



# **GLOBAL OBLIGATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION, REGULATION AND GLOBAL ORGANISATIONS**

**Amy North – Institute of Education, University of  
London**

# SETTING THE SCENE

- Increased prominence of Gender equality in education in global policy
- The Dakar Framework for Action on Education For All (EFA)
- The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – goals 2 and 3 concern with gender equality and education:
  - **Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education,** *ensuring that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling*
  - **Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women,** *eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005 and at all levels of education by 2015*



# THE “GLOBAL” RESEARCH

- Part of the Gender, Education and Global Poverty Reduction Initiatives Project
- Global Research component – avoiding the “neo-colonial gaze”
- Research in Civil Society Organisations (INGOs), Bi-lateral donors, UN agencies
- 10 in-depth interviews conducted to date



# VIEWS OF THE MDGS: AS DESIRABLE GOALS

“in education I haven’t really ever found it problematic. its pretty clear, it’s a desirable goal, its what we all want”



# VIEWS OF THE MDGS: AS LEVERAGE/LEGITIMATION

“For me... they are useful because... forms a framework that can push us. It can help us engage with government, because governments have agendas they wish to meet... It can help us engage with partners on a more local level, we have a mandate. So I think, in terms of our relationship, in terms of advocacy whether internal or external, they are very useful”



# VIEWS OF THE MDGS: AS LEVERAGE/LEGITIMATION

“because gender is there (in the MDGs) and quite strong - that’s where it really comes into the MDGs, in education - it has necessitated it being monitored at country level, in very quantitative ways, but it is there. And I think without that it might drop off.”

“I think they’ve been incredibly useful... Actually the difference between the MDGs and the EFA goals is interesting. The MDGs are fewer in number, they’re prioritized and they are easier to measure. And I think that as well as the fact that they are nested in a broader development agenda has been really important in galvanizing this sort of international support”



## VIEWS OF THE MDGS: AS CONSTRAINT

“MDG3 as you know relates to gender equality and women’s empowerment but it has a target related to gender parity in primary, secondary and eventually all levels of schooling. And therein lies the rub in terms of some of the challenges that we have seen with regard to gender because in fact a number of countries and a number of actors have chosen to interpret the MDG3 target in a very narrow fashion”



# VIEWS OF THE MDGS: AS CONSTRAINT

“what is bad is that its defining gender in an incredibly narrow way as just about enrolment. It’s even defining education in an incredibly narrow way. And I think history may judge us to have been a little naïve on all of this stuff, that we put the political imperative above the technical common sense

“We should have perhaps taken more of a clear separation between the political messages and then the actual implementation on the ground”



# VIEWS OF THE MDGS: AS CONSTRAINT

“The MDGs narrowly focuses on this sort of parity question which is quite limiting and leads to quite sort of instrumentalist interventions rather than things that are committed to a transformation”



# MDGS AS A REGULATORY FRAMEWORK?

- Fragility of reliance on the MDG framework to promote a gender agenda
- Difficulties of institutionalising gender
- Moving beyond numbers?

