

International Development Strategy: Call for Evidence form

You should read the full call for evidence before completing your response.

Guidance for submitting evidence

- These questions are broad so you can focus on a specific sub- issue or priority, according to your own, or your organisation's, area of expertise. You do not need to respond to all of the questions.
- There is no minimum word limit. Our recommended maximum limit is 500 words per question (not including references). Given the volume of responses we expect, longer answers may not be read in full.
- We recommend providing responses which contextualise and summarise the key points of the evidence they reference. You may include references in your response where applicable and a bibliography at the end of your response, using the box provided. This does not count towards the recommended word limit.
- You should put all your responses on this form. Given the volume of responses we expect, additional documents submitted may not be read.
- You should return this form in a text document format eg .odt or .docx.
- Please make sure you have read the privacy notice:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fcdo-as-a-data-controller-privacy-notice/fcdo-as-a-data-controller-privacy-notice> before submitting this form:

Please send your response to IDSCallForEvidence@fcdo.gov.uk, with the subject line “**IDS Call for Evidence 2021**” by 11:59pm BST on **6 September 2021**.

General Information

If you are responding as an individual, complete Table 1.

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation / company, complete Table 2.

Table 1: Individual

Full name and title (optional)	
E-mail address	
<i>Please read the Privacy Notice on the IDS Call for Evidence webpage and mark the statement below [X] as applicable.</i>	
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Table 2: On behalf of organisation / company

Full name and title (optional)	Rob Doble
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Organisation / Company	Theirworld
Position within Organisation / Company	Director of Policy, Advocacy & Programs



Theirworld is a global children's charity committed to ending the global education crisis and unleashing the potential of the next generation. Informed by breakthrough research and activated by our influential network of next generation partners, we work with youth, governments, businesses, NGOs and campaigners to develop and deploy solutions to unleash the potential of the next generation. See: <https://theirworld.org/>.

Theirworld is pleased to submit evidence to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's (FCDO) call for evidence to inform the forthcoming International Development Strategy. We outline below responses to the questions that are most aligned with Theirworld's expertise.

General Comments on the next International Development Strategy

The forthcoming international development strategy will be developed at a time of unprecedented challenges, particularly for lower income countries, where access to the financing needed to support economic recovery has been constrained. Education aid has fallen \$2 billion from its pre-pandemic peak and UNESCO has warned this gap could increase to \$200 billion per year for low- and middle-income countries, as they face what the World Bank has coined a "triple shock" of pandemic-related funding impacts on resources for education; reduced tax revenues leading to slashed education budgets, a fall in household income, and a reduction in international aid.

In this context, Official Development Assistance (ODA) is more important than ever. While ODA is just a single piece in the financing puzzle to address global challenges, including the global education crisis, ODA is a precious resource, and the only form of international finance with a specific remit to reduce poverty and meet the needs of the world's poorest. The UK's decision therefore to step back from its commitment to spend 0.7% of UK Gross National Income (GNI) on development assistance has been especially disappointing. The consequences of these cuts are still emerging, and there is a need for far more transparency and consultation, with NGO partners and national governments about how this process is managed. The decision also risks undermining the UK's reputation as a development partner willing to keep its promises, and to stand in solidarity with the world's poorest people, especially in moments of crisis. **The forthcoming International Development Strategy should be ambitious about the potential for the UK Government to work with partners to realise the hopes, dreams and ambitions of children in the toughest places. The strategy should also outline a clear ambition, and a roadmap, for returning to the 0.7% commitment as soon as possible.**

Summary of Theirworld's Key Recommendations

1. **Commit to making global education a top international development priority** – building on the UK's existing research and programming expertise in global education, the new strategy should recognise and seize the need to invest in education systems around the world as a core means of supporting prosperous and peaceful economies and societies. This should be reflected in a minimum of 15% of all aid being channelled to education (particularly basic education).
2. Specifically, there are **four areas in global education where the UK government can make the biggest and most significant impact** to catalyse progress to SDG4 – inclusive, quality education for all – by 2030:
 - a.) Invest at least **10% of the UK's education aid in pre-primary education**.
 - b.) Step up UK leadership and support to the **International Financing Facility for Education (IFFEd)**.
 - c.) Work to **close the youth skills gap** and ensure education and employment opportunities for young people is central to any forthcoming strategies on jobs, skills or economic development. This should include a specific focus on supporting young people to access training to develop skills that will be essential to the future workplace.
 - d.) **Prioritise education for children facing emergencies** – including ensuring at least 4% of UK humanitarian aid is dedicated to education.

Call for Evidence questions

You should read the full call for evidence and review the guidance for respondents (above in this document) before completing your response.

1. How might progress on international development to 2030 be impacted by the trends identified in the Integrated Review? How should the UK respond?

