



**Consortium for Research on
Educational Access,
Transitions and Equity**

**The Interactions Between Global Education Initiatives
and National Education Policy and Planning Processes: A
Comparative Case Study of the Education For All
Fast Track Initiative in Rwanda and Ethiopia**

Desmond Bermingham

**CREATE PATHWAYS TO ACCESS
Research Monograph No. 67**

July 2011



**University of Sussex
Centre for International Education**



Consortium for Research on
Educational Access, Transitions & Equity

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List of Acronyms

CF	Catalytic Fund
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
EPDF	Education Programme Development Fund
EFA	Education for All
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GER	Gross enrolment rate
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
GoE	Government of Ethiopia
GoR	Government of Rwanda
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education, Rwanda
MoE	Ministry of Education
UPE	Universal Primary Education
WB	World Bank

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Lastly, I am grateful for the continuing support of my former colleagues at the FTI Secretariat who continue to demonstrate their lasting commitment to education.

The views of this paper are entirely my own and I take full responsibility for any errors and omissions.

Preface

I am very pleased that CREATE is publishing some of Desmond Bermingham's recent research on the work of the Fast Track Initiative and on the response of two countries – Ethiopia and Rwanda to it. In recent years the Global Fast Track initiative has been an important mechanism for the funding of increased access to basic education in a number of developing countries. For CREATE, the national contexts of policy formulation, policy dialogue and financing provide a key dimension in understanding improvements in access to and in the quality of education on the ground. The Fast Track Initiative has been subject to a large-scale and rigorous evaluation in which some but not all of its ambitious aims have been met. This monograph builds from that evaluation but goes further. Its originality lies in an attempt to understand the interaction between those who design and promote global initiatives and those who act in response to such initiatives – those who 'talk back in the vernacular' - from within national educational policy and planning institutions.

Desmond Bermingham's overall conclusion is provocative. Time will tell whether the FTI as a global initiative will diminish in importance over the next few years as other sources of finance become more significant. If this is the case, will the FTI come to be viewed as an important global intervention that succeeded in helping countries make faster progress towards the MDG education goals, or will it prove to have been an expensive distraction from the long-term development of education sectors in developing countries by national policymakers and planners?

Professor Angela W Little
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Summary

The Education for All Fast Track Initiative (FTI) was launched in 2002 as a global initiative to help low income countries accelerate progress towards the MDG target of universal primary education by 2015 (FTI, 2004a). The initiative was announced by the World Bank at the Dakar World Education Forum as a way of delivering the commitment that no country with a credible education plan would be prevented from achieving the Education for All goals due to lack of resources (UNESCO, 2000). The FTI was intended to mobilise additional resources from donors to support education sector plans in developing countries. As well as raising funds, the FTI was intended to promote aid effectiveness by following the principles of donor harmonisation and alignment in the education sector (FTI, 2004a).

The FTI has developed as one of the most important global partnerships in the education sector. Forty-five developing countries, twenty donor countries and the main UN and multilateral agencies have joined the FTI. The FTI trust funds have received total commitments of over US\$2 billion and annual disbursements have risen to around US\$200 million (FTI, 2011b). The OECD has described the FTI as a good example of aid effectiveness in action in the education sector (OECD DAC, 2009).

There has however also been widespread criticism of the FTI for failing on its promises to mobilise more finance and secure more effective aid delivery. An independent evaluation of the FTI in 2010 found very significant differences between the claims of the FTI and the reality of its operations on the ground (Cambridge Education, 2010). The evaluation also found serious failures in communications and questioned the value added by the FTI in many countries. There have been serious delays in delivering finance from the FTI funds and in some cases this has caused severe disruption to the local planning process. Overall, the evaluation concluded that the FTI had fallen short of what could 'be reasonably expected' of a global initiative of this scale.

This monograph provides additional evidence on the operations of the FTI on the ground by drawing on the findings of a comparative country case study of the FTI in Rwanda and Ethiopia. The case study was conducted in 2009 and 2010 as part of a doctoral research project for the Institute of Education at the University of London. The research collected the views of leading national stakeholders and local donor representatives that were involved in the application to join the FTI partnership and the early implementation of the education sector programmes. The case studies are intended to make a modest contribution to fill the gap identified by Professor Angela Little in an earlier CREATE monograph (Little, 2008) on the interactions between global education initiatives and national education sector planning processes.

The Interactions Between Global Education Initiatives and National Education Policy and Planning Processes: A Comparative Case Study of the Education For All Fast Track Initiative in Rwanda and Ethiopia

1. Introduction: the Education For All Fast Track Initiative (FTI).

The FTI was launched by the World Bank at a high profile press conference in April 2002. Jim Wolfensohn (then President of the World Bank) described the FTI as:

...an historic first step towards putting all developing countries on an education Fast Track that could transform their social and economic prospects (BBC, 2002).

Initial pledges of support for the FTI were announced by the Netherlands and Gordon Brown, the UK Chancellor of the Exchequer, joined the launch press conference. The launch generated international media coverage and there was considerable excitement about the possibility of this new global education programme.

The Fast Track Initiative

Eighteen countries were invited to join the FTI the first phase: Albania, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam, Zambia, and Yemen.

Five more countries were included in the 'Analytic Fast Track' to receive additional technical assistance to help them prepare their plans for endorsement: Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of Congo, India, Nigeria, and Pakistan (World Bank, 2002).

The Washington launch was followed by an endorsement at the G8 meeting in Canada in June 2002. The communiqué from the summit meeting described the 'World Bank's fast track proposal' as a 'welcome first step' towards mobilising additional resources to help countries to achieve universal primary education (G8, 2002). However, the G8 countries did not make any specific commitments to increase their aid for education in developing countries.

The Mid Term Evaluation of the FTI (Cambridge Education, 2010) provides some revealing background information to explain the slightly lukewarm reactions to the FTI of the G8:

... some G8 donors felt that they had been "bounced" into the agreements that launched the FTI, and that their initial agenda had been taken over by the World Bank. These donors had agreed to a pilot approach on a small number of countries but found it announced as something much more ambitious. Their names were attached to commitments which they felt they had not agreed to. (Cambridge Education, 2010:6)

Partly as a result of these doubts, there was a protracted debate among the donor countries over how the exact nature of the FTI, how it would be financed and how it should relate to sector policy and planning processes at the country level. There was a drive within the NGO community to make FTI into a 'Global Fund for Education' which would play the same role as the Global Fund to Fight Aids, TB and Malaria in the health sector. This group became

highly critical of the FTI for failing to deliver on the promises that had been made at the launch (Global Campaign for Education, 2003).

Other members of the FTI partnership were resistant to the idea of a centralised global fund as they believed it would create additional bureaucratic structures and undermine national planning processes. The major bilateral donors preferred the ‘virtual fund’ concept which relied first on bilateral and multilateral funds to support education through existing programmes (FTI, 2003b).

As a compromise, a relatively small ‘Catalytic Fund’ was established to provide bridging finance to countries that had submitted their plans in the first phase. However, this fund was limited to so-called ‘donor orphan’ countries that were not able to mobilise sufficient resources from the local donor group¹. Donor commitments to the Catalytic Fund were modest and, in most cases, the finances were delivered as additions to existing World Bank projects (FTI, 2003a). Criticisms of the FTI grew and one major international NGO described the initiative as turning from a ‘fast track, to a slow trickle’(Oxfam, 2003).

