quality of delivery. The words we are beginning to use at GPE are we need business unusual. If you look at the typical trends in education delivery right now and education outcomes, they are wholly inadequate. That is not just an opinion of the international community; it is an opinion that is widely shared by all the leaders and others, the parents in particular, in the developing countries as well. It is by no means an opinion that is shared by just the donor community, for example.

We have two things that in broad terms we really need to work on. One is delivering better—better results, better outcomes, better efficiency of systems and better focus on all of the different areas that are problematic at the moment. We also need more money. To answer your question specifically about the money, it is important first of all to understand that, because education is really a national obligation of a lot of the developing countries, they need to really devote more of their domestic resources to education. The solution is not one where, getting back to the G7 for example, the donors ought to be putting themselves in a position of expecting to subsidise education in developing countries for ever and ever and ever.

Fixing the finance crisis is twofold: first, we do not have enough money because the developing countries are not consistently investing enough. That was one point coming out of the report; secondly, the international community is not putting enough money into education. The reason for that is complicated, but generally there has been a lack of enthusiasm for the sector because people think, “Where are the results? Where are the results?” In contrast to the health sector, we are not going to see results in a year. We are going to have to play the long game, but we are going to have to develop our expectations around what it takes to succeed over that long period.

Q4 Pauline Latham: Why do you think that developing countries are not putting enough money into even basic primary and secondary education,



never mind getting it up to a level equivalent to Western standards?

Alice Albright: First, the case for investing in education is not one that is easily made, although the Education Commission report has just made a very strong case for it. Secondly, these countries face very difficult funding trade-off decisions. Ideally a country would be putting as much as 20% of its domestic resources into education, but often an Ebola crisis comes along, for example, and often monies have to go for something else. Often a security crisis happens or there is war or something like that. There are all kinds of reasons why it is difficult to maintain the number.

One of the things that we pay a lot of attention to is how strong that commitment is. In fact, we have just reorganised how we fund specifically to make sure we ask for countries to maintain a certain level of domestic investment and we track it. We will only put our money in place if a country is keeping up with that commitment. If you talk to finance ministers in many of the countries, they will say that they are also not particularly satisfied with the efficiency and the return on the investment, so that gets back to the hard challenge of delivering better. It is complicated—it is a good question with a big, complicated answer.

Q5 **Wendy Morton:** Education is DFID's third largest sector spend and yet the total is still substantially less, as you will know, than spending on health and disaster relief. Do you feel DFID needs to address this?

Alice Albright: Yes, I do. I want to note that DFID has been generous to GPE. They have provided funding to us in a manner that has been very beneficial for us. They have helped us ourselves get on a very strong results and reform pathway. They have put in place with this latest pledge to us, which is £300 million, a whole set of measures that they were eager to see us accomplish. They made a certain percentage of the money contingent on the achievement of those results.

I was delighted by that. I said to my team, "Okay, folks, we are going to hit the cover off the ball," and we have. I was delighted to have that push ahead of us. I hope that they will continue to be a driver of a very important reform agenda, both in the sector but also with the partnership that I work for.

In terms of quantum of money, I would love to see it be higher. I will always press whatever Government I am meeting with to put more money into education and more money multilaterally into education. You see a real disproportion between the amount of money that is going in bilaterally and multilaterally. I have no problem with the bilateral spend, but I want to see the multilateral number go up, because multilaterally we can do some things that are complementary to, but frankly typically quite different from, what happens bilaterally. Yes, I would love to see the number go up.

Q6 **Wendy Morton:** You touched on proportionality. In terms of the



proportion of the DFID budget, something like 44% goes on the provision of basic education, 19% on secondary and just 6% on post-secondary education. Given the focus of SDG 4 now on lifelong learning, do you feel that DFID has the balance right?

Alice Albright: Largely, yes, and I will tell you why. We think about education—I just said this in the APPG meeting this morning, but I will beg your indulgence to say it again—as a staircase. The idea is that the staircase is wide enough and not so steep that every kid can start at the bottom, regardless of whether or not they are a girl or a boy or have disabilities or live in a remote area or what have you, and get to the top of the staircase and be able to then jump off and lead a productive life.

One of the critical investments in order to have people go up the staircase is that the bottom of the staircase is pretty wide. Often we see some countries—either it is deliberate or it just happens—spending a disproportionate amount of money on tertiary education. In Malawi, for example—I was just there in September—1% of the students who start primary school get to university. If we are orientating either the international aid money or the domestic money towards the richest kids who are going to go to university anyway, we are missing the kids who are not getting on the bottom of the staircase.

I would argue that public resources need to be a safety-net type of expenditure to ensure that kids are getting on the bottom of the staircase. Interestingly, one of the important details of how we provide funding is that, when we look at how domestic resources are being spent in-country, we insist that a certain percentage of it is going to basic education, because we are looking to create the access for all kids to get on the staircase. Of course, that is not the end of the story. We have to make sure that there is enough quality, teachers, books, focus on assessments and things to make sure that there is quality all the way through to the top of the staircase.

Albert Owen: Welcome to London.

Alice Albright: Thank you.

Q7 **Albert Owen:** Welcome back to London, I should say. GPE's theory of change states that strengthening the education systems is the key to unlocking access and equity as well as quality learning. What does that mean in practice and how would you define your approach?

Alice Albright: I am delighted that you have read our theory of change.

Q8 **Albert Owen:** Absolutely—with the help of the back-up staff.

Alice Albright: There were versions of the theory of change that looked like a plate of spaghetti, and I thought, "Oh my gosh, who is going to read it?" I think my communications buddies at work did a good job of unpacking it.



Albert Owen: You are going to have to explain it.

Alice Albright: The philosophy around the theory of change, and this is quite distinct from how some other people may go about education, is that you have to strengthen the system. It does not do any good to have money deployed to go build a school and then hope for the best. Often then the school is empty. There are no kids. There are no books. There are no teachers. You just have a building.

You need to approach how you reform an entire system, which starts with putting in place what we call a good education-sector policy, which is basically an investment case for how a government is going to get all the right pieces in place for their whole sector. This is really at the heart of GPE's work.

If I were to boil it down, we do two things. One is that we do help a government get all the right partners in place to put in place a good education plan. This is their game plan. It talks about all their policy priorities. It looks at where the gaps are. It looks at how monies are available and being spent. It really is their plan. Often it is a five- or 10-year period. It is a big international dialogue with a lot of partners. At a country level, DFID is often involved in that dialogue and very useful. At the end of it, it becomes a rallying cry at the country to get all the pieces in place.

One of the things that we do, and it is the twin to our theory of change, is our results framework. We are now going to be able to track how effective the country is being at achieving the goals that they have articulated in their education-sector plan. The first thing is a good education-sector plan.

The second thing, and it is another big lever for us, is money. We distribute between \$450 million and \$500 million a year. It is divided into two pieces. There is a 70% piece that we will only give a country if they achieve three different requirements. One is that it is a good education-sector plan. Two is that they have attended themselves and committed themselves to a level of domestic resource investment and that they stick with it. The third is that they have put in place a plan to deal with the data issues in the country. There are severe data issues in the education sector.

The 30% is what we call the variable tranche. We work with the country to identify three stretch goals, one in improving equity, one in improving learning outcomes and one in improving the efficiency of systems. Once they achieve those three goals, they will then get the 30% piece.

We have now done, whether approved or rejected, six of these 70/30 approaches with countries. It is remarkable to see how this 30% has focused the dialogue in the country around improving specific things. I have in my big notebook here the details of exactly what we are measuring in some of these 30% cases, and it is fascinating. We have



done them in some of the most difficult places: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi and Nepal for example. I could give you some detail around that if you are interested. It is the sector plan and it is money—those are the levers.

Q9 **Albert Owen:** You have explained the theory very well in the short period that you had. Two previous questions asked of SDG 4. With GPE's and the SDG's focus on lifelong learning, will you be extending your focus to include the early years and tertiary education?

