

UKFIET

## UKFIET NEWSLETTER

*UKFIET aims to share ideas, knowledge and expertise among all who work in International Education matters by linking organisations both public and voluntary, commercial and non-commercial and providing a network accessible to individuals working in the field.*

## UKFIET OFFICERS

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## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION - CAROLINE DYER

We are extremely pleased that DFID has agreed a three year funding package to support the preparation of two biennial UKFIET Oxford Conferences and three annual Global Monitoring Report Seminars. DFID has been generous with its sponsorship in the past and by securing committed funds we are now able to take a more strategic approach to conference and seminar planning. David Theobald and Caroline Dyer had explored this possibility in a meeting with DFID staff about the UKFIET-DFID link earlier in the year. Funding was awarded as our proposal contributes to DFID's current agenda on education, particularly the aspects of improved communication about UK support and achievement in education development within the UK and internationally, and extending UK influence with other actors through disseminating education research and policy development.

Even before this excellent news, we had been immersed in planning for the forthcoming UKFIET conference on Politics, Policies and Progress next year.

This exciting event promises to attract, as usual, a wide range of policy and decision makers,

academics, civil society organisations and practitioners. Many thanks to those of you who have been involved in putting the programme together, and who have offered to convene sessions.

We look forward to welcoming you to the UKFIET AGM which will be held from 1.30-4pm at the British Council, Spring Gardens on Friday 21st November. We are very pleased to welcome Jo Bourne, Acting Head of Profession at DFID to address the meeting. If you would like to attend can you please contact Claire Bastin as for security reasons we need to give the British Council a list of attendees a week before the event. The agenda and accompanying papers will be circulated separately.

We are delighted to welcome Claire Bastin as our new Support Officer. Claire has a background in business, a Master's degree in development and is currently working on issues related to sustainability and corporate responsibility. She will provide a range of administrative support to the UKFIET officers. Her contact details are: c.bastin@leeds.ac.uk.

**Dr Caroline Dyer**, Vice Chair and Newsletter Editor: c.dyer@leeds.ac.uk

## NEW UKFIET OFFICERS - YOUR NOMINATIONS NEEDED

UKFIET officers are all coming to the ends of their current term. Please nominate your candidate for the position of: Chair, Deputy Chair, Company Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, Newsletter Editor. You can do so by email to Claire Bastin, putting 'UKFIET officer nomination' in the subject line. All nominations must also be seconded and have the full agreement of the nominee. We will also set up an arrangement on the UKFIET website which you will be able to access; this will give details on the nomination process and also descriptions of the job roles.

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## FORTHCOMING UKFIET CONFERENCE

10th UKFIET International  
Conference on Education  
and Development



# Politics, Policies and Progress

The **10th UKFIET international conference on Education and Development** will be held in Oxford from 15th – 17th September, 2009.

You are invited to view the webpage which you can access via <http://www.ukfiet.org/> or <http://www.cfbt.com/ukfiet/>.

## NEWS FROM DFID

### *UN High Level Event on MDGs*

The United Nations High Level Event on the Millennium Development Goals, in New York on 25th September was a great success, with the UN highlighting commitments made of around \$16 billion, including \$4.5 billion for education and \$3 billion for malaria. It was also encouraging that these commitments represented such a broad coalition of actors, all committing at the highest levels to achieving the MDGs.

A particular highlight was the launch of the "Class of 2015", at the Education Partnership event attended by the Prime Minister, which brought together governments, multilaterals, faith groups, civil society, the private sector and FIFA. The Prime Minister announced a further UK contribution of £50 million to the EFA Fast Track Initiative and a pledge of £5 million to match

Comic Relief's target for funds to be raised for schools in Africa at next year's Red Nose Day.

### *New Appointments*

Following the announcement in early September 2008 of Peter Colenso's appointment as Head of Human Development Group within DFID's Policy and Research Division, Jo Bourne is acting DFID Head of Profession - Education until a permanent replacement for Peter is in post. It was also announced in early October 2008 that while Douglas Alexander remains Secretary of State for International Development and Gareth Thomas remains Minister of State (jointly with the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform), DFID's two Parliamentary Under Secretaries of State Gillian Merron and Shahid Malik have been replaced by Ivan Lewis and Michael Foster. Human Development issues are included in Ivan Lewis's portfolio.