As the case studies in this paper show this lack of clarity at the global level caused considerable confusion and disruption to national planning processes at the country level. Ethiopia effectively disengaged from the FTI for several years after the initial application to join and Rwanda decided to delay joining the FTI until it was clear what value the global programme would add to its national processes.

The FTI was heavily influenced in its formative years by the global debate on aid effectiveness. This debate was shaped by the consensus enshrined in two important global declarations the Monterrey Consensus (United Nations, 2002) and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (OECD DAC, 2005). The first principle in this consensus was that aid would have greatest impact if it was delivered in support of good policies (Dollar and Pritchett, 1998) and secondly that the most effective way to deliver aid was through joint funding of national plans and use of country systems rather than separately funded projects.

The donors sought to shape the FTI to follow these aid effectiveness principles. The aim was to encourage all partners to align their support behind a single education sector plan and to provide additional donor finances through the ‘most aligned modality’ using government budget systems wherever possible (FTI, 2008). These principles were reflected in all of the early statements on FTI however the evaluation found that the implementation of these principles varied enormously from country to country. Several donors continued to deliver their support for education in FTI countries through separate projects and even the Catalytic Fund support was in most cases delivered through a World Bank investment project that required additional reporting procedures (Bermingham, 2009). The evaluation concluded that there was only limited evidence that the FTI had been a significant factor in securing additional aid and that the increase in effectiveness was actually achieved in only a few cases (Cambridge Education, 2010).

Since the publication of the evaluation in 2010, the FTI has made several important changes to its governance and operational procedures (FTI, 2011a). These changes have included the appointment of an independent chair and the establishment of a constituency based board of

¹ ‘Donor orphan’ countries were defined as those that had 5 or fewer donors providing at least \$1 million per year to the education sector.

directors with equal representation from donors, developing countries, civil society and multilateral organisations. The central role of the World Bank is no longer as evident although it remains the trustee of the FTI funds it is the supervising entity in the majority of countries and retains significant influence over the staff of the FTI Secretariat².

The FTI has also recently strengthened its focus on a number of policy issues in particular improving quality and learning outcomes; increasing access to education for girls and young women; and increasing support for education in fragile states. The FTI board of directors considered and approved a number of papers on these issues at their meeting in May 2011³. The FTI Secretariat have proposed that the technical capacity to deal with these issues should be strengthened and that they should work with local education groups to promote the issues in national education sector plans. The board of directors also approved in May 2011 a new charter for the FTI which confirms the expansion of the FTI to cover all EFA goals including early childhood, youth and adult learning (FTI, 2011a). This is an ambitious expansion of the FTI's mandate and it remains to be seen how it will be implemented at the country level.

The FTI has launched a replenishment campaign to mobilise up to US\$8 billion in additional aid to meet the financing needs of FTI partner countries (FTI, 2011b). The campaign aims to secure between US\$1.75 billion⁴ and US\$3.25 billion for a single EFA fund which has replaced the Catalytic Fund and the other FTI trust funds plus additional financing from other bilateral and multilateral sources. These are challenging targets particularly in the context of very difficult fiscal situations in most donor countries. Two key donors – Spain and the Netherlands – have already indicated that they are planning to scale back their support for education – including FTI – as part of a reprioritisation exercise and reductions in aid budgets overall. The UK has become the largest donor to the FTI and has restated its commitment to increase its support for the FTI although it has made this conditional on other donors' contributions. Australia is the only new donor that has indicated an intention to make a significant increase in aid for education including through the FTI⁵.

² The staff of the FTI Secretariat are World Bank employees and the Head of the FTI Secretariat reports to the World Bank's Director of Education.

³ [FTI Board of Directors Meeting, Kigali, Rwanda, May 2011.](#)

Official web site: <http://www.educationfasttrack.org/about-fti/meetings/board-of-directors-meetings/rwanda-2011/>. Accessed: 30 June 2011

⁴ The lower figure would be equivalent to US\$300 – 400 million per year or approximately 10% of total aid to basic education.

⁵ [AUSAid Education](#) Official web site: <http://ausaid.gov.au/keyaid/education.cfm>. Accessed: 30 June 2011.

2. Reviewing the Literature on the FTI

The academic literature on the FTI is still quite limited, although the evaluation has provided a wealth of data which will provide rich material for future researchers (Cambridge Education, 2010).

Rose (2003) was one of the first to provide a critique of the initiative and some of its underlying assumptions. Rose was particularly critical of the use of the 'Indicative Framework' (FTI, 2004a) to prescribe policy parameters to all countries who wished to join the FTI partnership. Rose highlighted some fundamental failings in the data analysis by Bruns *et al.* (2003) that formed the basis of this framework. Rose (2005) argues that although the framework was intended to be used flexibly, in practice it has been used to impose policy measures relating to class size, domestic investment in education, pupil-teacher ratios etc. without taking account of the specific social, economic and political contexts.

Despite assurance that benchmarks should be adopted flexibly, some agencies and national governments fear that reliance on benchmarks may create tensions within their agencies and between them and the countries they are supporting, as the goalposts shift and they potentially move towards greater 'conditionality' through the FTI process ... There is a need to distinguish between simulations, international experience that should guide planning, and internationally agreed benchmarks that constitute conditions for access to external funds ... such distinctions are difficult to make in practice, which runs the risk that simulation models will be translated into conditions for funding—as indeed appears to have happened. This, in turn, undermines intended country ownership and negates the complexity and context-specific aspects of national reform (Rose, 2005:390)

Rose is also critical of the selection process for countries to join the FTI. This was initially made on the basis of a 'good performer' model which proposed additional support to those countries that had demonstrated they could make progress because they represented sound investment opportunities. Rose was concerned that this would *de facto* exclude those countries with the greatest needs.

The analysis in this paper suggests that the criteria for countries to become part of the FTI has resulted in a selective approach of accelerating progress towards the goals in particular countries, including ones which appear to be already on-track to achieve them. There is, therefore, a danger that those countries whose capacity is already weak and are neglected by donors become even more marginalised, raising questions about how serious a commitment exists amongst donors to break out of their conventional ways of working to achieve education goals globally (Rose, 2005:393).

Finally, Rose argued that the focus of the World Bank and the FTI on the single target of universal primary education had led to a neglect of the other EFA goals including early childhood education and adult literacy which were fundamental to the achievement of the holistic vision for education set out in the Dakar Framework of Action (UNESCO, 2000). This risk was further exacerbated, in Rose's view, by the questionable assumptions used by Bruns *et al* to calculate the primary completion rates without taking account of over-age children and the drop rate in the final year of primary school. Overall, Rose described the basis of the Indicative Framework as 'extremely problematic' (Rose, 2005:388).

Rose took up these concerns again in 2005 with King (King and Rose, 2005) in the context of a discussion on the growing use of international development targets in all sectors. King and Rose argued that, while there is nothing new about setting targets to measure the impact of policy choices, there is a worrying trend in the international education arena for these targets to be set *externally* and to be given additional weight through financial incentives.

Targets have become an important preoccupation with international co-operation agencies over the last decade, just as they have with domestic governments in several OECD countries. This Policy Arena is principally concerned with targeting in the education sector, though many of the issues discussed are multi-sectoral in their relevance. As this introduction argues, whilst internationally-driven targets suggest that a new global consensus has emerged which stresses the importance of ending global poverty with education playing a key role (Black and White, 2003), *it appears that these targets are in fact imposing new, perhaps more oblique, forms of conditionality for developing countries.* (King and Rose, 2005:97). (Emphasis added).