Alice Albright: If we look at the totality and the adequacy of the education-sector plan, we will be looking at all the different levels of school. In terms of our financing, we will be orientating our financing still towards basic, because that is an area from a financing perspective that is most at risk. It enables us to get kids to the bottom of the staircase. As our own resource envelopes evolve, we will begin to look at the most what we call equity-driven cases for investment in perhaps secondary school, but it depends on what arguments are to be made there.

If we had all the money in the world at our fingertips, we would be investing at all the different levels of education, but we are going to be focusing it for the meantime on basic and on lower secondary. Increasingly, where we see some very good cases to be made around inequity around secondary school we may begin to look at that area as well.

Q10 **Stephen Doughty:** At the last GPE replenishment you raised \$2.1 billion and the UK was the largest contributor to that. That is a huge increase on the last replenishment, but it was short of the goals that you set, and when you compare it with things like the Global Fund, it pales in significance. Given what you have been saying about multilateralism, why do you think it is that you are not able to secure those contributions from countries to your funds? What is your strategy for addressing that as you approach the next replenishment?

Alice Albright: It is a very good and timely question. GPE itself has been in a big state of reform. It was started in 2002 as FTI. It was started out to be a somewhat focused and in some ways modest gap-filling endeavour. It was very much embedded in the World Bank, who are our friends; we have a nice relationship with them. It had not really begun to focus on the question of performance and delivery.

In about 2010 or 2011, it started really rethinking itself. We are still hosted at the World Bank; they are very nice to us. But GPE wanted to begin to form itself into a much more ambitious, assertive, muscular organisation to prepare itself for the SDGs. I came along in early 2013. I was given charge of reforming and strengthening GPE and really putting it on a very ambitious target and pathway for better results, better performance and better delivery.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Now, three or so years into it, we have made a substantial change in five different areas. One is strategic. We have just finished our whole strategic plan. It is SDG 4. The second is technical. We have built a whole technical capability to really define the DNA and the guts of how we do our work. This is the theory of change. What comes with it, which we are so delighted about, is the first ever partnership-wide results framework, which has 37 indicators and tracks whether we are hitting our targets on every different bit and piece of this theory of change.

The third area is financial and risk management. We have spent a lot of time looking at how we manage our balance sheet, how we manage our finances and how we think about all that we do through the lens of risk. We also have shored up—this is the fourth area—our operational model, which is the whole collection of ways that we work in countries. We work through grant agents. We have now shored up all the consistency in expectations around how those relationships work. I can go into more detail on that. That is complicated. The fifth area is organisationally. We have done quite a bit of work internally on having the right skillsets, people and so forth. We have got fantastic staff at GPE. Some of them are back here. It is a delight to work with them.

We have two more areas ahead of us on the reform agenda. One is that we are completely reforming how we both raise money and how we deploy money. It is being talked about right now in fact, and it will be approved by our board on the one hand in November and then in February. That will be at the heart of our next replenishment. Finally, the final area of our reform agenda is the whole question of education in emergencies. We are working very closely with the Education Cannot Wait crowd to try to get that very important effort off the ground, and we can talk about that a little later.

When GPE went to do its replenishment in 2014, the only thing of the whole reform agenda that I just talked about that was even a reality was a fresh redesign of the 70/30 thing that I just talked about, and that had not even been put in place. It had been approved but it had not been implemented. We were replenishing on the basis of a lot of expectations.

We are now in a much stronger position in our replenishment. We have a strategic plan. We have a results framework. We have a very rock solid theory of change. We have got all of our technical building blocks in place. We have got a very clear idea about our business model, how we create value and where we are going with it. I am not naive in the slightest. It is a difficult environment out there, so we will put every bit of muscle we have into pressing every government we can to help us with this endeavour.

The other thing that is going to be a very important part of this replenishment is domestic resources. We were delighted in our last replenishment about securing \$26 billion of incremental domestic resource towards education from 25 of our country partners. We have



HOUSE OF COMMONS

long thought that domestic resources have to play a huge role here, not just in money but in terms of galvanising the appetite for reform in the countries. We will continue to press our country partners for their own commitments to education. We have a strong story going into this replenishment. We think the world is beginning to really focus on education, so we will be swinging for the fences on this one.

Q11 Stephen Doughty: Briefly, what sort of quantum would you be looking for from DFID next time round?

Alice Albright: It is too early to say that. We are still in the planning stages of that. If you look at the Education Commission report, on page 18, which we are very happy about, it talks about getting GPE to a level of \$2 billion per annum by 2020 and \$4 billion by 2030. Those are good, ambitious numbers.

Getting back to the initial part of your question, which is about the Global Fund, the Global Fund have done a fantastic job and they have done it by having a rock solid business model, showing clear efficacy, having very strong partners and strong advocacy about why people have to support better therapeutics and all the other interventions that they do.

We should not be any less ambitious than they are, because I think we all absolutely agree that aids, tuberculosis and malaria are major problems, but lack of education is also a major problem, and you could argue that it is in some ways a silent killer in the same way that aids, tuberculosis and malaria are. We should not hold ourselves to any less of an outcome than what they have done. We should not. We should just go for it in the same way, because the problem is a slightly different type of problem but just as bad and as challenging as what they are contending with.

Q12 Fiona Bruce: Good afternoon. You talked very early on this afternoon about the importance of DFID working multilaterally, yet the new Secretary of State has publicly questioned the effectiveness and efficiency of multilateral organisations ahead of the release of the DFID Multilateral Aid Review. What are your thoughts on this?

Alice Albright: We are looking forward to seeing the MAR. We read it very carefully. I will tell you a funny story. When I was thinking about taking on this job, I was doing all kinds of reading and I found that chart in the MAR with all the dots on it. I guess the higher you are in the chart in the upper right-hand quadrant, the better off you are, and the further you are to the lower left, you have a bit of work to do. I found GPE's dot and I said, "Okay. I am going to go fix that dot," and we have fixed the dot. We are delighted that we have fixed the dot. We have not entirely fixed the dot. We have a few more plusses to get to, but we are on a very good trajectory. We love the dots on the chart.

I have met with the Secretary of State. I met with and had a nice meeting with her at UNGA. Julia Gillard joined me for that. It was a very warm meeting. She is at the early stages of deciding. It must be difficult



in an increasingly Brexit type of world to begin to determine what is the right pathway forward from a policy and a foreign policy perspective for international assistance. That is not intellectually an easy thing to do.

I would encourage them to think that on the one hand they do have a strong set of bilateral tools at their fingertips, but they also need to engage multilaterally, because one of the things that I often think about is countries like the UK have chosen certain countries with which they will engage bilaterally, but they are not able to engage everywhere. We are able to help a country have a presence through a broader platform than what they may be able to do bilaterally. I would encourage them, and we are doing this, to begin to think about the bilateral and multilateral tools as being quite complementary towards each other from a strategic perspective. In terms of how she would go from here, she has got time to think about it. We will continue to give her some good feedback.

Q13 Fiona Bruce: Thank you. The MAR has experienced a number of delays. It still has not been released. Has that caused you challenges and have you been given any indication of what your final score might be this time?

Alice Albright: We have been given an indication. Am I allowed to say what the indication is?

Chair: Definitely.

Alice Albright: I am being told no. I was not sure. I do not know. Has it been a good process for us? Yes, it has been a very good process. I have to say, and I am completely genuine when I say this, there is no better aid organisation in the world than DFID in terms of understanding the science of what is at hand, how you measure it, how you structure it, how you create value with it, what organisations are doing well, what organisations are doing less well and so forth. We have found the whole process to be just exceptionally valuable.

Many of us would wish that a lot of other aid organisations are as forward leaning as DFID is. We have found the MAR process to be very valuable. It has not been a bowl of cherries, as we say at home sometimes, all the time. They have pressed us on a few things.