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## UKFIET GMR COLLOQUIUM

In partnership with the UK National Committee for UNESCO, UKFIET will hold a colloquium in London on 20 January 2009 to discuss the Education for All Global Monitoring Report on Overcoming Inequality-Why Governance Matters. The report, the seventh in the series, will be launched in the next few weeks. It tackles education governance in four areas: (1) education finance and fiscal decentralisation; (2) school choice and participation; (3) teachers and monitoring and (4) education planning and poverty reduction strategies. We expect that it will be of interest to a wide range of education specialists. More details will be circulated shortly.

## POVERTY AND EDUCATION IN DEVELOPMENT - TWO EVENTS

*Sheila Aikman reports on a One-day workshop hosted by the Literacy and Development Group at the University of East Anglia. 1st July 2008.*

This workshop aimed to foster an exchange of ideas and approaches and an exploration of possible synergies between researchers across disciplinary and geographical specialisms. It examined the dynamic interaction between multidimensions of poverty and education through the lenses of literacy inequalities, economics and externalities, gender equality and cultural diversity.

It took its starting point in a human development approach which critiqued global agendas and policies driven by limited targets driven goals as inadequate for meaningful engagement with diverse expressions and experiences of poverty, and paying little consideration to different forms and experiences of discrimination, exclusion, inequalities or vulnerabilities. Questions of meaning and context were important themes throughout the day and touched upon in a diversity of ways, such as questioning how concepts, processes and practices are framed and promoted at the global level and whether these take into account local meaning, practices and processes too. Cultural diversity was examined in relation to, among other things, exclusion and cultural violence perpetrated with in and through institutions such as the school. And, while educational institu-

tions themselves have in many parts of the world contributed to the loss of cultural and linguistic diversity, this loss is intimately related to loss of biodiversity environmental change.

Participants recognised the importance of ensuring conversations across different disciplines in order to develop adequate theories of education and poverty and to rise to methodological and theoretical challenges. Such an approach points to new ways of conceptualising and researching education and poverty and a blurring of boundaries between disciplines and work across sectors.

*Following on from that event, we are organising an UKFIET colloquium to attract a wider audience to debate this theme.*

## UKFIET COLLOQUIUM ON THE THEME OF POVERTY AND EDUCATION IN DEVELOPMENT

Will be held at Beechgrove House, the University of Leeds on December 15th. This colloquium will provide a space to develop interdisciplinary dialogue on conceptualising and researching education and poverty. Speakers will include Pauline Rose (GMR), Karen Moore (IDPM Manchester) and further information about this one day colloquium will be circulated very soon.



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**RETHINKING THE NEEDS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS:**

Critical perspectives on the Internationalisation of UK Higher Education Institutions  
A Seminar Series funded by the ESRC

**STUDENTSHIPS AVAILABLE**

Four seminars will be held between Dec 2008 and Oct 2009. Applications are invited from students with a research interest or a responsible role in this area. 10 studentships will cover the travel costs (up to £125 per event) of attending the seminars at the Universities of Birmingham, Bath and Nottingham.

Please email a CV and a statement of interest of up to 500 words to the events manager for the series, Jacqueline Wootton: [j.wootton@bham.ac.uk](mailto:j.wootton@bham.ac.uk)

Further details on the seminars can be found at <http://www.education.bham.ac.uk/research/seminars1/esrc/iss.shtml>.

**DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS IS 10TH November 2008****UNIVERSITAS 21 AND THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

Professor W. John Morgan, UNESCO Chair of the Political Economy of Education and Director of the Centre for Comparative Education Research, the School of Education, has been invited to join the Universitas 21 Working Group on the Millennium Development Goals. This is to be chaired by Dr Hugh Brady, President of University College Dublin. Its primary role is to provide leadership, direction and coordination to Universitas 21's combined efforts to address the MDG challenges as outlined in its Montreal and Dublin symposia. In endorsing the creation of the Working Group at the Dublin meeting in May, the Universitas 21 Presidents agreed the following terms of reference:

- To map existing capacity (both teaching and research programmes in Universitas 21 universities) and existing developing world partners
- To map potential national and international funding sources

- To develop proposals for mainstreaming development consciousness into the UG experience
- To develop proposals for research projects where Universitas 21 universities have a track record and where global collaboration would add value
- To identify key enablers (e.g. digital repositories and/or networks) and develop proposals for their use within the network.
- To identify options for partnership models with developing world universities and develop a shortlist of potential partner institutions in such countries

Other members of the Working Group are: Professor Stephen Toope, President and Vice Chancellor, University of British Columbia, Dr Enrique Zepeda, President, Technical University of Monterrey, Mexico, Professor Patrick Paul Walsh, University College Dublin, Professor Sue Welburn, University of Edinburgh, Professor Jan Jorgensen, McGill University, Professor Dick Guerrant, University of Virginia, Professor Alan Lopez, University of Queensland, Australia. Universitas 21 Managers' Group Liaison, Dr Erik Lithander, University College Dublin.



UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM



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## BAICE APPOINTMENTS

Dr Lore Arthur of the Open University has been elected Chair and Dr Michele Schweisfurth, School of Education, University of Birmingham has been elected Deputy Chair of BAICE. Congratulations to Lore and Michele on their appointments!

Dr Qing Gu, of the UNESCO Centre for Comparative Education Research, School of Education, University of Nottingham, has been elected to the Executive Committee of BAICE. Dr Qing is currently investigating the experiences of international students as part of a joint ESRC project with Dr Michele Schweisfurth.

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## SCHOLARSHIPS SCUPPERED

*Peter Williams, CEC Action Group on Commonwealth Scholarships.*

In March 2008 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office created controversy when the Secretary of State, David Miliband, announced to Parliament that the FCO would withdraw its funding of new Commonwealth Scholarships after the financial year 2008/09. What this means in effect is that students from Australia, Bahamas, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Cyprus, Malta, New Zealand and Singapore will no longer get Commonwealth awards for study in Britain. They have too high an average income per head to be eligible for UK development assistance, and so until now have been getting their Commonwealth Scholarships through the FCO budget.

Commonwealth developing countries are not immediately affected by this decision because their Commonwealth awards pass through DFID. But relatively prosperous countries like Antigua, Barbados, Botswana, Malaysia, Trinidad may well be apprehensive lest, before many years go by, they may be deemed ineligible for British aid and so also for Commonwealth Scholarships.

Next year, 2009, marks 50 years of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP), launched at the first Commonwealth Education Conference in Oxford in 1959. Back then, just 500 awards were envisioned, but next year's target is four times as great: 2009 awards to mark the Plan's Golden Jubilee year. Commonwealth Education Ministers have also adopted proposals to create an Endowment Fund to support more CSFP awards on a south-south basis between Commonwealth developing countries.

The Plan provides a Commonwealth multilateral framework within which awards are made bilaterally on a country-to-country basis. Scholarships normally cover travel, living expenses, academic fees and study costs; and, within country allocations, are awarded on a (competitive) basis of academic merit. They cover all disciplines. Many universities and colleges in membership of UKFIET will have received Commonwealth Scholars in Education from one or more of the 53 independent members of the Commonwealth or from dependencies.

Britain has been by far the most generous donor under the Plan, providing two thirds or more of the total number of awards. The other main donors, in a list of about 20 awarding countries, have been Canada, India and New Zealand, and several UK students have reciprocally held Commonwealth Scholarships in those countries, in the Caribbean or in Africa.

The FCO's announcement said that it will pull out of the CSFP, saving £2m. per annum, and concentrate its Scholarship support on just two programmes, Chevening



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Awards and Marshall Scholarships. Chevening awards from which about a quarter of the allocation (£8m) is to be cut, are available to all countries outside the EU, while Marshall Awards are confined to the USA only.

The FCO justified this change of policy mainly in terms of the need to reorder its spending to meet new priorities, especially work on climate change. It claims that Chevening awards, being retained on a large but diminished scale, meet its objectives better because award holders can be selected on the basis of future leadership potential and likely influence, rather than on academic merit.

The opponents of the FCO decision criticise it on a number of grounds. They say the FCO has yet to prove that its preference for Chevening Awards is based on any kind of objective review of evidence. Nor was there any consultation with other Government departments or any engagement in the normal diplomatic courtesies of informing the countries affected about the decision. Critics argue that the UK's central political and educational interests are served by bringing the brightest students to the UK to study and conduct research alongside UK students. They point to the numerous former Commonwealth Scholars from the eight countries threatened by the FCO decision who are now in positions of senior influence in their countries, and express extreme scepticism about whether ambassadors have any known expertise in forecasting which 30-year olds are going to rise to the top in fifteen or twenty years time. Moreover the past record on Chevening awards attests to the fact that senior diplomats are not too well connected with the worlds of theoretical and applied sciences where important advances are being made: a far smaller proportion of Chevening awards than of Commonwealth scholarships is held in the sciences.

