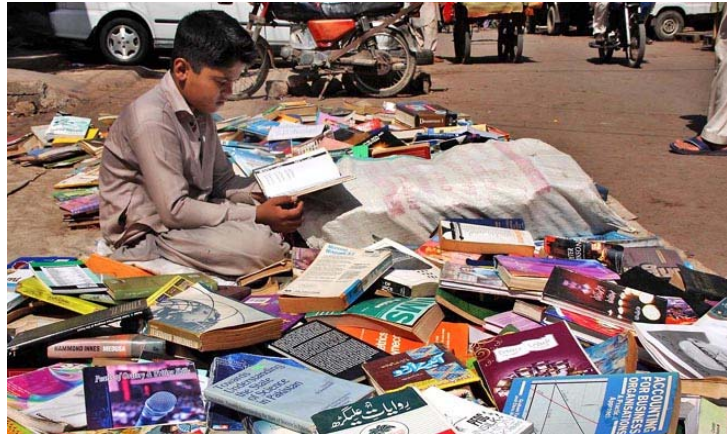


Some 264 million children out of schools globally: reveals UNESCO report

ISLAMABAD: There are 264 million children and youth out of school and 100 million young people globally currently unable to read.

It was disclosed in a GEM report “Accountability in education: meeting our commitments” launched jointly under the auspices of United Nation

Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Islamabad, in collaboration with I-SAPS (Institute of Social and Policy Sciences).



The report looks at the different ways people and institutions should be held accountable for reaching the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on education. Ms. Vibeke Jensen, UNESCO representative to Pakistan and Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman, Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training officially launched the report. A wide range of representatives from government, development partner agencies, civil society, academia, and media attended the event.

The report stresses that accountability is indispensable in achieving the global education goal. It describes accountability in terms of how teachers teach, students learn, governments act, private sector behaves and donors respond. It warns that disproportionate blame on any one actor for systemic educational problems can have serious negative side effects, widening inequality and damaging learning.

The Report cites an accountability vacuum with donors not delivering on their aid commitments for those in need. The share of aid to education has fallen for six years in a row. At the same time, donors increasingly demand that in exchange for aid, countries achieve results that sometimes divert energy away from systemic improvements in the education system.

It highlights that “No approach to accountability will be successful without a strong enabling environment that provides actors with adequate resources, capacity, motivation and information to fulfil their responsibilities”.

It calls on governments to design accountability for schools and teachers that is supportive and avoid punitive mechanisms, especially those based on narrow performance measures, allow for democratic participation, respect media freedom to scrutinize education and set up independent institutions to handle complaints.

It also urged to develop credible and efficient regulations with associated sanctions for all education providers, public and private, that ensure non-discrimination and the quality of education, to make the right to education justiciable, which is not the case in 45% of countries.

During the presentation of the key findings of the report, Ms. Vibeke Jensen highlighted that “the ambitious education outcomes, such as those in SDG 4, rely on multiple actors from governments right down to students fulfilling often shared responsibilities. But while responsibilities are shared, accountability is not: it is connected to single actors, who are held to account for their individual or institutional responsibilities.”

She also stressed that “accountability starts with governments as they are ultimately the primary duty bearers of the right to education. “

In his keynote speech, Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman, Federal Minister for Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training emphasized that the 2017 GEM Report looks at the topic – accountability in education which is very relevant and pertinent to Pakistan. He said that “democracy is the best accountability where you listen to people and get feed-back. He also mentioned that “financial allocation on education in Pakistan has increased and because of that more out of school children are now in schools. Pakistan has already adopted SDG-4 and has converted it into our national development goals where education is our first priority and we are fully committed towards it.”

The launch was followed by a panel discussion facilitated by Dr Salman Humayun, Executive Director of I-SAPS to discuss the education accountability issues in Pakistan especially from the provincial perspective on accountability.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Jamila Razzaq who has also co-authored a national case study said “A well performing education system in Pakistan can only be built by creating enabling political, social and legislative conditions. This system has to perform well for all learners in the country- whether living in urban centres, rural areas, mountainous regions or remote deserts. This tall order demands not only an efficient and effective accountability system but also a sense of responsibility shared by all stakeholders.”

Source: http://www.onlinenews.com.pk/index.php?page=newsdetail&news_id=10308#