The integrated Review identified a wide spectrum of geopolitical trends and transnational challenges including geopolitical and geoeconomic shifts, systemic competition, rapid technological change and transnational challenges. We focus below on two trends - 1) increased migration and insecurity and 2) rapid technological change as two trends likely to have a significant impact on global education.

Migration and Security

Children are on the move more today than ever before. In 2019, 33 million children in the world were international migrants, in addition to another 17 million

children who were internally displaced. **Being on the move causes significant disruption to a child's education.** In a global survey of 4,000 migrants and refugees aged 14-24, 33% said they had lost one to three years of education, while 25% had lost more than four years of education.

The climate crisis, humanitarian disasters, war and conflict are expected to cause millions of children to seek refuge and safety in other countries. While initiatives such as Education Cannot Wait have helped to galvanise resources to provide children who are on the move with an education, millions of refugee children and other children on the move continue to be denied their right to education. For example, ten years after the conflict began in Syria, and despite progress over the last five years, there are still more than 2.4 million children inside Syria and 750,000 Syrian children in neighbouring countries who are out of school, according to UNICEF. And yet there is compelling empirical evidence that education is one of the best investments we can make to support refugee children. Access allows children to develop crucial skills in numeracy, literacy and in new foreign languages, but equally importantly education can lift children's spirits, restoring a sense of normality, a safe space, a break from the other challenges in their lives, while allowing children to make friends and develop skills for the future.

Recommendations:

- The FCDO should ensure education is at the heart of the department's response to ongoing crises and conflict such as the conflicts in Syria and Yemen, and new and emerging crises, including the unfolding situation in Afghanistan.
- The world has now developed a strong bank of evidence of programmes, projects and interventions that are effective in reaching the needs of children in emergencies, as well as children in host countries, such as the double-shift system in Lebanon. FCDO should protect funding for these programmes and should be willing to increase support for the education of children in emergencies, should new foreign and security challenges lead to increased numbers of refugee children.
- There is still a refugee crisis here in Europe. Theirworld has been among the leading donors to refugee education in the Greek islands through its partnership with Education Cannot Wait.¹ The UK should support international efforts to provide financing and policy support to meet the needs of refugee children - a group that includes children fleeing some of the world's toughest conflicts including Syria and Afghanistan - to access education. The FCDO should also work with the Home Office to support relocation efforts to provide long-term stability and the chance of a new life to vulnerable refugee children.
- In 2019, less than 3% of all humanitarian ODA went to education and there is a longstanding call for donors to invest at least 4% of education ODA in education. The UK should ensure this commitment is written into the next International Development Strategy.

Rapid Technological Shifts

¹ See: <https://theirworld.org/news/greece-plan-to-get-every-refugee-child-in-school>.

Rapid technological shifts have the potential to provide new job and economic opportunities for young people globally *if* leaders come together to address the skills crisis and to address deep inequities in children's access to digital education. Education must be a cornerstone of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and education, political and business leaders must work together to support young people to develop new skills that will enable resilience in a rapidly changing world -- curiosity, creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, social-emotional skills, digital literacy, and systems analysis – will be of particular value in the workforce. Young people want to embrace this digital technology; **Young people are more likely to use digital tools for education and skill building.** They are twice as likely as adults to self-study or seek online training for digital skills acquisition.

Leaders are not yet making the policy shifts needed to fully embrace these rapid technological shifts. By 2030, it is expected that more than half of all young people will not have the basic skills needed to get decent jobs.

Recommendations:

- The forthcoming International Development Strategy should ensure that the education and employment opportunities for young people are at the heart of any forthcoming strategies on jobs, skills or economic development. This should include a specific focus on supporting young people to access training to develop skills that will be essential to the future workplace.²
- FCDO should consider partnering with industry, here in the UK and around the world to develop innovative new initiatives to address the youth skills gaps. The views and experience of children and young people should be central to the development of any such initiatives, and Theirworld be delighted to facilitate this.

2. What could success in 2030 look like in terms of meeting the needs of the poorest and most marginalised and increasing opportunities for countries to become self-sustaining?

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the internationally negotiated and agreed goals, targets and standards for 'success' in meeting the needs and increasing opportunities for the world's poorest and most marginalised communities by 2030.

In 2015, major commitments were made by governments for educating children around the world as outlined in SDG 4 - "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" with targets 4.1 and 4.2 including a focus on early childhood education and primary education.

Currently, we are seriously off-track to achieving these SDGs. Renewed political commitment from FCDO ministers to the SDGs framework and to the targets related to SDG 4 are urgently needed. According to a BOND report from 2019 describing the current SDG 4 context, "262 million children and young people remain out of school and many more are in school but not learning." Furthermore,

² See: <https://gbc-education.org/project/youth-skills/>.

even before the pandemic, there were concerns about the huge shortfall in the financing needed to achieve the SDG goals for education. According to the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, education spending needed to more than double from 2015 - 2030 from 1.25 trillion USD per year to nearly 3 trillion USD.