The civil society critics whose campaign has been largely orchestrated by an UKFIET member, the Council for Education in the Commonwealth, have two other fears. The first is that the countries being deprived of UK Commonwealth Scholarships are the very ones that have been most accustomed to offer awards reciprocally to British students to study in their countries. The second is that these countries are the ones that would normally be expected to contribute most generously to the Endowment Fund whose success might in consequence be imperilled by the FCO's decision announced at a singularly inappropriate time.

Campaigning has taken many forms – an E-Petition to Downing Street signed by nearly 2000 people, an Early Day Motion and many questions in Parliament, a letter published in the Times that was signed by former Presidents and Prime Ministers and every one of the former Secretaries general of the Commonwealth, letters to MPs, and a well-attended public meeting at the Royal Commonwealth Society addressed by three former Commonwealth Scholars – Germaine Greer (Australia) Sir George Bain (Canada) and Alastair Niven (UK).

Campaigning continues though so far the Government has proved intransigent. Possibilities of compromise involving shared funding are being explored but even these require some funding to be put up from somewhere within Government. The prospects are not altogether hopeful especially since the Department of Innovations Universities and Skills, obviously discomfited by the FCO decision on Commonwealth Scholarships, nevertheless appears to have connived recently at HEFCE's intention of ending the Overseas Research Students Award Scheme (ORSAS) – a decision announced in late July when Parliament was in recess.

In a recent positive development, the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) has agreed to provide funding of £800,000 over the next two years. This, together with matching contributions from UK universities, will allow the Commonwealth Scholarships Commission to restore doctoral awards for candidates from the 'Developed Commonwealth'.

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This is by no means a full (or permanent) restoration of the Scholarships. It can be seen, however, as a step in the right direction, which keeps the awards alive until the next funding round in 2011.

#### **The DIUS Awards**

The new awards will be open to all eight countries affected by the initial FCO decision, and be open to all subjects – although there is some hope that they will contain a reasonable proportion of scientists. They will, however, be at doctoral level only. The awards will be jointly funded by UK universities. It is hoped that a wide range of institutions will agree to take part on this basis, and letters inviting all were sent last week. The initial universities to agree joint funding have been Oxford and Cambridge (the two most popular destinations for developed country award holders), Edinburgh and Nottingham. It is expected that funding will be sufficient for 16-18 awards in 2009-10, which roughly equates to the number of doctorates that would be given to developed countries in a normal year. At present, only 6-8 awards can be guaranteed in 2010-11.

In view of the later than normal announcement of the awards, and likelihood that many high quality candidates will have been deterred from applying in the belief that no awards would be available, timing and publicity will be critical in the short term. National nominating agencies have been asked to send nominations to the UK by 31 January. Domestic deadlines, therefore, are likely to be before Christmas.

## **THE LITERACY WORKING GROUP - ADVOCATING ADULT LITERACY ACROSS THE GLOBE.**

Contributed by **Jan Eldred**, Chair of the Literacy Working Group ([jan.eldred@niace.org.uk](mailto:jan.eldred@niace.org.uk))

### **Background**

The Literacy Working Group was set up as a result of the growing interest in this area generated in particular by the 2006 EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) focusing on literacy. The UK National Commission for UNESCO (UKNC), UK Forum for International Education and Training (UKFIET) and the British Association for Literacy in Development (BALID) organised linked events in December 2005/January 2006 to discuss the findings of the GMR. The level of attendance at these events and the quality of discussions there demonstrated the presence in the UK of a strong professional constituency versed in literacy issues and with wide experience of literacy programmes and projects in the UK and abroad.

A number of those concerned in organising and attending these events identified a need to create a continuing UK forum for the exchange of ideas, for the support and promotion of international literacy programmes and campaigns, for advocacy of the case for literacy development, and for facilitating the mobilisation of UK literacy expertise on behalf of development efforts worldwide. They accordingly decided to establish a Literacy Working Group as an autonomous group of both organisations and individuals committed to the promotion of literacy. Given UNESCO's worldwide leadership responsibility in literacy, and its public commitment to adult literacy as a priority, it would be linked to the UK National Commission for UNESCO, but independent of it.



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**Membership**

Three main categories of member were identified: representatives of major UK organisations active in the area of literacy and international development; representatives of smaller organisations; and individual specialists. For the most part, members come from civil society organisations. The current membership is drawn from: UK National Commission for UNESCO (UKNC); British Association for Literacy in Development (BALID); National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) ActionAid International; The National Research and Development Centre for adult literacy and numeracy (NRDC); United Kingdom Forum for International Education and Training (UKFIET) and also includes some individuals who are highly experienced in this field. For the initial period NIACE was invited to chair the group and BALID agreed to provide the secretarial support, with UKNC acting as Treasurer.