The authors discussed this trend within the MDG process as a whole. They acknowledged the value of targets when they are used flexibly. But they underlined the risks of externally imposed targets which do not take account of the complexity of the local context and risk shifting policy attention on to what can be measured easily at the cost of what is most important. There are also broader debates surrounding the efficacy of target setting. As Maxwell (2003) argues, while there are important reasons why poverty reduction targets are useful with respect to rallying support and providing monitorable indicators, they also have their risks:

They encourage reductionist approach to complex problems, privilege quantitative indicators at the expense of qualitative indicators, distort resource allocation, and undermine professional motivation and responsibility (Maxwell, 2003:12).

Jansen (2005) posed a series of questions about the utility of what he described as ‘serial target setting’ which seems to be prevalent in but by no means unique to the education sector.

Why is it that despite the serious (and acknowledged) conceptual and methodological inadequacies of target setting in education (TSE), monitoring and measurement activities continue to enjoy credibility among major international agencies? Why, despite the remarkable lack of progress—even regression in some cases—in moving towards set targets (Addis Abba, Jomtien, Dakar, etc.), do development organizations continue to press forward with such processes? Why do developing countries, with no credible plans and (promised) resources, continue to go through the motions of TSE? (Jansen, 2005:369).

Jansen went on to describe the widely acknowledged flaws in the data that are used to assess progress towards these targets, and the political and financial incentives that lead to distortion of data in many developing countries. Yet, despite these flaws, the international community continues to maintain the ‘facade of precision’. Jansen concluded his paper with a salutary call for realism and humility in the future use of targets:

Should target setting therefore continue? It is quite possible that targets have served to mobilize national action in some states. It is also conceivable that targets—even where they have not been met at all—may explain some of the rapid expansion in

education systems especially after the end of colonialism. And it is probably the case that targets provide a convenient forum for inter-state dialogue about education priorities, plans and resources. In this limited sense, targets might have served a useful function. But for targets and target setting to have any educational meaning in the day-to-day lives of teachers and learners, *these transnational activities will require much more humility about their measurement, much more honesty about their motivation, and much less hype about their meanings.* (Jansen, 2005:379)

Lewin picks this point up in a recent CREATE monograph and emphasises the problematic nature of even the most commonly used indicators such as gross and net enrolment rates (Lewin, 2011). These rates are often based on unreliable population data, do not take full account of over-age children in schools and fail to take account of the increasingly large number of children in private schools in developing countries that do not appear on government lists. He questions the legitimacy of international target setting that does not take account of the local context.

International target setting, devoid of the national politics that shape policy that is translated into action, are blind to differences between countries in goals and expectations, starting points, and capacity to implement needed reforms (Lewin, 2011:3).

These are fundamental questions for the FTI. The initiative was established to help countries to achieve the MDG target of universal primary education by 2015. The FTI model of delegated decision making to the country level was intended to allow the national government and its donor partners to make adjustments to their targets in order to avoid the perverse distortions which Lewin, King, Rose, Jansen and others highlight. The case studies found a very mixed picture of the extent to which this flexibility had actually been applied in practice and the recent developments in the FTI policy agenda described above seem to be taking the initiative in the direction of increased centralised prescription rather than otherwise.

In another CREATE monograph, Turrent (2009) reviews the particular challenges for the FTI in fragile states. She describes a number of attempts by the FTI partnership to engage with fragile states with mixed success. She concludes that there are some fundamental impediments to the FTI operating effectively in such circumstances:

... the current EFA-FTI partnership arrangement does not adequately address the problems posed by state fragility. Not only does the typical absence of a credible sector plan mean that fragile states are unlikely to be eligible for endorsement to receive financial resources, but donors are often unwilling to take the risk of engaging in these countries as 'trust gaps' are not addressed by the EFA-FTI compact. (Turrent, 2009:21)

As mentioned earlier, the evaluation provided a detailed analysis of the operation of the FTI and a rich source of primary data including nine full country case studies and an additional eight country desk analyses (Cambridge Education, 2010). The overall conclusion of the evaluation report was that 'FTI's aims were and remain important' and that 'FTI has made positive contributions.' towards the achievement of the global education goals (Cambridge Education, 2010:5). However the evaluation team felt that 'FTI's contributions have fallen short of its ambitions and of its reasonable expectations.' and that the FTI 'has remained a

weak partnership, with weak accountability, and has not delivered the ‘compact’ to which it refers.’ (Cambridge Education, 2010:10-1).

The evaluation reviews revealed widespread confusion about the objectives and operations of the FTI at the country level.

Country-level experience of the FTI has been diverse. Some countries that were invited to join the FTI in the initial round did not submit proposals: the reasons included confusion about the nature of the FTI, lack of in-country capacity to fulfil technical requirements, and some governments' judgment that they had little to gain by doing so (Cambridge Education, 2010:3).

This confusion was reflected in FTI's impact on the policy and planning process at the country level. Although, this was supposed to be a major part of the FTI's added value, the report concludes that most of the emphasis at the country level had been on the endorsement process with very little attention given to subsequent implementation of the plans or monitoring.

Contrary to the concerns raised by King and Rose (2005) the evaluation found that the Indicative Framework had ‘not been the central feature’ that was anticipated and its use was very inconsistent.

In several countries, the IF was interpreted as an instrument of conditionality; in others it was used – more in line with FTI guidelines – to inform dialogue; and in some it was not used at all. Its use as a framework for monitoring country performance has been very limited (King and Rose, 2005:7).

Finally, the evaluation found that the process at the country level had been largely led by donors. The participation of local stakeholders was found to be ‘very variable’ and that there was ‘much room for improvement’ in the involvement of civil society actors and local parliamentarians. Finance ministries and other government departments outside of education were insufficiently involved in the FTI processes with consequent lack of coordination across government and donor agencies alike.

The evaluation was received with considerable disappointment by the FTI partners especially the World Bank and several donors on the FTI Board.⁶ The FTI board launched a major reform programme to address some of the most serious issues raised by the evaluation. The outcome of these reforms were unclear at the time of this research report but there were signs that donor commitments to the programme were beginning to decline in 2010 in part as a response to the negative evaluation. Two of the main donors to the FTI Catalytic Fund – Spain and Netherlands – have indicated that they were scaling back their aid to education – including to FTI – in response to the financial crisis at home. The UK however repeated its commitment to provide at least the same amount of funds as in previous years and offered a ‘bonus’ if the FTI was successful in mobilising additional resources from other donors (FTI , 2010).

⁶ One donor representative described the evaluation's assessment of the FTI as ‘one of the worst I have ever seen’. Personal communication.

The most recent analysis of the FTI was written by the author as a background paper for the 2010 EFA Global Monitoring Report (Bermingham, 2009). Bermingham argued that the FTI had made several important and positive contributions to the planning and coordination processes at the local level. He also indicated that, based on the analysis of the FTI Secretariat there had been an increase in funding – both domestic and international – for education in most FTI countries, although the extent to which this could be attributed to the FTI endorsement was contested.

According to the FTI Annual Report, total aid for basic education in FTI countries (including funding from the FTI Catalytic Fund) rose to \$1,047 million in 2006. The first phase countries secured a doubling in aid commitments to basic education from 2000 to 2006 including large increases in bilateral aid to some of the poorest countries such as Burkina Faso (\$14.8M to \$59.3M), Niger (\$4.4M to \$13.2M) and Guyana (\$0.9M to \$6.9M) after their FTI accession. These increases are significantly higher than the global trend of commitments to basic education which were also on the rise during this period (Bermingham, 2009:7).