With this £300 million contribution that they announced for us at our last replenishment came a 15-indicator results framework with a lot of different details associated with it. We are delighted to report that we have met 11 of the 15 indicators completely. For three of them, I guess substantially was the word that was used. One of them we have not met yet. But having that focus, which was in part a function of the MAR process, was fantastic. It was absolutely fantastic and I would not trade it. We will continue to work on the basis of having a strong results orientation with DFID. They just put the same type of thing in place in connection with the Global Fund pledge, so it would seem as if they are perhaps going in the direction of more of this results orientation, and we are very favourable.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Q14 Fiona Bruce: Thank you. Just very briefly, because you have talked about reforms already, GPE were subject to a number of criticisms in the 2011 MAR. You became CEO in 2013 and you have overseen a number of reforms. Is there anything you have not already talked about that you would like to tell us in terms of addressing DFID's concerns since that first review?

Alice Albright: I have touched on a number of the pieces. What DFID was really caring about was: perform and show results, show value for money and look at risk management. Another thing that they spent a lot of time working on is governance. We are still in a process of really getting the governance right. If you will allow me, I will spend just a second on that topic. It is fascinating.

Many organisations like mine are somewhat conventional in the sense that you have various partners but principally donors sitting around a table deciding how to deploy money in developing countries. What is absolutely distinctive about GPE is it is a partnership, and we are the largest partnership in the world that is exclusively dedicated to education. I like to describe us sometimes as the largest assembly of education talent in the world by far.

We have around the table 65 developing countries. We have three UN agencies, I am very proud to say. We have a very distinctive relationship with all three of them. It is UNICEF, UNESCO and UNHCR. We also have the multilateral development banks, which is principally the World Bank, but others join here and there. We have civil society organisations from the north and the south. We have the private sector, both the business community and the foundations. We have the teachers unions—very important. I am sure I am forgetting some. There are 20-plus donors, of which you all are a very proud part.

When we make decisions, it is not the G7 and the donor community telling the developing countries what to do. It is all of us sitting around the table deciding as a group, including the countries—and this is so important—how we ought to be reforming education systems. When we think about our governance, it has to keep that concept front and centre. Because education is so much about local delivery, if GPE begins to move in the direction of doing something such that the countries feel put upon and do not embrace it, we are not going to win. Reforming governance for us is really important and really tricky. It is something that we have not entirely finished yet, but that is something DFID has been very eager about and we are working with them on. There is a lot there. We have made good progress, but there are a couple more things to do.

Q15 Paul Scully: Evidence to the inquiry from the Brookings Institution talked about DFID's oversight procedures as being onerous, limiting partners' ability to be flexible and innovative, and putting a burden on them that could undercut their ability to deliver effectively on programmes. Do you agree with that assessment? Is it an area of concern for GPE?



Alice Albright: It came from Brookings?

Paul Scully: Brookings Institution.

Alice Albright: Brookings. Okay. I would say yes and no. There is a shift such that, if you think about the right way to do education reform, which is at the heart of what we do, it is a systems approach. We need to move away from counting how many schools we are building and how many textbooks we are buying, because we would characterise those as inputs when we really need to focus ourselves on outcomes. There is a tendency, and it is not simply in the UK—it is with a lot of other donor governments—to want to focus on the inputs, because it is easy to count and it is more visible. People are used to counting vaccines and counting other stuff that is countable. One of the challenges we have in education is it is not quite so countable.

In particular this is one of the benefits of SDG 4. People are beginning to realise that, while the inputs are very important ingredients and raw materials, that is not the end of the story. We have to enable Governments to put it all together and have teachers in the right place with the right materials, with the right curriculum, with enough money and enough interest in school to get kids to school and to stay there.

DFID has begun to make a bit of a shift and understand that there is room both for a systems approach and in some other cases more of an inputs approach. Have they been onerous? No, I would not say that they have been onerous. They have really pushed us, but I have found it to be very valuable as a push. I said this to Secretary of State Patel when I saw her. I continue to embrace being pushed.

Q16 **Paul Scully:** We have clearly got to make sure that DFID delivers value for money, but also makes it open and accessible so that partners can get on and do the job that they want to without too much onerous oversight. Do you feel then that the balance is largely right? Is that what you are suggesting?

Alice Albright: They do come to visit us more than others, but they also understand us better than others, and they also are among our largest donors. If I were a UK taxpayer and I understood that my Government had put in place a law that was 0.7%, which is fantastic, and you are sticking to the law regardless of who is in power, I would want to know, particularly in this day and age of such difficult resource constraints, that money is really being put to good use. I have no problem with the rigour.

I will continue to push DFID to give us more though. I will continue to do that—maybe you all can join me with that—because there is a financing crisis going on. As they get more and more vested in education, in the multilateral approach and into GPE, I would like them and everybody else to think that we are the platform in education we are, such that they get more and more comfortable with us and support us even more.



Jeremy Lefroy: Good afternoon.

Alice Albright: Nice to see you again.

Q17 **Jeremy Lefroy:** And you. In recent years DFID supported low-fee schools, including private schools, in some of the poorest priority countries. What is your view on this and have they got the right approach? You talk about the importance, quite understandably and rightly, of strengthening education systems. In many countries those schools are a very important part of the education system because there is nothing else in the areas they serve.

Alice Albright: This is a very tricky issue. We spent a lot of time thinking about this one. If you visit a low-cost private school—I visited a Bridge Academy school in Kenya last year—it is hard to not come away being impressed by the ingenuity involved. They have got nice classrooms. They have got kids sitting there. They have got teachers teaching. They have grown very quickly. They are beginning to put in place some interesting technology. It is hard to not come away impressed by that.

However, if you dig deeper and you think about how that business model relates to my staircase, we do get quite worried about business models that could very well keep kids off the staircase. Anything that is fee-paying and fee-charging could very well do that and could very well create an environment where a government feels as if they do not have to have the responsibility for providing what we hope to be free education for all the kids to start primary school.

We would have some real both philosophical and equity-based concerns about a world where we saw low-cost private schools really displacing the responsibility of government. The whole education space is a very varied space. There are many others—non-profit organisations, faith-based organisations—that are not specifically strictly government-owned that are doing fantastic work.

One organisation that I am sure you all are familiar with is Camfed here, which is just doing fantastic work in building education opportunities and leadership opportunities for girls. They are doing it through a business model that is bursary based that gets girls to get to go to school free. That is an example where it is not strictly a government-owned programme, but they have been able to figure out the finances to make sure that we do not get into equity situations. It is tricky. At least at GPE we spend a lot of time thinking about the equity issues.

Q18 **Jeremy Lefroy:** Thank you. Can I just ask a supplementary on a slightly different tack? Does GPE look at the curriculum and how the curriculum is going to prepare children and young people for life afterwards, whether in work or whether through encouraging business skills, entrepreneurship and so on? Is that important or in your view is the curriculum tending to be focused on the more traditional academic subjects? How much do you



take into account what kind of economic environment children are going to go into after their education?

Alice Albright: We look at the totality of the policy structure around the education system, which certainly includes a consideration of curriculum. I would like to go back to my technical folks and find out specifically how often that conversation involves the curriculum at the technical, vocational and tertiary end of the dialogue. I do not have details on that to hand. Logically, if you are thinking about the adequacy of an education sector as a whole, it ought to, but I want to make sure I have some examples at my fingertips before I answer that question, so let us come back to you on that one.

You are right about the point. I just want to make sure that I have some specifics around that, so we can get back to you on that.

Chair: Perhaps you could write to us with that further information on Jeremy's question. Thank you.

Q19 **Dr Cameron:** DFID has moved away from general budget and education-sector support in recent years. Is the department right to be moving away from these methods of administering aid and has it ceased to be effective?

Alice Albright: Budget support is the way to go, but with some caveats. The first question ought to be why. Why do we think budget support is the way to go? It gets back to the whole concept of strengthening education systems. Governments have to be in the driver's seat. They have to have the right capacities in place to be able to put in place, maintain and encourage their own education system. Yes, at the heart of that is having a proper budgeting system.

Some 50% of the dollars that we deploy are in fragile and conflict-affected countries, and 28 of the 65 countries we work in are fragile and conflict-affected countries. We work in some very tricky environments. Giving money straight away to a government is going to be difficult. We work through in all cases grant agents—the way to think about it is a local fiduciary or fiscal agent—to make sure that monies are being deployed according to plan.

