



YES Campaign Newsletter

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A Monthly Newsletter Devoted To
Highlighting Critical Concerns:

This Month's Theme

GLOBAL
CAMPAIGN FOR
EDUCATION

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Background Info

Education is development. It creates choices and opportunities for people, reduces the twin burdens of poverty and diseases, and gives a stronger voice in society. For nations it creates a dynamic workforce and well-informed citizens able to compete and cooperate globally – opening doors to economic and social prosperity.

The 1990 Conference on Education for All pledged to achieve universal primary education by 2000. But in 2000, 115 million school-age children were still not in school, 56 percent of them girls and 94 percent were in developing countries – mostly in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. The Millennium Development Goals set a more realistic, but still difficult, deadline of 2015 when all children everywhere should be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

Target

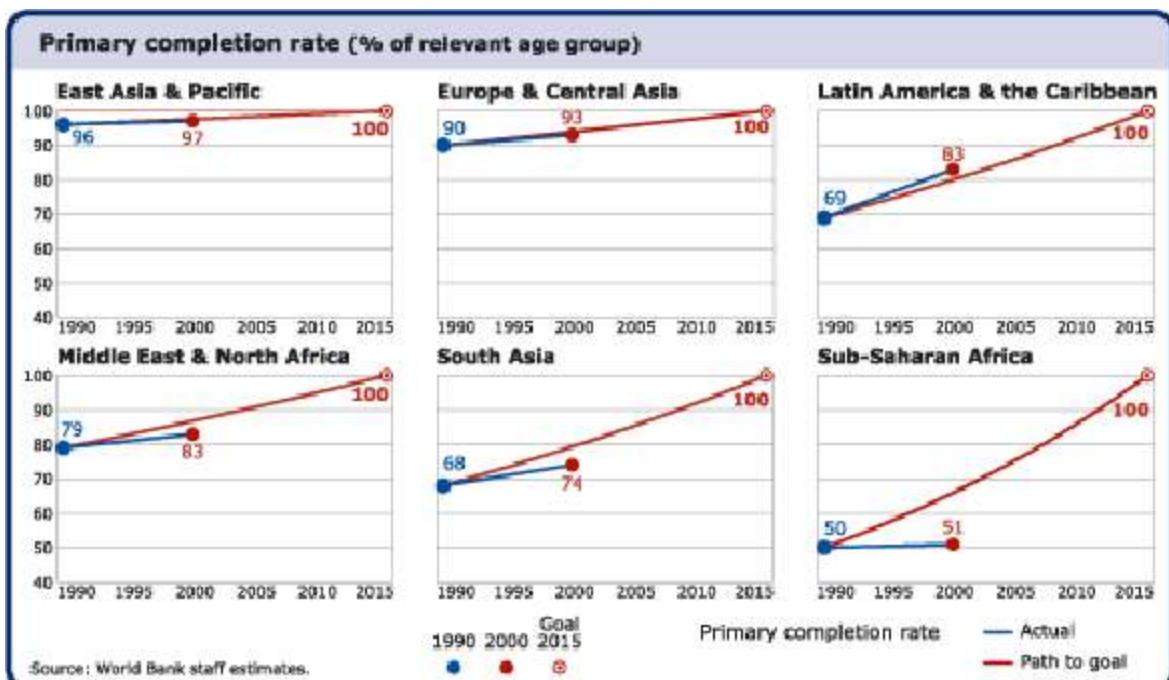
Target 3 Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

Reading, Writing, and Retention

To reach the education goal, countries must first enroll all school-age children.

Then they must keep them in school. While the majority of developing countries have already built sufficient schools to educate their primary school-age children, only about a quarter of these countries retain all the children through primary graduation

According to a World Bank study, only 37 of 155 developing countries analyzed have achieved universal primary completion. Based on trends in the 1990s, another 32 are likely to achieve that goal. But 70 countries risk not reaching the goal unless progress is accelerated. In several of them completion rates have stagnated or even fallen in recent years.



Three regions – East Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean – are on track to achieve the goal. But three others, with 150 million primary-school-age children, are in danger of falling short. Sub-Saharan Africa lags farthest behind, with little progress since 1990. South Asia is the other region with chronically low enrollment and completion rates.

Major Challenges



Worldwide, an estimated 104 million children are not enrolled in primary school.

This means that less than one in three – or about 14 per cent - of the world's children are not getting a basic education.

About two-thirds of them are girls.

How big a problem?

Almost all of the out-of-school children live in developing countries, and most (73 per cent) live in sub-Saharan Africa (46 million) and in South and West Asia (44 million). These are the poorest regions, with a large proportion of the population living on less than US\$ 1 per day, and the most heavily indebted countries. Some 1.8 million out-of-school children live in industrialized countries. And even if children do attend school, in the hardest hit regions fewer than three out of four reach Grade 5.

Some progress...

Despite many obstacles, progress is being made. Overall, the number of out-of-school children fell by around 4 per cent over the decade 1990-2000, and total worldwide enrolment in primary education increased from 596 million to 648 over the same period, an overall increase of 8.7 per cent in ten years.