If we miss these crucial targets, we will be placed even further behind which will make it difficult to achieve these goals in the future. This will also undermine the confidence that leaders deliver on their promises. It is imperative that governments such as the UK can do everything in their power sooner rather than later.

For decades, we have been facing a chronic financing gap in education. At a time when the pressure on education systems is greater than ever, we need to secure the prospects for the future generation. What is clear at the global level, the financing gap in education is so large, it will be impossible for traditional aid instruments to fill it. We need to not only secure existing financing, but innovate to expand the pool of available financing for recipient countries. This is the only way to be in striking distance of giving all children a quality education by 2030.

The International Financing Facility for Education (IFFEd) is a ready-to-launch, powerful new finance vehicle that could multiply the financing for post-Covid global education response. IFFEd aims to unlock US \$4 to 5 billion of new funding by 2030, to accelerate progress towards SDG 4 and support education's pivotal role in creating a healthier, greener, more just, sustainable, peaceful, and resilient world. IFFEd's innovation is that it provides the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) with a new form of quasi-equity they can use to mobilize additional financing in capital markets to support countries' education needs. This capital is paired with grants to soften the loan terms provided to client countries, making critical long-term investments in education affordable to LMICs. Under current interest rate conditions, \$550m of paid in capital could unlock \$4.4 billion of financing for recipient countries. This 8-times multiple provides unparalleled leverage in the international development sector, and is significantly more efficient than capitalising the MDBs directly. In times when fiscal space is squeezed globally, IFFEd does not require countries to increase their total education aid budgets. IFFEd has been extensively negotiated and vetted by four MDBs, the European Commission, and almost ten bilateral aid donors. Subject to final donor commitments, IFFEd could be launched within the year and finance projects in over 50 eligible countries. It is the only available instrument capable of making a substantial dent in the education financing gap. With the active political leadership, it could become a flagship vehicle to scale up globally the post-Covid education response.

Recommendations:

- FCDO, along with other major development donors, must **contribute to closing the financing gap in global education, by committing at least 15% of its budget to education (particularly basic education).** Our analysis finds that there is an annual education financing gap of at least \$59bn. As a starting point, FCDO should commit to protecting its budget for global education at least at the levels disbursed in 2019, and ensure any increase in the aid budget as a result of a growing economy also prioritises

education (Theirworld 2021b).

- FCDO should join international efforts by **committing to allocate at least 10% of its education aid budget to support early childhood education**. With 8 of 10 children of the world's poorest children missing out on pre-primary education, the UK can make an immediate contribution to the long-term future of millions of children with smart, impactful investment in pre-primary education. As it stands, the UK invests over \$10.5 million a year on pre-primary, a tenfold increase between 2015 and 2019 (Theirworld 2021a). While this makes the country one of the world's largest contributors to early childhood education, this is still only 1.1% of the UK's overall spend on education. By increasing its investment to at least 10%, the UK has the potential to transform the prospects of the world's youngest children and stand out as a global leader on education. The evidence is clear that two years of high-quality pre-primary have a long-lasting impact on literacy and numeracy development while increasing the chance of children continuing their education beyond primary school (UNICEF 2019). It is also a smart investment. Each dollar invested in early childhood education can yield a return as high as US\$17 for the most disadvantaged children.
- **The UK has been a key champion of IFFEd since its inception, but should now step up its leadership to ensure the facility is launched imminently.** The UK was an active participant in the design and negotiation of IFFEd in 2019 and is the current designed host country for facility. The UK has already made a substantial financial commitment to IFFEd, comprising \$250 million for the guarantee facility and a further \$100 million for the grant window. The successful launch of IFFEd would be strengthened by active political leadership from one of the two leading donors (the United Kingdom and/or the Netherlands) to secure a small number of additional donors needed to complete the facility.

3. How and where can wider UK government international policy and activity best support long term international development outcomes?