The ideal is very much helping Governments maintain a proper budget. The reason for that is you want to make sure the money is going all in the right places, allocated in the right way and that there is enough money there. It also enables us to look at the adequacy of domestic resources and make sure that we have a bird's eye view of how all the donor monies are being spent. But we have to deploy the money in a way that is risk sensitive.

Q20 **Dr Cameron:** Could moving away from budget and sector support risk damaging the relationship between donor and partner Governments at all?



Alice Albright: It could, yes. Not with bad intent, but I do see from time to time what causes governments some problems—it is not just DFID, as there are other governments, which I will not name, that are frankly a little bit worse about this—is being very intent on a specific thing and then requiring a lot of reporting around the specific thing. That then takes away from the government's ability to develop the capacity it needs to run its own education sector. That is understandable in some ways, given some of the domestic politics that go on from time to time, but it is not ideal. It is not ideal.

Q21 **Pauline Latham:** GPE was central to the establishment of the Education Cannot Wait fund. How is that going to help? Is it gearing up at the moment to deliver? Where will it be focused?

Alice Albright: I am very glad you are asking about that. It is a very timely topic. First of all, ECW is critical right now. If you look at the number of crises that are going on, the incidents of protracted crises, of kids in refugee settings, both camps and outside, it is clear that that whole nexus of challenge, and it is huge, will absolutely get in the way of us reaching our education goals. It even spills beyond that to a broader peace and security agenda and other challenges. It is a very timely thing and we are delighted with the focus that has been put on it.

We are working quite a bit with all of them, meaning UNICEF and Save the Children—there is a whole bunch of people that are working on this—to get it off the ground. They have made a very good start of it. They have now allocated about \$42 million to some initial grants. One is what is called the whole of Syria, which is a particular approach on Syria. There is another one for Yemen. There is another one for Chad. Those are coming along.

What is very important about ECW, and this is really where the challenge is going to be in designing it, is creating a bridge between humanitarian response to education and development so that countries can both respond, or whoever is in a particular territory, and then slowly begin to build back better. Some 50% of what we do as GPE is already in fragile and conflict-affected countries. We have a specific way of working in those countries. We also very much agree with this idea of building a bridge between the humanitarian and the development world.

ECW needs to get started and it needs to be funded. One of the questions that needs to be determined is where it will get hosted. It is a question that is very much on our minds. It could very well stay at UNICEF. There is some discussion going on about whether or not it ought to come to GPE. If we are asked to do it, we are absolutely prepared to step up and do it. It does need to be funded and we do need the latitude to begin to build some specialised skillsets and talents in key areas to make sure we are doing a good job. We should be sober about it.

Q22 **Pauline Latham:** What is the sort of timescale on that decision?



Alice Albright: It is to be determined. I am really not authorised to answer the question. My guess is that the decision will be made sometime in the coming months to a year. There is a steering committee put in place to make that decision. Our board at GPE has got increasingly focused and serious about possibly being called upon to do it. My guess, and this is really just a guess, is that a decision will be made sometime in the next year, but I am not the one making the decision so I cannot comment.

Chair: Thank you very much. We have five more minutes with you and two quite big questions, so I am going to ask the questioners and you to be quite concise with them.

Q23 **Albert Owen:** You have touched on GPE having to step up to the game in emergency situations. What provision of education on the ground are you doing now in some of these areas, like with the Syrian crisis for instance? What are you doing to provide education in those situations?

Alice Albright: Technically right now GPE is not engaged in Syria. ECW is engaged in Syria, because Syria, Lebanon and Jordan on paper are too rich for GPE. We are not engaged. The ECW is looking at a potential grant of \$15 million to the rest of Syria to work through organisations that are there to provide temporary education. There has been an initial proposal that has been made. A number of people are beginning to put together what the details might be and will submit to ECW a more complete proposal. As that process unfolds, I would like to make sure we get a copy of that to you, because we can get you the details as they are made available, but they are still a bit in process.

I know we are running out of time, but I can give you chapter and verse on the work that GPE does in the crisis situations that are part of our existing geographic footprint. I have got a whole policy thing here. I can give it to you. We have got a whole specific way of working. We have deployed money on a fast-track basis to four different countries. We made a decision to do Haiti on Friday. We have done Central African Republic, Somalia, Yemen, Chad and we have now done Haiti. I can give you details on that.

Chair: You have kind of answered the final question, but, Wendy, I will let you—

Q24 **Wendy Morton:** It does—absolutely right, Chair. Maybe just to expand on that a little, taking on board how you replied to Albert, given at the moment when we talk about emergencies—we, as a community, within the Committee as well—we focus a lot on Syria, do you think that there is a risk that the international community is forgetting about the huge number of other countries where children are living in vulnerable conditions?

Alice Albright: Yes, I do. Syria is awful. It is going to go down in history as this generation's disaster for all manner of reasons, not the



least of which are the children and education. It is awful. I do not know that we have yet begun to really figure out how to deal with the implications of it.

Yet, there are places like Chad that do not capture attention. There are protracted generations-long problems in places like Chad, around Lake Chad for example, where there is just as pressing a situation that does not get the attention. We worry about that. If you look at the numbers, the majority of the world's refugees are in GPE countries.

Let me tell you specifically about Chad. Chad is having an incursion of refugees from the Boko Haram problems into that region in Chad. Even Chad, being as difficult a case as it is and in as difficult straits as it is, decided that it was important to provide some form of education to the refugees coming in. Bless their hearts for deciding that. They went to the UN appeals process and asked for \$7 million to help them provide education. \$7 million is not an enormous amount of money. The UN appeals process was able to deliver \$0.5 million to them. They did their best but it was \$0.5 million. I have nothing against the UN, but they were not able to really prioritise education in the whole pecking order of issues there.

Chad came to us and they said, "Is there any way you can help?" We have an ability to fast-track a portion of our spending to a country and restructure it if we have an existing grant going on. At the time we did. We looked at the details of it. It met our criteria and we said yes. We were able to get them \$6 million to help in effect plug a hole. We were delighted to be able to do that. It is not a ton of money, but it helps a tiny bit.

Here is the general problem that we see in these circumstances. Governments are capacitated and resourced to deal with their own citizenry, but the number of refugees and internally displaced people going backwards and forwards is huge. The Governments are often forced to decide, if they have one last dollar or pound or euro or what have you, whether to give it to their own citizens' kids or the refugee kids. You do not want a Government to be in that position, so we do need a much more effective mechanism to take away the choice.

Often these refugee situations become decades long. A kid can lose out on education for their whole life. We need a funding mechanism that gets in these situations and takes the choice away and gives the tools to the Government to be able to get the work done on the ground. This is one of the reasons why we are delighted that UNHCR is now part of our board, because they are going to help us with some of the technical work on this. I hope that answered your question.

Q25 Chair: Fantastic. We have covered a lot of ground in one hour. Thank you very much indeed. We look forward to seeing you again in the future and best of luck with your work.



Alice Albright: I am delighted to come back. Thank you for your interest.

Chair: Thank you. Do feel free to stay to hear the next panel if you wish, but if you have to leave, I understand. Lovely to see you again. Thank you.

Alice Albright: Thank you. Thank you so much.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Joseph Nhan-O'Reilly, Susan Nicolai and Dr Hamed Al Hammami.

Q26 **Chair:** We will make a start now with the second panel. My mathematics says that there is a vote at 10 to four, so we have only 50 minutes for the second panel. I apologise to the panellists, but a vote takes 15 minutes, so I will aim for us to finish at 10 to four. We have nine questions that we wish to address with the second panel, so again we have roughly five minutes for each question. We just managed it in the first panel. When we have several witnesses we go straight into questions, but when you first answer a question, please feel free to say a bit about yourself and your organisation. It is not necessary for every panel member to answer every single question.

I will start with a quite general question to every panel member. Why is it so important for children and young people in emergencies and protracted crises to receive an education? What are the specific challenges faced in providing quality education in conflict environments? If we could have a short overview answer from each of you, that would be fine.