However, Bermingham agreed with the evaluation team's findings that overall the programme's impact had fallen far short of its expectations and its potential as a major global programme. He attributed this strongly to the negative impact on the partnership as a whole resulting from the poor disbursement performance of the FTI's main trust fund, the Catalytic Fund.

The most visible challenge has been a serious slow-down in disbursements from the Catalytic Fund since 2007 when the decision was taken by the World Bank to apply full IDA project procedures to all trust fund operations managed by the World Bank, including the FTI operations. There has since then been a significant slowdown in disbursement rates and some countries have had to wait up to two years for their first tranche of financing. As of April 2009, only \$44.2 million (or 8%) had been disbursed out of \$522 million allocated in 2007 (Bermingham, 2009:8).

The negative impact of these delays on the local planning and budget processes was confirmed by the responses from ministry officials in the case study countries as described in the following sections.

3. The FTI in Action: Two Case Studies in Ethiopia and Rwanda.

The case study countries were chosen because of the very different states of the education sector, their varying experiences with the FTI and their contrasting social and political contexts.

Ethiopia is the largest country in the FTI in terms of geographic area, overall population and number of primary aged children out of school. The population of around 82 million covers a vast country of over 1 million square kilometres (CIA, 2010). Ethiopia remains one of the poorest countries in Africa with GDP per capita averaging US\$800 in 2007 (World Bank, 2008). Primary school gross enrolment rates in 1999/2000 were less than 50% in much of the country and there were over six million out of school children. The influence of recent history is evident at many levels in the education system. The central government maintains a tight grip on policy and overall strategy while the responsibility for financing and implementation is decentralised to the regional and local councils. Ethiopia is one of the few countries that did not experience colonial rule (apart from a short period of Italian occupation in the 1930s) (Bahru, 2001) and therefore does not have a significant European legacy in its education system. It does however have to cope with complexity of very different cultural and linguistic influences across the various regions and peoples of the country.

Rwanda is a much smaller country with approximately ten million people living on just over twenty six thousand square kilometres - one of the highest population concentrations in Africa. Rwanda made remarkable progress in the late 90s in reconstructing the country after the devastation caused by the 1994 genocide. In the education sector, primary school gross enrolment rates in 2000 were estimated to be around 100% although there were large numbers of over-age children in primary schools and very high drop rates (Rwanda. Ministère de l'Éducation de la Science de la Technologie et de la Recherche Scientifique, 2003). As well as dealing with the aftermath of the genocide, Rwanda has also had to contend with lasting post colonial legacy from Germany, Belgium and (to a lesser extent) France. President Kagame's vision for Rwanda involves building the country into a technology hub that forms a bridge between Francophone and Anglophone Africa (Rwanda, 2002). His government has invested heavily in the education system to give youth the skills they will need to make this vision a reality.

The education sectors in each country have had very different development patterns over the past decade. Gross enrolment rates in Ethiopia rose rapidly to reach 98% in the school ending in 2008⁷. Net enrolment rates also rose from 36% to 78% over the same period and the number of children out of school fell from just over 6.4 million to around 2.7 million. Survival rates to Grade 5 of primary school however remained low at 47% and there were widespread concerns about the quality of education provision although test results remained remarkably stable throughout the period of expansion (Ethiopia, 2005). In contrast, the major increase in access in Rwanda occurred in the late 1990s and the country started the new millennium with 100% gross enrolment which then rose to 151% by 2008 as a result of continuing large numbers of over-age children in primary schools. Net enrolment rates in 2008 were estimated around 96% (with girls' enrolment slightly higher than boys') and Rwanda was on track to achieve UPE by its target date of 2010 and universal basic education (primary plus lower secondary) by 2015. Concerns over the quality of education were also prevalent in Rwanda particularly in connection with language difficulties of many children

⁷ All figures in this section are from UNESCO Global Monitoring Report for 2011 (UNESCO, 2011).

who could only speak Kinyarwanda and a continuing shortage of trained teachers (MINEDUC, 2006).

The evidence from the case studies confirms the general findings of the FTI evaluation that both countries had strategic planning processes in place and had made considerable progress in the education sector *prior to joining the FTI*. The main value added by the FTI appears to have been an element of increased rigour to the national planning process and eventually additional finance to support the implementation of those plans.

The final contrast between the two countries related to their involvement with the FTI. Ethiopia joined the FTI in 2002 as one of the first phase of countries. It was actively invited to join the partnership by Wolfensohn in order to ensure that there was at least one large population country in the initial group of beneficiary countries. However, Ethiopia was not initially eligible for financial support from the FTI Catalytic Fund and the responses to the research interviews revealed that the country largely disengaged from the FTI for the first few years after its launch. Rwanda was also invited to join the FTI at the initial stage but the government (with support from the local donor group) decided not to engage with the global initiative until they had established the national policy and planning processes. The local donor group in Rwanda was much smaller than in Ethiopia and the donor coordination mechanisms were much less well developed. The interviews and documentary data were analysed to explore whether this had a significant impact on the FTI interactions at the country level.

3.1 The FTI in Ethiopia

Ethiopia was one of the first phase of countries to join the FTI when it was launched in 2002. It was regarded as an important country for the FTI partnership with one of the largest populations of out of school children in Africa and one of the lowest per capita incomes.

Ethiopia was formally welcomed into the FTI in 2003 following the endorsement by the local donor group of the second education sector development plan (ESDP II) (FTI, 2004b). Ethiopia had a well established education sector planning process place dating back to 1994 - eight years before the FTI was launched – and was described in one World Bank report as a ‘prototype’ for the FTI (World Bank, 2004). It was not clear in the early years what value the FTI was adding to this ESDP process at the country level.

Ethiopia’s engagement with the FTI during the first few years was marked by considerable confusion at the country level about the exact meaning of ‘joining the FTI’. The initial expectation was that the FTI endorsement would lead to substantial additional financing. There was considerable disappointment at the country level when it became clear that Ethiopia would not be eligible for financing from the Catalytic Fund as it was not considered to be a ‘donor orphan’ country. As one interview respondent put it:

We were expecting the funds. We were then later told that we would not be eligible for funds because we were not a ‘donor orphan’ country. We just simply kept quiet. It took a long time for money to come (Interview E3⁸).

⁸ See Appendix A for list of interviewees.

Following this decision, Ethiopia did not have any further substantive engagement with the FTI until it submitted its application for a grant from the expanded Catalytic Fund in 2007.

In the intervening period, the government of Ethiopia proceeded with support from the local donor group with the implementation of ESDP II and, as noted above, made considerable progress towards the ambitious goals of increasing access to primary education. During this period the local donors increased their aid for the education sector through new education projects as well as general budget support to the federal government and sector budget support to the states (World Bank, 2009).

The evaluation concluded that the change in the rules of eligibility for Catalytic Funds was a major factor leading to the 'come back' of FTI in Ethiopia in 2007 (Dom, 2010:27). However, the application process did little to build local confidence in the FTI. The initial decision by the Catalytic Fund committee was to allocate less than half of the financing requested by the government because of concerns about some of the financial calculations in the application (FTI, 2007). This caused considerable disappointment as the government had already substantially reduced the request from the analysis of the financing gap in the ESDP. Ethiopia was told that they could apply for a further grant once they had addressed the concerns but it was unclear whether this was an automatic entitlement or whether it was conditional on the availability of funds. One senior official involved in the application process expressed his frustration at the unfairness (as he saw of it) of the treatment given to Ethiopia:

What shocked us is what was said to us by the Secretariat. They told us that there was a new formula and that the CF committee had come to the conclusion that the local development partners could do more. The CF Committee allocated only \$76million. I am not sure that anyone was against Ethiopia getting more. But at the meeting someone picked up an issue in the financial gap calculation. We had decided to minimise our capital investment to concentrate on quality investments. The CF committee saw that the government of Ethiopia investment was falling and questioned how that could be if we were seeking this big expansion at the same time ... I was embarrassed (Interview E7).