**Aims**

The aims of the group are to encourage the UK Government, in particular, to develop policies, planning and implementation of more adult literacy programmes, including family literacy, in international development activities and to encourage embedding or integration of literacy into aid programmes. The clearly shared vision is that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education For All (EFA) targets would be more effectively and efficiently achieved if such approaches were adopted.

The rationale is based upon the concept of literacy as social practices which are linked to and part of every day living and working. Identifying those things which motivate adults to learn, from understanding health and HIV and AIDS, maternal care, early childhood development and health, to supporting their children in primary education or developing skills for employment and sustainability, provides the basis on which literacy can be developed too. Integrating the learning creates purpose and relevance and is mutually enhancing. We argue that supporting parents and carers in family literacy programmes enhances primary education as well as addressing gender disparity, not to mention the gains in skills for the adults themselves. The training of teachers who are adult literacy specialists, to work with other teachers or facilitators is a vital component of such partnership approaches.

We know from research in industrialised countries as well as in developing countries, that such approaches are productive and effective. The purpose of the group therefore, is to engage in advocacy, supported by evidence drawn from research, of expanded and improved adult literacy activities across the globe.

**Ways of working**

The group proposes to achieve its aim and purposes by

- Responding to and supporting the UNESCO Literacy for Empowerment (Life) programme, the UN Decade on Literacy, and the UNESCO literacy programme sponsored by the Institute for Lifelong Learning in Hamburg.
- Responding to the annual EFA Global Monitoring Reports from a literacy perspective
- Responding to calls for consultation in areas within the group's competence by any appropriate international agency or organisation.
- Creating responsive partnerships in the field of literacy both within the UK and overseas, and encouraging knowledge and information sharing through networking activities;
- Advocacy, in writing and through meetings, with UK government ministers and officials, of the introduction and sustenance of support for literacy in the UK's international development activities.



- Appropriate study and research into literacy policies programmes and practices.
- Distributing information about literacy, about the group, and its views, at events, conferences and meetings.

### **Achievements**

To date the Group has:

- Met together every 8-10 weeks, meeting on members' premises to keep costs to a minimum;
- Met with the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning to hear about its literacy priorities
- Commissioned and edited a position paper on literacy concepts and strategies, which was distributed at UKFIET and International Adult Learners' week conferences. Flyers promoting the group's aim and purposes were produced for distribution at such conferences and events.
- Met three times with DFID officials to discuss and press for literacy within the UK aid programme and opportunities for further development of adult literacy;
- Produced, under contract, a briefing note on literacy for senior DFID officials;
- Responded, from a literacy perspective, to the 2007 and 2008 EFA Global Monitoring reports - on Early Childhood Education and Mid-term Assessment of EFA goals - through written critiques and attendance at the 2008 UK GMR review conference. We contributed to a workshop at that event on the role of literacy in achieving the EFA goals;
- Written a paper submitted to the international adult learning journal, *Convergence*;
- Contributed to the chapter in the UK CONFINTEA report on adult literacy.

A plan of action for 2008-09 has been agreed which includes:

- Continuation of the dialogue with DFID about possibilities of an expanded place for literacy within the British aid programme;
- Requesting a meeting with the Minister for Higher Education and Skills, Bill Rammell MP, who has an international remit;
- Seeking opportunities to strengthen our advocacy through the media and political influence;
- Supporting a strengthened role and improved capacity and effectiveness of UIL in Hamburg.
- Preparing to play an active part in the IBE Conference on Inclusion in November 2008 in Geneva and CONFINTEA V1 in May 2009
- Preparing an input to the UKFIET Conference on Education and International Development in Oxford in September 2009
- Consultations with DFID on ways to inventory UK resources in literacy and to make them more accessible to international partners.

We believe we are beginning to have an impact, evidenced by a repeated request to work with DfID, invitations to make representation and contribute to events, publications and reports; and the Minister of State has expressed a willingness to meet us. We think that this success is attributable to effective partnership working through clearly defined roles and responsibilities; forward planning, gathering up and contributing information and insight from different perspectives, people and organisations; being pro-active in forging our own way ahead; being passionate and believing fervently in what we are trying to achieve.