Dr Hammami: Thank you very much. First of all, let me thank you for inviting UNESCO to be at this session; we are very pleased to be here. Education in emergencies is very important. First of all, education is a human right for all children. It is also part of the common and public good. Education is essential not only as a human right but also in a crisis, teaching children and youth of their rights, how to deal with crisis and to get information to live a life. It is very important for survival.

Q27 **Chair:** Thank you very much. Joseph, would you like to go next?

Joseph Nhan-O'Reilly: Thank you, Mr Chair. I am Joseph Nhan-O'Reilly, Head of Education Policy and Advocacy at Save the Children. As Alice kindly said, I have been a member of the GPE Board for some time. I chair the GPE Strategy and Policy Committee, and chaired, with His Excellency Farooq Wardak, the Minister of Education of Afghanistan, the task team on making GPE more fit for purpose in this



HOUSE OF COMMONS

area. I was also a member of the technical strategy group for Education Cannot Wait.

In answer to your question, I would suggest that there are five broad areas why it is important. As a colleague said, we do not want children who are themselves victims of an emergency to have their education interrupted. By virtue of that, education in emergencies is a thing and we need to support it. Furthermore, the scale of the problem and the number of children this affects is no small matter: up to 75 million children globally are somehow affected by an emergency, whether it be a natural disaster or a conflict. That in itself suggests a very important role for education in emergencies.

The third reason would be that education is in itself, apart from the benefits that accrue from educating children, protective, lifesaving and life-sustaining during emergency situations, and we have lots more to say about that. Of course, safeguarding children's education in these kinds of contexts is also critical to the general development task, making sure that development can continue both during and after the emergency. Finally, as you have already heard today, we will not reach the sustainable development goals and the aspirations that we have all set ourselves without according attention to education in emergency contexts, given the extent of the number of children for whom emergencies interrupt their learning. For all those reasons, we would posit it as important.

You had a double-barrelled question though, which was, in addition to why it is important, what some of the barriers are. Would you like me to address that too?

Chair: Please do, yes.

Joseph Nhan-O'Reilly: I do not mean to steal Susan's thunder, because Susan was the principal author of the work and the report that informed the development of Education Cannot Wait. But in that document, it posits five areas that are the chief barriers to addressing education in emergencies. The first is funding and the lack of it, which we can speak about in more detail. The second is a lack of capacity within the system to provide the technical expertise, know-how and the things needed to provide education in these contexts.

The third is the architecture. You heard from Alice that GPE has been on a mission to improve its role in these kinds of contexts, but it was not always so. It would be true to say that the architecture is not quite right. Humanitarian work—not just in education but in general—occurs in a silo, as does development work, so there are barriers to collaboration and co-operation, which is a big issue for this. Education is fundamentally a systems issue that needs to occur across those continuums.

The fourth issue is a lack of political will. We have seen a big shift in that this year, with a growing interest in education in emergencies. It is



HOUSE OF COMMONS

largely driven, I think, by a recognition, in the form of the crisis that we are faced with, of the importance of continuing to educate children so that we do not end up with lost generations, not just in Syria but broadly. However, a lack of political will and recognition that this is an issue has impeded the response to date.

The fifth issue is about data: knowing how much we are spending, whether it is effective and how it is being used. There are big gaps in our knowledge around that that prevent the money flowing and our knowing whether our interventions are being effective. Education Cannot Wait was created in part to help alleviate those gaps.

Chair: Thank you very much. Susan, welcome.

Susan Nicolai: I am Susan Nicolai, with the Overseas Development Institute. We have done quite a bit of work looking at this issue over the past few years, including research on some of the investments related to education in crisis, the scale of investments and what some of the gaps are. We have looked at levels of prioritisation around affected communities in terms of education, and specific work as well looking at education in crisis and gender issues, particularly girls' education, and looking at what is happening in certain countries. There are various pieces of work, both with and for DFID, and for other actors as well.

In terms of why it is so important for children facing crises to have an education, I reiterate my colleagues' points about education being a right. Some of the most egregious violations of this right to education occur in crisis contexts. My colleague from Save the Children already mentioned that approximately 75 million children around the world are out of school in these contexts.

Research we have looked at shows that affected communities prioritise education as an issue that they want, in terms of their own recovery and development. It also is a key ingredient in terms of poverty alleviation in any developing context, but particularly in crisis contexts and in terms of addressing inequality. As those issues have become of central importance through the sustainable development goals, the link between the need for education for children in crisis and overall sustainable development is very clear.

Q28 Pauline Latham: I am not sure who would be best placed to answer this, but given what you have all said, do you think there are certain groups of children and young people who are more at risk of being excluded from education in emergency situations? How can we make sure that no one is left behind?

Joseph Nhan-O'Reilly: I am very happy to answer that. That is a great question, because we always have to be attentive to the groups that are marginalised. However, the reality is all children are inherently disadvantaged by being caught up in and affected by an emergency. That is the general principle, and we definitely still need to approach



HOUSE OF COMMONS

emergencies from a universalist perspective, suggesting that everyone needs to have access to the service.

Having said that, there is lots of evidence to suggest which groups are most affected. Others may pick this up, but I would want to focus a bit on the refugee situation, which Alice touched on earlier and gave a very compelling example of why refugees are particularly disadvantaged. By refugees, I mean a child who has crossed an international border seeking protection. I am not using the UNHCR definition of a bona fide refugee in the sense of someone who has been through the process; it is anyone who has crossed an international border, because all of a sudden they are in a different environment.

The duty bearer for their education happens to be a host country, which more often than not is itself already challenged in providing services to its own children. Some 75% of the world's refugee populations are in the least developed countries, so we know they will be inherently disadvantaged. Maybe refugee populations, and refugee children in particular, are particularly affected by crisis.

It is an issue we have been campaigning on this year, and which we took to the UNGA. We called for the international community, during the negotiations this year around the New York summit declaration, to commit to providing education to refugee children within 30 days of them crossing an international border, in an effort to close the significant gap they face. Fewer than one in two refugee children of school age are in school, so they are particularly disadvantaged. I will let colleagues pick up some of the other groups.

Q29 Pauline Latham: Are there any particular challenges faced by young women and girls?

Susan Nicolai: Yes. There are three groups that I would highlight as being particularly disadvantaged. I would also reiterate and reinforce the comment that all children in these situations are inherently disadvantaged. In terms of women and girls, the analysis that we put together found that four of the five countries with the largest gender gaps in terms of education are countries affected by crisis. Girls being out of school does go hand in hand with some of the countries that are facing crises.

In terms of the point about refugees and internally displaced children, some of the analysis we did showed that there are over 17 million refugees, IDPs and other populations of concern between the ages of 3 and 18 in countries affected by crises. Very few of those children will even go to pre-primary education. As Joseph said, only one in two will go to primary, and one in four to lower secondary. There are major challenges for those groups.

The third group I would just mention is children with disabilities. An estimate in developing countries is that more than 90% of children with



disabilities are not attending education. We can assume that that percentage is even higher in countries affected by crises.

- Q30 **Pauline Latham:** When you pick up on that, could you also give any examples of best practice where education is successfully being targeted to those most marginalised?

Dr Hammami: Let me first pick up on what colleagues have said. For us in UNESCO, youth are the most vulnerable, because most of the donors pay money for primary education, for access and partially for quality education. But mostly now we are looking at the Syrian crisis, and youth are untouched. UNESCO is trying to strategise its implementation and its action on to youth aged from 15 to 24. This is part of the action we are doing, because we believe that most of these people who are accessing primary education need later on to go to secondary and higher education.

Also, it is not only providing access for them; if we do not occupy them in school and university, these people—especially in the Syrian crisis—are meant to go to fight within ISIS or will be paid to kill others. The second group who are also often marginalised is the displaced, especially in the Syrian crisis. Nearly 6 million people are internally displaced, and these people are also not being given the right treatment as refugees outside Syria, because most donors do not want to pay money for inside Syria, which is a little odd. We are trying to cover this, because I am a representative of UNESCO to Syria and Lebanon, and when we meet these people who are displaced, they ask us why we are not providing services for them like the ones we are providing for refugees.