The evaluation concluded that the FTI had only limited impact on the local planning processes and at times had a detrimental effect due to lack of clarity and delays. The evaluation highlights the poor communication between the global level policy discussion and the dialogue at the country between government and donors.

Lack of clarity and/or of timeliness in communication seems to have been a major factor in the chain of misunderstandings between Ethiopian stakeholders (including both Government and the local donors) and the FTI partnership, which characterised the FTI process in Ethiopia until recently (Dom, 2010).

The evaluation also found that local stakeholders viewed the FTI primarily as a source of finance and many were frustrated and disappointed at the slow speed and the lack of transparency in the decision making process. The FTI's role in supporting policy and planning through the use of tools such as the indicative framework was much less evident at the country level. The evaluation also found no evidence of the FTI making a substantive contribution to efforts to improve the systems to collect better data or to build local capacity in the education sector.

On the positive side, the case study did find examples of several significant changes to the national planning processes which were made in response to demands from the FTI (or from the World Bank acting in the name of the FTI). These demands mostly related to requirements for additional analysis, more detailed plans and policy changes linked to the FTI grants.

In the early stages of Ethiopia's engagement with the FTI these changes were minimal. However, these requirements greatly increased in the second phase particularly during the preparation of the application for the Catalytic Fund. A full project appraisal with detailed spending and procurement plans had to be prepared to show how FTI financing would be used. This was a very significant change in the national planning process and it was regarded by some respondents as potentially undermining the sector wide planning and use of government financial systems which had been established under the ESDP (Interviews E3 and E4).

Several interviewees commented on the high expectations that had been raised by the FTI and then disappointed. They also noted the long delays in funding disbursement. Some of the interviewees ascribed this to World Bank 'bureaucracy':

USAID is bureaucratic but it is not as bad as the World Bank (Interview E3).

The final source of disruption noted by the local ministry officials was the delay in delivering the FTI finance which was affected by a decision in 2007 by the World Bank to review all of its trust fund operations – including the FTI – and bring them into line with standard IDA project procedures. This caused delays of up to two years in some countries (Bermingham, 2009).

The World Bank task manager described the intense pressure which he was under to prepare the project documentation for both the World Bank project and the FTI grant when he took over the country programme in January 2008.

I was starting to get worried ... [I] was under intense pressure from management and from the FTI Secretariat to deliver the GEQIP project and start disbursing quickly. The government were expecting the PAD [Project Appraisal Document] in January. This pressure got crazy after the FTI meeting in Tokyo in April 2008 (Interview E6).

He also explained that he himself was not entirely clear about the procedures that were required for the FTI grant as the World Bank had not yet finalised its internal guidance to task managers.

All I know was the IDA project preparation cycle – there was no clarity on the FTI process. I need to mobilise a team at short notice. I only had the standard IDA project preparation budget ... I basically wrote the PAD myself (Interview E6).

In the end, the project appraisal process was completed in 11 months instead of the typical 12 – 18 months project preparation period for World Bank operations. But this still meant a delay of nineteen months for from the time of the allocation of FTI funds in May 2007 to the receipt of the first tranche in January 2009.

The DFID education adviser indicated that he thought his main task during this period was ‘managing expectations’ and trying to bring a group of donors together into a pooled fund arrangement with the World Bank and FTI in support of the GEQIP project. DFID drew heavily on the World Bank for their project documentation and approved an additional grant in support of GEQIP from their bilateral donor fund for education. The Netherlands, Italy and Finland also agreed to support a pooled fund to support the GEQIP interventions (E5 Interview Notes). On the positive side, the FTI had thus helped to reduce the transaction costs to the government by aligning the support of a number of donors into a single pooled fund to support the GEQIP project. However, it did mean that all of their funds would be subject to World Bank procurement and financial management procedures.

In summary, the experience of the FTI at the country level in Ethiopia, at least as seen from the perspective of senior government officials, was marked by confusion, disappointment and frustration. Ultimately, the government did receive substantial additional financing to support its education plans but this came at the cost of considerable disruption to the national planning process and could certainly not be described as a model of the aid effectiveness principles in action.

3.2 The FTI in Rwanda

Rwanda was also included in the first phase of countries that were invited to join the FTI in 2004. However, the government decided not to join at that stage as there was still considerable uncertainty about the role of the FTI. There was also a desire from the local donor group to protect the coordination mechanisms at the country level which were still new and regarded as fragile (Interview R12).

Rwanda’s first substantive engagement with the FTI took place three years in 2006 when the minister of education wrote to the FTI Secretariat indicating Rwanda’s intention to seek FTI endorsement for the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2006 – 2010. As part of the follow up to this letter, Rwanda completed an independent appraisal of the ESSP and formally joined the FTI partnership in September 2006. At the same time, Rwanda submitted a request for assistance from the FTI partners to mobilise an additional US\$233 million (including US\$61 million from the Catalytic Fund) over the next four years to fill the financing gap identified in the ESSP (Chiche, 2010:17).

The evaluation case study on Rwanda concluded that FTI’s support for Rwanda had been relevant to the country’s needs and helped to secure substantial additional financing (Chiche, 2010). The government used these funds to employ additional contract teachers; deliver a substantial increase to school capitation grants; construct new schools; and purchase additional books and learning materials (Chiche, 2010:47). The evaluation also found that the FTI helped to strengthen local donor coordination mechanisms, although the report notes that these were established before Rwanda joined the FTI and that, at least in the early stages, the FTI also caused disruption to the national processes by imposing additional reporting requirements and requiring derogations from the standard government financial management systems. The evaluation concluded that the contribution of the FTI to the policy dialogue had been limited although the appraisal process had helped to advance the debate on issues such as teacher training and the balance of spending between higher education and basic education which the local donors had raised on previous occasions with the government.

The most serious criticisms of the FTI operations in Rwanda related to the unpredictability and delays in the delivery of the Catalytic Fund after it had been allocated.

The FTI CF support in particular has contributed negatively through (i) length of the process to arrive at endorsement; (ii) timing of endorsement in 2006, timing of signature of grant agreement in 2007 and 2008, and timing of endorsement in 2009 out of line with budget cycle – leading to the need for revised budget laws; and (iii) disbursement of the 2007 and 2008 support late in the fiscal year, disbursement of the second 2007 tranche in 2008, leading to disruptions in cash management by MINECOFIN and undue pressure on MINEDUC budget execution late in the year. (Chiche, 2010:42).

The initial delay was caused by the requirement to complete an additional ten year financing plan. The evaluation found that national stakeholders believed that this was a condition of the FTI (Chiche, 2010:26). This was confirmed by several respondents for the country case study interviews for this research project. There was in fact no such requirement from the FTI and Rwanda was the only country to complete a ten year financing plan in this way. It is possible that this discussion may have been influenced by the UK government which was asking other African countries to prepare ten year education plans which were linked to the UK's announcements of ten year commitments to education (Birmingham, 2006). Whatever the cause of the misunderstanding, the consequence for Rwanda was considerable additional work and significant delays that had a serious impact on the government's financial planning. The government was forced to take on higher levels of borrowing in order to fill the gap left by the delayed FTI funds which in 2008 represented 12% of the total education sector budget.

