

Report on the JYU 2012 International Seminar on the Education For All (EFA)

Launching of the Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2012, Youth and Skills: Putting Education to work University of Jyväskylä, Finland, 8-9 November 2012

The aim of the international seminar was to increase knowledge about the global EFA process among higher education students and staff. The seminar linked local challenges with global education policies and processes, and engaged the local civil society, public and private agencies, schools and education offices.



Programme

The launching of the UNESCO Education For All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report 2012, Youth and Skills: Putting Education to work was the highlight of the seminar. The EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) is an annual publication that monitors progress toward the six targets to which over 160 countries committed themselves in 2000. Every year the report focuses on a specific theme. Dr. Kwame Akiyeampong, Senior Policy Analyst of the UNESCO Global Monitoring Report Team, presented the findings illustrating links between education, skills, labour markets and poverty.

- The world's youth population in urban areas is larger than ever before. The vast majority of the world's poor and least educated live in rural areas.
- There are 250 million children of primary school age today who cannot read or write, whether they're in school or not.
- 71 million teenagers are out of secondary school, missing out vital skills for future employment. They need alternative pathways to acquire basic skills for employment and prosperity.
- One in eight young people is unemployed and over a quarter are trapped in jobs that keep them on or below the poverty line.
- The effects of the economic crisis continue to squeeze societies worldwide, the severe lack of youth skills is more damaging than ever.
- Acquiring a lower secondary education is a minimum today for young people to gain the foundation skills they need to find decent jobs



In addition to the GMR launch, the seminar programme consisted of participatory theatre, presentations, roundtable discussions, dark café, theme group discussions, learning café and seminar dinner. Participation of all was emphasised.

Vice-rector Helena Rasku-Puttonen opened the EFA seminar and briefed the participants on the roots of the Finnish teacher education, started in Jyväskylä in 1863, which laid the basis for the development of the high quality University with seven faculties that is the University of Jyväskylä today. Following the tradition of the JYU EFA seminars, the participatory theatre group Taivaltajat showcased the experiences of youth concerning education, skills and work.

Presenters were invited from other universities and collaboration partner organisations. The presentations and group discussions provided a variety of perspectives on the GMR topic, such as views of African, Asian and Finnish Youth; roles of higher education, technical and vocational education; skills fares; music outreach programmes; inclusive education and educational leadership in enhancing skills and the situation of youth. One of the group discussions, 'Educational Leadership and Youth Unemployment', was organized by the students of the Institute of Educational Leadership of the University of Jyväskylä. Eleven students from different countries presented their views on why we have youth unemployment of such a magnitude in their respective countries and suggested some solutions. The richness of these diverse views was highly appreciated by the audience.

In the **Dark Café**, refreshments were served in complete darkness. The Dark Café offered visitors a glimpse of another world, where eyesight is useless. Activities like finding a seat without bumping anyone were completed with use of specialist equipment designed to help everyday life of people with limited vision. Visitors found this experience eye-opening. The Dark Café was organised by the Youth Wing of the Central Finland Association of Visually Impaired.



Learning Café was a morning session with tea, coffee and short-term discussions to find solutions to selected EFA challenges. The café was planned so that each mixed group had five minutes to agree on and write down one possible solution, and then another group continued with the same challenge and made another or better suggestion. In addition to this Learning Café during the EFA seminar, a group of doctoral students sent the invitation, instructions and selected challenges around the globe to partner universities. For example, in the University of Shaoxing, China, 20 students from different colleges of the University gathered to their own learning café session about the theme “Youth and skills: Putting education to work”. In Shaoxing the discussion concentrated on three issues – financing, disadvantaged, and skills training. The perspectives and solutions of the Shaoxing learning café were summarized in a two-page document that was sent to the Finnish EFA seminar organizers.

Doctoral students organised a meet before the EFA seminar to share knowledge and exchange experiences concerning their EFA related education research work.

More information, seminar programme and the video recorded presentations are available on the seminar website.

124 participants

Over 160 participants registered for the seminar, 124 were present and others followed the programme online. The seminar participants were higher education students and staff, mostly from the University of Jyväskylä, and representatives of collaboration partner organisations. The students received 3 ECTS credits for participation and submitting



learning journals with reflections of their learning experiences related to EFA and seminar participation. According to the student feedback, learning about the EFA targets and process, and participation in active dialogue on the issues highlighted in the GMR were highly valued. More time for dialogue and sharing experiences was suggested for next time. In addition, all enjoyed the international atmosphere.

“

- *All in all this Seminar broadened my horizon and lead to many further questions and issues to think about.*
- *During the two days I learnt a lot. The best part was to discuss with education experts and students from all over the world.*
- *Now I want to act in my home country. Everyone can do something!*

Organisation

The two-day seminar was organized by the Faculty of Education, University of Jyväskylä, in collaboration with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education and Culture, Finnish National Commission for UNESCO, Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) and the Finnish University Partnership for International Development (UniPID). The enthusiastic organising team included seven doctoral students and faculty staff and 17 students from different study programmes volunteered to assist with the arrangements.

The next EFA seminar with the theme ‘Teacher Education’ is planned for 6-7 November 2013

The University of Jyväskylä has its roots in the teacher education college that was established in 1863 and celebrates its 150th anniversary in year 2013. The theme of the 2013 EFA seminar will be teacher education.