Most of these people want to migrate, and to stop them migrating to Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq or Europe, we need to provide some services to them. That is why we are fighting to have our operation inside Syria for the displaced and youth.

- Q31 **Chair:** Can we have one example from one of you of really good practice?

Susan Nicolai: I was just going to mention some of the work that DFID is doing.

Chair: Really briefly; sorry, we are so short of time—just an example of good practice.

Susan Nicolai: With the Girls' Education Challenge, the work that is being done in places like Afghanistan, Somalia and South Sudan through that challenge, focusing specifically on access and quality for girls in those contexts, is very good practice.

- Q32 **Stephen Doughty:** You mentioned that the first challenge was funding. 2.7% of all humanitarian funding goes to education at the moment.

Joseph Nhan-O'Reilly: It is a bit less now.



Q33 Stephen Doughty: It is a bit less. I think UNICEF have said there is an \$8.5 billion gap a year. Why do you think international donors are still not getting this? Do you think DFID is doing enough to put pressure on other donors, and indeed in its own work, to change this? What sort of percentage would you feel would more accurately reflect the need and the scale of the challenge faced?

Joseph Nhan-O'Reilly: This is a complex issue. The barriers to scaling up funding for education in emergencies need to be put in the context of the challenge of providing sufficient funding for humanitarian crises in general. Education is the poor cousin of an underfunded system, which is very stretched in itself, and with a spike in conflict, pandemic disease and natural disaster, that system is more and more stretched. We have to think more creatively about how the whole thing responds better.

You are absolutely right; education is massively poorly funded. One of the things that has contributed to this is the mindset that education is not a lifesaving intervention. As a result, the international community, including organisations like my own, have historically been challenged in establishing a priority for education when some of the first-order priorities in emergencies happen to be health interventions, water and sanitation etc. We are seeing the prolongation of crises, which necessitates a recognition that education must be provided. We have seen a growing recognition that education ought not to be interrupted by virtue of any sort of crisis, whether natural disaster or a source of conflict.

In terms of funding, we have seen the creation of a new global fund for education in emergencies, in the form of Education Cannot Wait, of which DFID was a champion. It co-chaired the technical strategy group and is the single largest donor to Education Cannot Wait as it stands, and the Secretary of State is on the high-level steering group. We, in our submission and publicly, have praised DFID in respect of all the leadership it has shown. DFID has also prosecuted the case for better support from the Global Partnership for Education, via the reform efforts you heard about before.

We still face, though, a massive funding gap for education in emergencies. This year, Education Cannot Wait has been successful in receiving pledges for its first year of operation of up to \$116 million. Its budget is \$150 million, so we are not even on the \$150 million. That is a tiny proportion, and it is recognised that that needs to scale up to account for \$3.85 billion over five years. I am not clear, and I do not have the answer, on what is going to secure the shift and step change in funding for education in emergencies.

In addition to being a generous donor and offering technical leadership, there is still more room for the UK Government writ large—DFID but also other ministerial departments—to play a bigger role in championing the importance of this issue. Having said that, DFID of course convened the Syria conference earlier this year in London, was one of the big donors to



HOUSE OF COMMONS

that and again played a leadership role there, recognising the importance of the issue. We came away from the Syria conference broadly with pledges that would see sufficient funding for most of the services for the first year that were budgeted for. That shows it is possible, and DFID and the Government more generally need to get behind similar efforts.

- Q34 **Stephen Doughty:** Dr Hammami, within the UN system I am assuming UNESCO is out there making the case to other UN agencies, but what is the reaction you get when you raise this issue with colleagues in UNOCHA, UNICEF or elsewhere?

Dr Hammami: During the crisis, everything is a priority: it is mostly humanitarian, because people want to save lives. Donors have to realise that education is also saving lives. When you concentrate on educating people, especially if you give them access to education and give them life skills, these life skills will also contribute to their lives. But mostly donors concentrate on the humanitarian side, because they want to save lives.

- Q35 **Paul Scully:** The Education Cannot Wait fund has an ambitious target to increase access to education in emergencies to 18% of crisis-affected children by 2020, and 100% by 2030. Susan, what challenges do donors have in meeting those targets, and do you have any thoughts about how they might be overcome?

Susan Nicolai: There are three main challenges to meeting those targets. The first is around the need to maintain momentum in the advocacy and awareness that the funds are needed, bringing together people to secure those funds. The high-level steering group is a real asset and the Secretary of State's membership of that is key. That advocacy needs to be brought to other high-level actors and countries for their commitments.

The Education Cannot Wait fund is new, and that is a second challenge. It needs some investment in terms of time and experience to be able to prove the concept. There are some good things that are happening in a particular set of countries: there have been initial investments made in Syria, Chad, Yemen and Ethiopia as well as for the education cluster. Approaches can be tested through that, but it will also need time and careful attention in those cases.

The third major challenge relates to the need to go beyond traditional donor bases. The £30 million pledge that the UK has made to the fund is incredible in terms of leadership, but the vast majority of the other pledges are also coming from traditional donors. Outreach will need to be made to other actors from the Middle East, from the business community etc., to bring new kinds of money into the fund.

- Q36 **Paul Scully:** Joseph, I just wanted to turn to SDG 4 and the fact that the fund focuses on access to education, whereas SDG 4 talks about quality of education. Do you think that focus on access is the right approach?



Joseph Nhan-O'Reilly: There is a consensus that access alone, across the education spectrum, both in a development context and in emergencies, is not sufficient. We know that there are millions of children in schools who are not learning, 250 million in fact, and who we anticipate leaving school at Year 4, or getting to that grade and not being able to read and write effectively. Many of those children are in conflict-affected, fragile states, because of the poor quality of education.

We need to get much better about that. Education Cannot Wait has an important role to play in that respect. However, we are all learning about how to secure learning outcomes for children in all of these contexts, and that work needs to continue and be supported.

Q37 **Chair:** We will move now to a number of questions relating specifically to the Syria crisis and the impact in the region. Joseph, you have answered what I was going to ask as the next question, but as a supplementary: you referred to the Supporting Syria and the Region conference that was held in February. Save the Children has highlighted that funding disbursement from donors, including DFID, has often been slow. Can you tell us why disbursement promptness is so important, but also how it can be improved?

Joseph Nhan-O'Reilly: On the pledges made at the London Syria conference, and their delivery, including disbursement, we are not alone in being challenged in understanding what has happened. I was at UNGA, and the British Government convened a Supporting Syria conference follow-up meeting. It was addressed by Børge Brende, the Foreign Minister from Norway, who was of course one of the co-hosts of the original conference, and Stephen O'Brien, a former colleague of yours, who now heads up OCHA.

Not to put those two gentleman in it, but they started the meeting with different figures about what had been spent to date, and it was a source of some consternation in the room that the two people who were hosting the event and should know could not say. One of the big challenges in respect of disbursement and pledges etc. is the metrics. To its credit, DFID has initiated and commissioned consultants to produce a report that will set out in a systematic way how much money was pledged, on what basis, and what has been distributed, because there were competing figures at the event I mentioned, and subsequently. The inability, in a way, to be decisive about those questions is a big challenge to the problem. That does not address how the money is spent and what the blockages are to that.

One of the big things we have seen in the response in Lebanon and Jordan is a recognition by both host country Governments, at least, that they need to be in control of the situation for the refugees within their borders. That is laudable and understandable, and that will lay the foundation for a cohesive approach to access. However, at the same time it has prevented the start-up of situations or responses there in both countries that would have enabled speedier access and spending of some



of the donor pledges, without necessarily going through the government system. A cost-benefit analysis is needed around ensuring the host-country government has the right policies and practices in place and is in control of the situation. The situation is likely to be protracted, and they have every right to do that, since they are the principal duty bearer. This must be weighed against being responsive and providing short-term answers to the situation, which has been one of the issues in respect of disbursement and spending.

Chair: Thank you. We will explore that a bit further in a moment.