These delays were compounded by a decision by the Catalytic Fund Committee not to meet in full the financing needs identified at the country level (Chiche, 2010:25). The government of Rwanda's initial request was based on the calculation of the funds available from the domestic budget and the commitments from the local donor group for the period 2006 - 2010. The CF application indicated that there was likely to be a decline in aid for basic education in the later years of the plan as several donors were unable to commit beyond one or two years. The FTI Catalytic Fund Committee took this as a sign of falling support for education and was anxious to avoid the FTI replacing contributions from locally represented donors. They therefore decided to allocate US\$44 million instead of US\$61 million with the specific intention of encouraging the local donor group to increase its support (FTI, 2006). This had the perverse effect of penalising the recipient country twice for the failure of donors to provide long term financing. As a result, the government was forced to delay its plans to expand access to nine years basic education.

The final cause of delay in the disbursement of the FTI funds was a protracted discussion about the funding modality that should be used to deliver the finances. The FTI guidelines indicated that the Catalytic Fund should be delivered through the 'most aligned modality' in order to minimise additional transaction costs for the recipient country and that budget support should be used wherever country systems are judged to be sufficiently reliable (FTI, 2008). The education sector in Rwanda had already largely moved from project to sector budget support in the first half of the 2000s and most donors were delivering their support through sector budget support under the Joint Education Sector Support (JESS) agreement (Chiche, 2009).

The expectation was that the Catalytic Fund finances would be delivered through the JESS mechanism. This request was approved by Catalytic Fund Committee meeting as being consistent with FTI policies on promoting harmonisation and alignment. However, when it came to the negotiations with the World Bank it became apparent that the Bank did not have a mechanism to deliver finances through sector budget support. The World Bank instead wanted to use a standard investment project operation with separate reporting and independent audit requirements (Interview R1). After considerable discussion and a further six month delay, an agreement was reached with the World Bank to channel the FTI funds through a flexible investment project operation, although it was still not using the existing budget support channels (Chiche, 2010:39).

The evaluation report notes that over the period of the implementation of the initial FTI grant further efforts were made to streamline the delivery mechanisms. This was ascribed to government leadership, effective support from the local donor group (especially DFID) and flexibility on the part of the local World Bank representative rather than to the FTI itself.

Overall, the main drivers behind the evolution towards enhanced coordination and aid effectiveness have been GOR's strong ownership and focus on ensuring aid is aligned with its own priorities and processes ... strong planning processes and improved outcomes at sector level; the signature of the JESS and Partnership Principles (Chiche, 2010:40).

In 2010, Rwanda received approval for a further grant from the Catalytic Fund and agreed that DFID should be the supervising entity for the funds rather than the World Bank (FTI , 2010). The reasons for this change stated by several interview respondents were a wish to avoid the high additional transaction costs involved in working with the World Bank and a belief that DFID would be more of a 'trusted partner' (Interviews R1 and R13).

The responses to the interviews in the case study confirmed many of the findings of the evaluation. Several respondents commented on the complexity of the interaction between national planning and the global interventions from FTI and the World Bank. Several also described their confusion around the relationships between national processes and interventions such as the Long Term Strategic Financing Framework, the FTI appraisal and the external quality review which were perceived as FTI requirements. There were several examples of interventions – in most cases by the World Bank – which disrupted local planning processes and sought to influence national policy. But on the whole Rwanda seems to have been quite successful in pushing back against most of these interventions and in protecting national processes and government policy priorities. Several respondents also indicated that they felt in some instances the global interventions provided an incentive to increase the rigour of national plans and to tackle difficult policy issues.

Most of the respondents who were involved in the early stages of Rwanda's interactions with the FTI commented on the lack of clarity about the requirements to join the partnership. They also said that it was not clear what benefits the FTI would bring to Rwanda as it was not eligible for additional financing in the early stages. Finally they recalled a concern that engaging with the FTI would disrupt the country planning processes which were still in a fragile state.

... there was at that time no guarantee that FTI would actually bring any financial or other benefit to Rwanda ... secondly the government had actually gone a very, very

long way towards in writing its own such plan. It was very, very close to being finalised. And the FTI process actually threatened to suggest that they start again and do something slightly different (Interview R12 – Former DFID Senior Education Adviser in Rwanda).

The World Bank Task Team Leader for Rwanda gave a different account of the reasons for the delay in applying for FTI endorsement. In her view, the World Bank was in negotiations with the government over the policy decision to introduce fee free primary education and the Bank was reluctant to accept the costings proposed in the EFA Action Plan. Her recollection was that the government was very keen to make an application to the FTI based on this plan (Interview R11).

I recall very distinctly that the minister of education at the time was not terribly disposed to think about a delay in applying for the EFA [FTI] funding because you know, they really needed the money, he felt. And he felt that having to work on the strategic plan again was going to do double work, and you know, it was a delicate discussion because he had said well, you know, the first plan was good enough for UNESCO, and the EFA worked with them, so why does the bank have to request us to have to do something in addition? But we worked it through, and I think the Minister ultimately realised that it would be a good idea to work with the PRSC [Poverty Reduction Strategy Credit] team, because that was then kind of tightening the relationship with the Ministry of Finance. And it might help the education sector in the longer run (R11 – World Bank former Task Team Leader for Rwanda).

The other area of considerable confusion reported by the interviewees was the relationship between the various FTI planning processes. Even the actors that were closely involved in the preparation of the different documents were not always clear on the purpose nor their connection to other national planning exercises. In particular, there was a tension perceived by many respondents between the government led education sector planning and national budget processes and the World Bank Country Status Reports and the Long Term Strategic Financing Frameworks. Several respondents commented on the value of the increased rigour required for these external reports. But they undoubtedly created substantial additional transaction costs for the government and, on occasion, threatened to de-rail the FTI application process altogether. One respondent commented on the frustration at repeated requests for new information from the World Bank during the finalisation of the FTI grant agreement.

I think that they [Government of Rwanda] were irritated by many of the demands at the meetings and they began to lose a certain degree of confidence, I think in the Bank's type of engagement but yet they know that politically they still had to keep on good terms with the bank 'cause obviously they got pressure from the Minister of Finance not to rock the boat too much (Interview R1 – DFID Senior Education Adviser).

Several respondents believed that this was a key factor in the decision by the government to request that the most recent phase of support from the FTI Catalytic Fund should be supervised by DFID rather than the World Bank. This request was approved by the FTI Catalytic Fund Committee in September 2010 (FTI , 2010).

The interview respondents highlighted several examples of policy issues where the government and the local donor group had pushed back against interventions from the global level. One key example was over the choice of financing instrument to deliver the Catalytic Fund. The initial proposal from the World Bank was to deliver this support through a conventional investment project, which would require annual procurement plans with specific expenditure reports on FTI funds and a separate independent audit in line with standard World Bank procedures. The Director of Planning at the time recalled the negative reaction from the government to this proposal:

The one alternative was that there should be sort of a project administered by World Bank ... We said, "We are going back because we are talking of trying to get away of this, then their own projects," ... the transaction costs we've been experiencing with these different projects is enormous, and we don't want to go back to this thing. So the logic was to support the whole sector, and also because one of ... the reasons [for using budget support] is that the systems in the government [were good] enough for the use of the money through sector budget support ... (Interview R10 – former Director of Planning, MINEDUC, Rwanda).