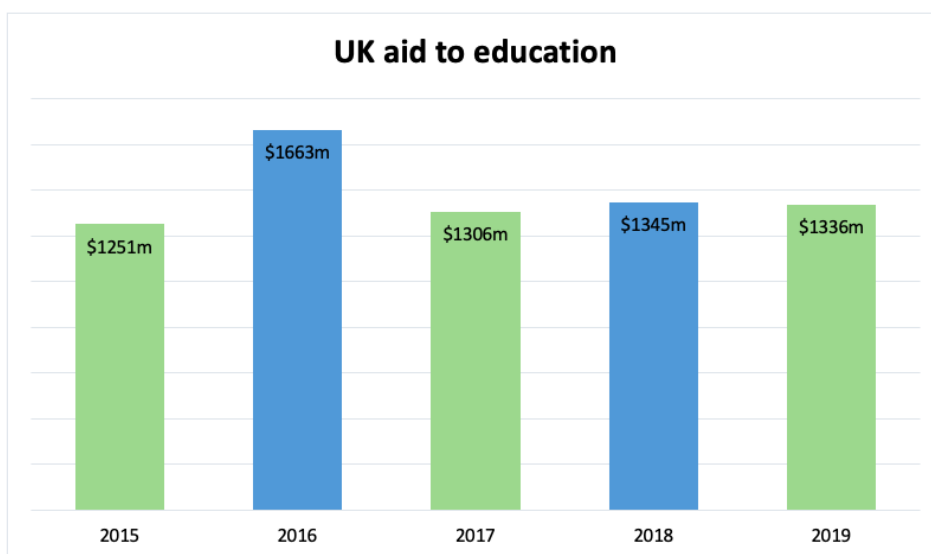
Investing in education is one of the best long-term investments we can make to support prosperous and peaceful economies and societies. Investing in education is also the key to unlocking progress on extreme poverty and progress across all other SDGs. You can see the links between education and other SDGs and sectors here at The Key: <https://key.theirworld.org/>.

4. How and where can Government work on development best support the UK's wider strategic objectives set out in the Integrated Review?

5. In what area of international development does the UK have comparative advantage, particular interests, or is best placed to deliver?

As evidenced in the chart below, the UK has already made considerable investments in education, with the current Prime Minister and previous International Development Secretaries championing education and girls education in particular. Such investments have made a significant impact to help achieve the

SDGs. For example, the UK's 'Get Children Learning' policy is aimed at helping 330 million children in developing countries to read or do basic maths by the time they complete primary school. It also supports 66 countries through programmes such as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and is the largest donor to Education Cannot Wait (ECW) which improves access to education during humanitarian emergencies and crises. In 2018, the UK launched the 'Leave No Girl Behind' campaign which called for 12 years of quality education for all girls, and in the same year, 152 UN Member States signed up to join a UK-led joint statement on girls' education. These examples evidence how the UK has established itself as a key leader in advancing the SDGs that promote education for all. On a more focused level, it also highlights that the UK has a strong framework focusing on girls. This is one key comparative advantage the UK has in international development and this advantage can be used to facilitate further educational initiatives.



Source: Donor Tracker

The UK has also been well positioned in aiding the research aspects of education. UK aid (£20 million) supported the Education Technology (Ed Tech) hub where DFID worked with the World Bank and EdTech hub to create the largest body of research that focused on how education technology is currently employed and how it can be improved. This is critical research that covers areas such as prioritising equity in learning and access, education for displaced children and more. Last month, the Foreign Secretary also announced new UK aid funding (£15.8 million) to find the best ways to provide education to vulnerable children. The research will focus on the best methods to provide schooling, particularly at the primary and lower secondary level, in areas experiencing long-term conflicts or crises. Countries of interest for the research include Nigeria, South Sudan, Myanmar, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. The UK evidently has a strategic objective to advance education accessibility with science and technology. The development and employment of digital tools help improve access to and provide quality

education to groups who need it the most. This, in turn, continues to improve global literacy rates and the UK continues to hold this comparative advantage due to its education soft power status worldwide. Such initiatives are also more helpful in the current pandemic context, where accessibility to education has become even more challenging.

The UK must continue to lead in its aid to education or it risks undermining all its in-country progress and international goodwill. Even with a reduced budget, the UK continues to demonstrate its comparative advantage in education by unveiling a new five-year global action plan on girls' education spanning 2021 to 2026. This will help advance international efforts to track and achieve the 'Quality Education' SDG, support national governments in developing girls' education efforts and establishing global public goods for education. The UK's targets of getting 40 million more girls into school and another 20 million reading at the age of 10 by 2026 has also been adopted by the G7. Additionally, the FCDO has announced seven policy areas for 2021/2022 and girls education is one of these.

The UK has for a long time been a leading donor to education as it continues to be one of the largest bilateral and multilateral donors to global education. If we continue to focus on education, we will be building on existing investments already made to 'build back better' in the context of COVID-19. It is important the UK identifies and addresses any gaps in its rhetoric and commitments on advancing education accessibility and quality for children with limited access to it. Currently with aid cuts, Save the Children has estimated that 700,000 fewer girls might receive an education. UNESCO also estimated that last year alone, 11 million girls may not return to school because of the pandemic. Budget cuts can damage the UK's global status as a reliable partner and strong donor to education. Since it already has a comparative advantage with girls education, we recommend the UK continues to make education a key development priority. The Integrated Review recognised that transnational challenges exist and so does competition to shape the world order of the future.

6. How should the UK's approach evolve to build partnerships with new actors and strengthen existing ones?

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