Q38 Stephen Doughty: This is not specific to Syria, but one of the major consequences for children and young people in any conflict situation like that is mental health issues. Would any of you like to say a bit about how dealing with mental health issues interacts with their ability to learn and engage with education in emergency situations, and what you think is required? Could you speak specifically about the situation in Syria, to give us an example of some of the challenges that are being faced?

Dr Hammami: Let me start. Maybe if we take Syria as an example, we have been talking to parents and teachers in Syria, where you maintain the students inside the class but students are not gaining—accomplishing their outcomes or succeeding in their education. The most important thing to see here is the psychosocial side. In UNESCO, we have tried to develop a manual to train the teachers. We have a small manual for teachers, and we train teachers to train other teachers there to face this problem, because sometimes we tend to neglect the psychosocial part when we look at education.

It is very important, because sometimes not only are they not gaining in their learning but the students show very hostile behaviour. They are becoming very hostile towards each other. This is one of the most important things: psychosocial training is very important and we are trying to spread it, not only in Syria but on the Yemen side.

Joseph Nhan-O'Reilly: That is a really important question. I was in Jordan two weeks ago, speaking directly to children. It was deeply moving hearing their stories of displacement and trauma, and realising, despite the good work we and others are doing and the prima facie happiness of the children, that these are children who have very complex needs as a result of what has happened to them.

In the international community, in respect of articulating funding gaps and in planning to provide services, principally education, to displaced children like these, or children affected by conflict more broadly, we tend to say: "The average of providing an education somewhere like the DRC, for example, is \$100 a year. If we absorb these children into the system, that is what we will need."

That does not take account of the additional needs they come with. That is one of the challenges we face in articulating a funding gap. I do not



HOUSE OF COMMONS

want to overcomplicate the issue of funding, which we spend a lot of time on, but I think your point is that our funding analysis needs to be better at understanding the needs of the children to whom we are going to try to provide a service.

Secondly, we are requiring this of usually already massively overstretched systems, which I already saw in Jordan. It is a middle-income country that has done a good job on education, but this crisis has exemplified and identified for them many challenges within their system as a whole. We are asking that overstretched system to take on children with these additional needs.

Furthermore, of course, we have the whole issue of social cohesion and the challenge posed for the host countries and communities in taking on these populations and providing hospitality to them, and their integration. This can add to trauma and exacerbate the trauma that children already come with. In answer to your question, yes, it is a very big issue, and we need to be much better at acknowledging it, recognising it and supporting education systems that are providing educational services to think about how they can ameliorate the negative effects and prevent some of the consequences.

Q39 Stephen Doughty: In the cases of Syria and Yemen, which was also mentioned, do you think the prolongation and severity of the conflict and what young people and children are experiencing has heightened the need for this to be considered as an issue in the education provision in those places versus emergencies in general?

Joseph Nhan-O'Reilly: I do. They are very good exemplars of the complexity of the problem, but I would go as far as to say that they are not too dissimilar to some of the other crises you have referred to already today that are somewhat neglected. I will just give you an example of what I saw in the DRC: it is a very different conflict, but there are children who are deeply traumatised by a whole series of other, grave human rights violations that they experienced in the lead-up to their displacement.

Prior to coming back to London, I spent three years working with Save the Children in Thailand, where we are the sole provider of education in the nine refugee camps on the Thai-Myanmar border. It is a very protracted situation that is relatively stable in comparison with the ones we are talking about, but children there face a different set of issues: confinement in the camps, lack of opportunity, and exposure to the opportunities that exist in the region, including Thailand, but an inability to access those.

The refrain from the work around Syria is "no lost generation", which is a great rallying cry for that crisis, but it needs to be universalised. The loss of childhood is not just about the loss of educational opportunity; it is about having experienced these grave violations of human rights and



HOUSE OF COMMONS

being incredibly traumatised. The point is we need to become better at responding to children's needs in all these contexts.

- Q40 **Fiona Bruce:** Many of us in this country are full of admiration of the hospitality that has been shown by host countries, particularly the Lebanese and Jordanians, in accommodating a massive influx of refugees. That includes children in the schools. You touched a moment ago on the impact of providing education to these additional numbers. Does any of the panel have any more specifics that they could talk to us about regarding the challenges that the Jordanian and Lebanese Governments have had in providing education for so many children, both the Syrian children who have come in as refugees and their own citizens?

Dr Hammami: Let me start with Lebanon, because I am resident there. First of all, Lebanon itself as the host community is fragile, because they are very poor in terms of electricity, health and social cohesion. Now the refugees are creating more pressure in these areas. The second problem in Lebanon is that there are no camps, because the refugees are scattered everywhere. It is very hard, because now the Government will not accept camps inside Lebanon, and this makes collecting the students into schools very difficult.

The Government, with the help of the international community, is trying to accommodate these students, but they have seen a first and second shift, and in some places there is now a third shift. The most important thing now is how to bring these people into schools, because the Back to School campaign is now very strong in Lebanon, but we are still trying to encourage people to come and register in school. This is the problem.

Fiona Bruce: It is very difficult.

Dr Hammami: It is very difficult, because they are not in one place. You cannot provide education for people who are scattered everywhere.

- Q41 **Fiona Bruce:** What provision of informal education is contributing to helping keep these children educated?

Dr Hammami: UNESCO and UNICEF are working on what is called ALP—accelerated learning. We started it for primary education informally, and there are certain condensed curricula, but we are now trying to start it for secondary education, because condensed curricula are very much needed for secondary education.

- Q42 **Fiona Bruce:** Before I ask the rest of the panel, what about the tensions between the host and refugee communities? I have spoken of the admiration we have here for the sheer numbers they are accommodating.

Dr Hammami: You see the tension is there between the host country community and refugees, but we are also trying to find certain programmes to bring this tension down. For example, we use sport for dialoguing, where we bring both the nationals and the refugees into camps where the sport starts a dialogue. We try to have intercultural



HOUSE OF COMMONS

dialogues. We have summer camps for the students to try to bring them together, because sometimes you need to reduce the tension between these people.

Fiona Bruce: Thank you. Does either of the other panel members wish to comment?

Susan Nicolai: In the case of Lebanon, for instance, the Ministry of Education, prior to the crisis, was entering a reform process to deal with some of its own longstanding weaknesses: bloated teacher workforce, uneven distribution of schools and lack of an education data system. When the crisis happened, it was even more overwhelming in terms of the system. The support that is needed is not just for the refugees but the system itself, which has had to postpone and not deal with the kinds of reforms needed.

Q43 **Chair:** Did you say bloated workforce?

Susan Nicolai: Yes.

Q44 **Chair:** Say a bit more.

Susan Nicolai: I am not sure that I can, but the bloated teaching workforce is the note that I had here.

Q45 **Chair:** Does that mean there are too many teachers, or am I misunderstanding you?

Susan Nicolai: I think so, but a number of things were prioritised in terms of reform. A rationalisation of teachers and their placement was certainly one of them.

Chair: I see—I understand.

Dr Hammami: Yes—that makes sense.

Joseph Nhan-O'Reilly: I would want to reiterate a recognition of both Governments' hospitality for hosting refugees. I am very happy to be able to say that personally, because I saw it in action, and to put it on the parliamentary record, as it were. We cannot do enough in recognising the generosity of that. I would add, though, that it precedes the current crisis, which was also a complicating factor. You will all realise that both countries are host to long-term refugee populations from Palestine, Iraq and other crises in the Middle East. I would want to acknowledge all of that.

The last point I also want to make in respect of the crisis and the region is we ought not to forget Turkey, which is now the world's leading host of refugees. It hosts the largest population of refugees and is facing its own issues that are not dissimilar to others in the region. We need to bring it into an understanding of a regional response, although it has not to date been the beneficiary of the funding from the regional response in the same way that Syria and Lebanon have. Nevertheless, I think we are



going to point to some of the challenges that it is facing, albeit of a slightly different nature.

I would reiterate the points that colleagues made around the fact that the crisis in the region has exacerbated an already overstretched system in both places and brought to greater attention some of those big gaps. I would say too that some of the innovative methods that we are very happy with, such as double shifting, need to be recognised as temporary measures. The effect of the double-shifting system, among many others, is to sometimes create a good and a less good system. That is certainly one of the dangers in Jordan, where the new absorption of children will be done in parallel.