Several interview respondents described the intensive negotiations that ensued to reach an agreement with the World Bank on a mechanism to deliver the FTI funds. In the end, a compromise was reached whereby the FTI funds would be channelled through a World Bank investment project but with a broad range of expenditures permitted. Audits for the fund would be carried out by the government auditor general in line with the agreement reached with other donors. The DFID senior education adviser at the time describes the determination of the local donor group not to allow a new project to be created and she highlights the importance of the supportive collaboration from the individual World Bank task manager – including sometimes challenging her own colleagues.

S [World Bank Task Manager] [was] ... a very open and easy person to work with, and that was really important ... she was willing to bash down doors and make herself unpopular within the Bank in order to try to push this solution through. And it was all very touch and go for a long time. ... we gave her a lot of information about the way the modality was working. We all spent a lot of time hassling with lawyers. And when she didn't get anywhere, I would hassle them directly. ... we worked together on who [to talk to], she would know which buttons to push. And if she wasn't ... getting them through, she would ask me to get them (Interview R12 – DFID – former senior education adviser for Rwanda).

This is a good example of individuals working across the boundaries of their own organisations to support the country in the most effective way even if this appears to run contrary to their own interests. Castells (2000) identifies this as a key feature of networked organisations when they are working well and it is an important element of the original design of the FTI at the global level (Birmingham, 2009).

Unfortunately, Rwanda was a rare instance of individuals working in this way. More often than not, the bureaucratic interests of the organisation prevailed. Even in the case of Rwanda, the World Bank refused to continue with this flexible approach for the second phase of CF support and insisted that the funds should be delivered either through a standard investment project or through a full budget support programme with additional policy requirements. This

was another factor in the decision by the government to propose that DFID should take over the role of supervising FTI funds in Rwanda (Interview R1)

A final theme that runs through many of the interview responses is the importance that is placed on building trust at the national level between the government, donors and other development partners. Several government senior officials praised the work of the local representatives of DFID, UNICEF and the World Bank task manager. The feeling on the government side was that the local donors were willing to work with them to help them solve problems as they arose. In many instances, donor officials played a significant part in drafting papers for the FTI application and even gave the presentation to the FTI Catalytic Fund Committee that secured the country's second phase of support (Interview R1). The Permanent Secretary (PS) felt that this close collaboration was essential to overcome differences of views and deal with the complexities of the international policy dialogue;

[The development partners] ... help you to understand where your gaps are, what the requirements are, and what you really need to do to make FTI requirements. And so it has led to really capacity development in a very good sense (Interview R3 – Rwanda MINEDUC Permanent Secretary).

The PS also stated that she welcomed the challenge from external partners because it helped the government to move ahead and to see where it needed to do better in comparison to other countries. But she thought that external feedback must take account of the local context and, in her view, the local donor group played a crucial mediating role in making this happen. In her view, Rwanda had demonstrated that the principles of FTI of supporting local ownership could be achieved in practice.

Interviewer: The theory behind FTI was that the global process should support the local process and minimise the disruption and additional transaction costs. Has that been your experience?

Interviewee: Well, Rwanda is unique, and I think that has been achieved. And I would largely say I would like to attribute it to the country donors who translate the global initiative onto the ground.

R3 - Rwanda MINEDUC Perm Sec.

4. ‘Talking Back in the Vernacular’ – the Dynamics of Power within the FTI

The case studies looked for examples of effective resistance from the country level to attempts by FTI at the global level to impose policies from the outside – what Chabbott memorably termed ‘talking back in the vernacular’ (Chabbott, 1998).

There were some noteworthy examples in the case studies of national voices pushing back successfully against global policies and procedures. The most striking example was Rwanda’s insistence on the choice of modality for delivering the FTI funds (Interview R1). This decision was initially strongly opposed by the World Bank; however, the local ministry of education – with support from DFID – was ultimately successful in persuading the FTI to pass the supervision of the funds to DFID as a ‘more trusted partner’ that was willing to deliver the support through the government budget (Interview R13). A second important example was Ethiopia’s insistence on obtaining the full grant from the FTI in spite of the initial decision by the FTI Catalytic Fund Committee to reduce their allocation (Interview E7). The government corrected a misunderstanding that there had been a shortfall in local donor financing and re-stated their case increased investment in quality related inputs. Ethiopia was ultimately successful in obtaining the full amount of their request, again with support from the local donor group.

There was also evidence in the interviews of power imbalances in the FTI and several examples of attempts by the global members of the FTI partnership to impose decisions that were contrary to the expressed priorities of the national actors. The principal tools used to exercise this power were the FTI appraisal process and the negotiations around the delivery of financial support. In both case study countries the FTI Indicative Framework was used in an attempt to impose policy changes on the government. In the case of Ethiopia, this included measures to strengthen the focus on learning outcomes – a key policy priority for the World Bank at the time. In the case of Rwanda, the negotiations around the FTI grant agreement were used to press the government to shift its investment priorities away from higher education towards primary and basic education. In both cases, the principal agent at the country level was the World Bank. The limited capacity of the FTI Secretariat meant that it had to rely heavily on the World Bank to communicate on its behalf at the country level. The evidence from the case studies confirms the findings of the evaluation that this led to considerable inconsistency at the country level about FTI policies and procedures. In both case study countries there is evidence that the World Bank used their position as the manager of the FTI funds as well as an investor in the education sector in their own right to influence policy. The control of information and the final decision over financing mechanisms were also important levers used by the World Bank on more than one occasion to influence key decision in the sector dialogue.

This hegemonic use of power by the largest development organisation is not surprising nor is it unique to the FTI. What is interesting in the research findings is that on more than one occasion the national actors were successful in resisting this imposition of external policy priorities. The success of this ‘talking back in the vernacular’ was due largely to the support the government received from sympathetic donor representatives rather than the systematic application of FTI principles of empowering national governments.

Rwanda provided the most convincing examples of resistance to external attempts to impose inappropriate policies. For example, Rwanda insisted on proceeding with its decision to expand basic education to nine years and maintaining its investment in higher education as a

key component of the national development strategy. The government came under intense pressure to change these policies from the World Bank including attempts to use FTI finances to leverage its influence. However, the government - with support from its local donor partners - managed to secure the FTI finances without acceding to the external policy demands. In Ethiopia, the most striking resistance to global policy pressures was the insistence by the government on securing the full amount of its request from the Catalytic Fund including using its position on the FTI board to challenge donors' decision to reduce their allocation.

In both case studies, the active support of sympathetic donor representatives at the country level was decisive in empowering local actors. Interview respondents pointed to several examples where donor colleagues had acted in the interests of the collective education group rather than strictly following the policies and procedures of their own organisation. This behaviour is consistent with the features of a networked organisation (Castells, 2000) in which the social and professional interaction of actors from different agencies leads to a sense of collegiality that crosses organisational boundaries. The shared objectives of country level actors were more focused on the success of the education system whereas the global actors focused on the success of the FTI itself.

Further research would be needed in other FTI countries to ascertain whether the experiences of Rwanda and Ethiopia were typical of the FTI partnership as a whole. The evaluation indicated that the FTI added most value in those countries where the education planning systems were weak and there was little or no donor harmonisation in place. These were largely Francophone West African countries that did not have large local donor groups and were, on the whole, still using project aid to support the education sector. In these cases, the FTI may have had a greater impact because the local systems were starting from a lower base.