Some of the Syrian refugees are in school with Jordanian children in the first shift, but the absorption of the new numbers, which are 100,000 this year if my numbers are correct from the visit I did, will be absorbed into a parallel second shift. There is a concern that that will be a lower quality service. The teaching workforce that have been recruited to provide that are not tenured teachers but contract teachers. There is a series of other things that you can imagine might have unintended consequences for that.

Furthermore, an entirely parallel system runs the risk of exacerbating some of the social cohesion issues and conflict challenges. The other thing from a learning perspective is that a shifting system, which reduces the number of teaching hours and time on task, is not good for learning outcomes. We know that; we have a debate in this country about the extension of the school day. But as you can imagine, here kids are spending double the amount of time in school than they would in a double-shift system.

Finally, the UN General Assembly this year focused on responsibility sharing. That is the idea that we all have responsibility for refugee populations, not just host countries. That is exemplified by the donor support that DFID and others have provided to the Syria crisis, but it cannot be a one-off. It cannot be a flash in the pan. The idea of responsibility sharing for the refugee crisis and the conflict in general needs to be mainstreamed, and something that we take as part of our working methods, beyond the conference we had this year, into how we support host countries on a long-term basis. Lebanon and Syria are doing more than their fair share in respect of this issue.

Q46 Chair: Can I explore a bit more this issue of jobs and livelihoods that Jeremy Lefroy raised with Alice Albright earlier? In a sense, there are two different aspects to it. One is the aspect he raised, which is: what is happening in the schools in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey around preparing children, whether refugees or not, for jobs and livelihoods? Secondly, what more can DFID and other donors do to support the Governments in those countries to adapt their labour markets to enable people to work, without tensions with host communities? Sorry, those



are two very big questions at this stage.

Dr Hammami: In Lebanon, because I am there, and in Jordan, the Governments are reluctant to prepare students for jobs. They are against technical and vocational education and providing them with skills that will enable them to work in that country later on.

Chair: Is that across the board or specifically for the refugee children?

Dr Hammami: For the refugees—I am talking about the refugee students. After the London conference, because there was a lot of pressure, governments have to prepare the students. In Lebanon, they are trying to ease the situation, but they want to try to use technical and vocational education at the secondary level, not at the tertiary level. At UNESCO, we are trying to push for it to be at the tertiary level, so that later on these students can go and work within that country, which is not allowed now. It is not only for the Syrians but also for the Palestinians in Lebanon. They are not allowed to work; it is difficult for them to work. The policymakers within Lebanon are still hesitant and reluctant to allow these things.

Q47 **Chair:** Susan and Joseph, do you want to comment on that?

Joseph Nhan-O'Reilly: The context we are talking about is that Jordan, for instance, has an unemployment rate for young people and adolescents of about 50%. A huge number of their own population are already unemployed. This goes back to the whole issue around the crisis exacerbating existing tensions and exemplifying challenges within the system. That is the first thing I would say.

The second thing I would say, and I will send the Committee a reference to this, is that we met with one of Queen Rania's foundations during our visit to Jordan. As you probably know, Queen Rania has been a huge advocate for education for some time, and her foundations support it in various ways. She and the foundation were responsible for a new education strategy in Jordan, which was released just prior to our arrival. It is a very compelling document that identifies all the challenges to which you refer, including the issue of improving vocational education and training and, fundamentally, skills, right across the system. It recognises the big issue facing Jordan is a lack of marketable and usable skills.

The final point I would make in respect of all this is that this speaks to the need for broader economic reforms in countries that are facing conflict or absorbing large displaced populations. Again, the infrastructure that we have as an international community is a bit limited in providing the level of support necessary. For instance, one of the principal vehicles for financing those kinds of reforms that I am talking about is IDA. However, these countries are middle-income countries, and much like they cannot receive GPE funding, they cannot receive IDA funding.



One of the promising things we saw last year was that the World Bank established a trust fund for the Syria region. It was slower than the World Bank itself would have wanted in terms of disbursing funding and making money available, but it did begin to fund some of these broader infrastructure and economic reform issues. We need to see more of that.

Q48 Chair: The Division bell will ring in five minutes, so it is not a fire but a vote in the House of Commons. I have one more question I want to ask, and if there is time I will bring in Fiona as well. In the run-up to the World Humanitarian Summit, UNICEF said that there tends to be a lack of co-ordination between emergency humanitarian education agencies and longer term development education agencies. Can you say briefly how this could be improved, and secondly could you give an example of where there is good joining-up of the longer term development with the humanitarian? Susan, do you want to answer?

Susan Nicolai: That is a really key issue and it is something that DFID has begun to show leadership on with its work on the Education Cannot Wait fund. A number of things are being suggested as part of that fund, and joint planning and response is one of the key pieces of it. The work on investments in transition plans is key and there are models of those types of plans through the IIEP. UNESCO's IIEP has done some work on that, as has GPE. Investments in the cluster, and linking them up to the local education groups and longer term sector plans on the ground in-country, is key.

Chair: Thank you so much. Hamed?

Dr Hammami: I would like to add that sometimes co-ordination is very important, and Lebanon is an example. Most of the work is done through the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Education is co-ordinating most of the donors and UN organisations there. The role of each one is known, so there is no duplication and there is a lot of co-ordination and complementarities there. When there is a body organising this, like a Ministry of Education in Lebanon, it is very successful.

Chair: Thank you so much. Joseph?

Joseph Nhan-O'Reilly: I did not say this at the outset, but I will say it now: Save the Children co-leads the Global Education Cluster with UNICEF. The cluster system is the humanitarian sectoral system that co-ordinates the international community's response in emergencies. We have an official mandate for co-ordination, along with our colleagues at UNICEF, as a global co-lead of the cluster system for education. We have a bit of skin in the game in respect of this issue.

It is an important one, and as Susan says, some of the promise of Education Cannot Wait, as I indicated before, was to break down those architectural barriers. At a country level, in respect of education in emergencies, you have the cluster performing a co-ordinating role; in



HOUSE OF COMMONS

development, you have the local education group, which is one of the mechanisms the GPE uses. We want to bring those groups together.

The most promising and important practice is for countries to take responsibility, in their education-sector plans, for contingency planning and preparedness for emergencies. They need to do that on the basis of an analysis of what the likely emergencies will be. In Asia, where I have worked, in Cambodia and the Philippines, it is natural disasters. In fact, in the Philippines, in response to the typhoon, the education system sector was up and running in typhoon-affected communities within three days, because they had excellent contingency plans in place to provide education. Save the Children was key to providing those services in those places.

In different places in terms of conflict, or countries that will experience refugee populations, contingency plans are working. There was a good example in Rwanda, where they have received Burundian refugees and have done some promising work in respect of that, relatively speedily. The other promising practice I would point to is GPE's work in this area. The accelerated funding that Alice spoke to, which enabled Chad to access some of its funding from GPE for its emergency and refugee populations, was excellent. The challenge with that is it used its development dollars to pay for an emergency, without that being augmented. It was using its GPE grant, which was essentially for its own citizens, but it decided to do that. We need more funding in the system and we need organisations like GPE to be able to incentivise countries to include those needs in their responses.

Q49 Fiona Bruce: What is the experience of refugee children in Turkey, where there is less funding, compared with children in Lebanon and Jordan? What more could DFID be doing? Lastly, do you have any numbers?

Chair: Who is best placed to try to answer that?

Fiona Bruce: I think, Joseph, you referred to this issue, which we are aware of.

Joseph Nhan-O'Reilly: I did. To make it very short, I would like to go away and we will provide a written answer to that question.

Q50 Chair: Thank you. I apologise that we have been curtailed by 10 minutes. Thank you, all three of you, for coming to give evidence. We are at the start of this inquiry, and your evidence is very valuable and helpful for us. Thank you very much indeed.

Joseph Nhan-O'Reilly: We appreciate the opportunity. Thank you.