The dominant theme from the country case studies – which matched the findings from the evaluation - is that the early stages of the interaction between the FTI and the country level policy and planning processes were marked by considerable confusion and frustration.

The interactions were shaped by what Hajer and Wagenaar describe as 'radical uncertainty' and 'hyper complexity' (Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003). In the early years, the FTI global partnership failed to communicate the objectives of the initiative to the country level. Both countries were initially expecting to receive substantial additional finance from the FTI. There was disappointment at the failure of the FTI to deliver on these high expectations. This was followed, in the case of Ethiopia, by an effective withdrawal from engagement with the FTI until it was clear what value it would bring to the national process. It is also apparent from the interview data that the most important factor which encouraged the countries to return to the FTI was the renewed possibility of obtaining new funds following the decision in 2006 to expand access to the Catalytic Fund (Interviews R1 and E5). Despite the rhetoric in global meetings about the importance of the local donors scaling up their support, numerous respondents indicated that the FTI was not an important factor making this happen at the country level.

Despite repeated global policy statements by the FTI partnership about the importance of country level processes and national ownership, the FTI interventions at the country level appear on balance to have been more disruptive than supportive of these processes. There were numerous examples of the FTI failing to take account of the national context and

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imposing new requirements for additional procedures that were not aligned with national policies or plans. In some cases these requirements were regarded as providing a positive challenge that improved the quality of the national plans. But this relied heavily on the interpretation and mediation of FTI requirements by members of the local donor group.

5. Conclusion

In many ways, the FTI was a creature of its time. The initiative was designed and launched at the same time as the Global Fund to Fight Aids, TB and Malaria (GFATM). However, despite persistent advocacy by international NGOs and one or two leading government advisers, the FTI did not succeed in establishing itself as an equivalent global fund for the education sector (Sperling, 2009).

Instead, the FTI followed the less ambitious paths carved out by the aid effectiveness consensus of the last decade which culminated in the Accra Agenda for Action (OECD DAC, 2009). The FTI emphasised the importance of donor harmonisation and alignment over the establishment of a large fund. The FTI has been praised for its promotion of these aid effectiveness principles although, as this research project has shown, its own practice on the ground was not always fully in line with these principles. As a consequence, the FTI Catalytic Fund has provided a significant but still relatively modest additional finances - at its peak the fund was disbursing US\$250 million per year which is less than 10% of total aid for basic education (FTI, 2010b).

The future for the FTI is unclear. Commitments to the FTI Fund (now re-named the Education for All Fund) fell steeply in 2009 and 2010. This was in part a reaction to the evaluation and in part due to wider impact of the global financial crisis resulting in several donors cutting their overall aid budgets. The Netherlands and Spain (two of the FTI's largest donors) were forced to cut their aid budgets in order to balance their budgets and the FTI suffered along with several other global and national programmes (FTI, 2010a). The UK has restated its committed to support the FTI but it has made its increased commitment conditional on securing increased support from other donors (DFID, 2011). The ambitious resource mobilisation effort in early 2011 has so far failed to secure substantial new commitments although there were some encouraging announcements by Australia to scale up its support for education.

The evidence from the case studies indicates that the national education sector policy and planning processes are robust and likely to survive whatever changes may occur within the FTI. It is possible that the FTI as a global initiative may diminish in importance over the next few years as other sources of finance become more significant. If this is the case, future research will be able to consider whether the FTI should be seen as an important global intervention that succeeded in helping countries make faster progress towards the MDG education goals or whether it proves to have been a rather expensive distraction from the long term development of education sectors in developing countries.

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*The Interactions Between Global Education Initiatives and National Education Policy and Planning Processes:
A Comparative Case Study of the Education For All Fast Track Initiative in Rwanda and Ethiopia*

Appendix A: Interviews

Interview Reference	Organisation
Ethiopia	
E1	Amhara Regional Education Bureau. Manager: Planning and Resource Mobilisation
E2	Ethiopian Muslim Development Association. Senior Project Officer
E3	UNICEF. Education Specialist (formerly Head of Planning in MoE)
E4	USAID. Deputy Office Chief, Basic Education Services. (formerly Chair of Planning Panel in MoE).
E5	DFID Senior Education Adviser and local lead donor
E6	World Bank Senior Economist and Task Team Leader for World Bank GEQIP project.
E7	Federal Ministry of Education Head of Planning (recently retired).
Rwanda	
R 1	DFID - senior education adviser in Rwanda
R 2	Rwanda Ministry of Education – director of planning
R 3	Rwanda Ministry of Education PS
R4	Government Local Consultant
R 5	Rwanda Ministry of Education – finance officer
R 6	ODI fellow in MINEDUC
R 7	UNICEF and DFID consultant
R8	SNV and VSO
R 9	CfBT Consultant
R 10	MINEDUC - Former Director Planning
R11	World Bank – former task team leader
R 12	DFID – former senior education adviser in Rwanda
R 13	Minister and Permanent Secretary ⁹

⁹ This was a discussion over lunch. Researcher prepared notes immediately after the discussion.



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Report summary:

The Education for All Fast Track Initiative (FTI) was launched by the World Bank in 2002 as a global initiative to help low income countries accelerate progress towards the MDG target of universal primary education by 2015. Over the past decade, the FTI has expanded to become one of the most important initiatives to emerge out of the Dakar World Education Forum. The FTI provides around two hundred million US dollars per year to over forty developing countries and receives support from most of the major bilateral donors and multilateral agencies working in the education sector. As well as providing additional finance, the FTI was also designed to promote the principles of aid effectiveness to increase the impact of all financial support to the education sector. This monograph provides evidence on the operations of the FTI by drawing on the findings of a comparative country case study of the FTI in Rwanda and Ethiopia. The case study was conducted in 2009 and 2010 as part of a doctoral research project for the Institute of Education at the University of London. The research collected the views of leading national stakeholders and local representatives of donor organisations that were involved in the application to join the FTI partnership and the early implementation of the education sector programmes. The case studies found that the FTI had made important contributions to the education sector but that the global initiative had also caused serious disruption to the national planning processes particularly in the early stages. The case studies are intended to make a contribution to the research gap identified by Professor Angela Little in an earlier CREATE monograph on the impact of global education initiatives on national policy processes.

Author notes:

Desmond is currently the Director of the Education Global Initiative for Save the Children and a consultant adviser to Results for Development and the MasterCard Foundation. Desmond was formerly the Head of the Education for All–Fast Track Initiative (FTI) Secretariat at the World Bank and prior to that was the Head of the Education Profession in the UK government's Department for International Development (DFID). In 2005, Desmond advised the UK Prime Minister's office on the commitment to expand the UK's education aid program to £10 billion over ten years and from 2006 – 8 he helped to expand the FTI to over 40 countries and secured donor commitments of over US\$1.2 billion. Desmond has written widely on the international aid architecture for education and the case for scaling up aid for education. He has recently published a paper (jointly with Nicholas Burnett) on innovative financing for education for the Soros Foundation Open Society Institute. He is currently working on the development of the Ed Venture Fund – an innovative social venture capital approach to financing education programs in developing countries. Desmond was a member of the UNESCO International Advisory Panel on Education For All and a board member of the Commonwealth of Learning based in Vancouver. He has also been a member of the World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council for Education since 2008. Desmond has an honours degree in English Language and Literature from St John's College Oxford; an MA in Education from the London Institute of Education, an M Sc in Global Development Management from the UK Open University and is currently completing a doctorate in international education policy at the London Institute of Education.

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