However, there are strong regional variations. The highest increases – with gains in enrolment outpacing population growth – occurred in sub-Saharan Africa (38 per cent), in South and West Asia (19 per cent), and in the Arab States (17 per cent)], yet these are also regions with very high rates of out-of-school children. For instance, over the same period, the number of African children not attending school increased by 17 per cent, partly because of high population growth.

While some 57 per cent of all out-of-school children are girls, this percentage has decreased by six points over the last decade, with the steepest reduction occurring in East Asia and the Pacific. In that region, however, the number of out-of-school boys has tripled. Globally girls' enrolments have increased faster than those of boys, but Sub-Saharan Africa is still the region with the highest number (23 million) of out-of-school girls, and South and West Asia, with 21 million, has the highest concentration of gender disparity.

...but not enough

Also, during the 1990s, the primary school completion rate in developing countries improved from 68 per cent to 73 per cent. Yet over 150 million children in the developing world do not complete five years of schooling, the minimum required for basic literacy.

In the least developed countries, 40 per cent of children who enroll in primary school drop out, and only 25 per cent of boys and 14 per cent of girls go on to secondary school.

Of 155 developing countries, 66 countries have achieved, or are on track to achieve, universal primary education by 2015. The other 89, however, are unlikely to reach this goal over the next decade, according to a recent World Bank report.

At current rates of progress 100 million children will still not be enrolled in primary school by 2015.

WHO ARE EXCLUDED AND WHY?

It is happening today to over a hundred million children. They are being denied the opportunity to attend school and improve their lives.

Living in chronic poverty, most often in the poorest developing countries, they are the victims of many human rights violations, and accumulating disadvantages.



The poor

Because they are poor, they cannot afford the cost or time of schooling, and often have to care for their families and work. They are not aware of the value and relevance of education to their lives. Around the world, one billion people live in absolute poverty, surviving on less than \$1 a day. Some 250 million children between the ages of 5 and 17 – one out of every six in the world – are working.

In the Asia Pacific region, 127 million children under the age of 14 are child labourers, and in sub-Saharan Africa, 48 million children work, representing nearly one-third of all children in the region.

In Ethiopia and Guinea, up to a third of school drop-outs said their need to earn money or work on the family farm were their main reasons for leaving school early.

Girls

At least 9 million more girls than boys are left out of school every year. Even if girls attend school, they are the first to leave when needed at home to do domestic chores, and care for siblings or ailing parents. Also, when resources are scarce, girls are more likely to be deprived of basic necessities, such as food and medicine, and school. And very often, early marriage and pregnancy force girls to abandon their studies.

'Family reasons' are given by girls in Latin America as the first or second main reason for dropping out.

Lack of education not only limits a girl's individual potential, but dramatically reduces hope that her children will be able to escape a lifetime of poverty and hardship.

The majority of countries with the lowest secondary enrolment rates for girls also have among the highest rates of child mortality – where more than 15 per cent of children die before age five. (UNICEF)

Some 83 per cent of all-out-of school girls live in sub-Saharan Africa, South and East Asia and the Pacific.

Children in conflict-ridden countries

Caught up in conflict and war, children are not in school because they are orphaned, refugees, displaced, disabled or traumatized. The majority of the world's 25 million displaced people are women and children, and it is estimated that half of the 104 million out-of-school children live in countries in or recovering from, conflict.

Some 80 per cent of the world's wars are in Africa and Asia. For every child killed in armed conflict, three are injured and permanently disabled, and over 10 million children have been psychologically traumatized by armed conflict.

It is estimated that some 300,000 children under the age of 18 have been coerced or induced to take up arms as child soldiers, some of them only 7 years old.

Civilian casualties in wartime have climbed from 5 per cent of the total in the early twentieth century to up to 90 per cent during the wars of the 1990s.

In Mozambique, some 45 per cent of primary-school networks were destroyed, and during the crisis in Rwanda more than two-thirds of the teachers either fled or were killed.

The Disabled

An estimated 40 million out-of-school children have some form of disability. This number may be growing due to increasing poverty, armed conflict, child labour, violence, and HIV/AIDS. Children living in chronic poverty often suffer from poor nutrition and health, and cannot get the care they need. It is estimated that the number of children under the age of 18 with disabilities around the world varies between 120 and 150 million, and that more than 90 per cent of children with disabilities in developing countries do not attend school.

Every year, 500,000 children lose some part of their vision due to a vitamin A deficiency, and over a million babies risk mental impairment due to insufficient iodine in their mothers' diets.

Children living in remote and rural areas...

Living in remote and rural areas, and in regions too poor to provide the necessary infrastructure, many children simply have no way of getting to school. National enrolment statistics often conceal strong regional inequalities; for example, a girl living in a rural area is three times more likely to drop out of school than a city boy.

In Latin America, two out of every five children living in rural areas fail to finish primary school, compared to one urban child in six.

... Or Constantly On The Move

The children of migrants, nomads, and seasonal workers often have no access to formal education, either because their non-sedentary life style does not allow them to attend school regularly, or because they are not officially registered as living in a given place,

and so cannot enrol in the local school system.

Street Children

Street children, the primary victims of exclusion, are often forgotten by official institutions responsible for their education and socialization, and held in contempt by society at large.

While no precise statistics are available on how many street children there are worldwide, estimates range between 150 million (UN) and 100 million (UNICEF).

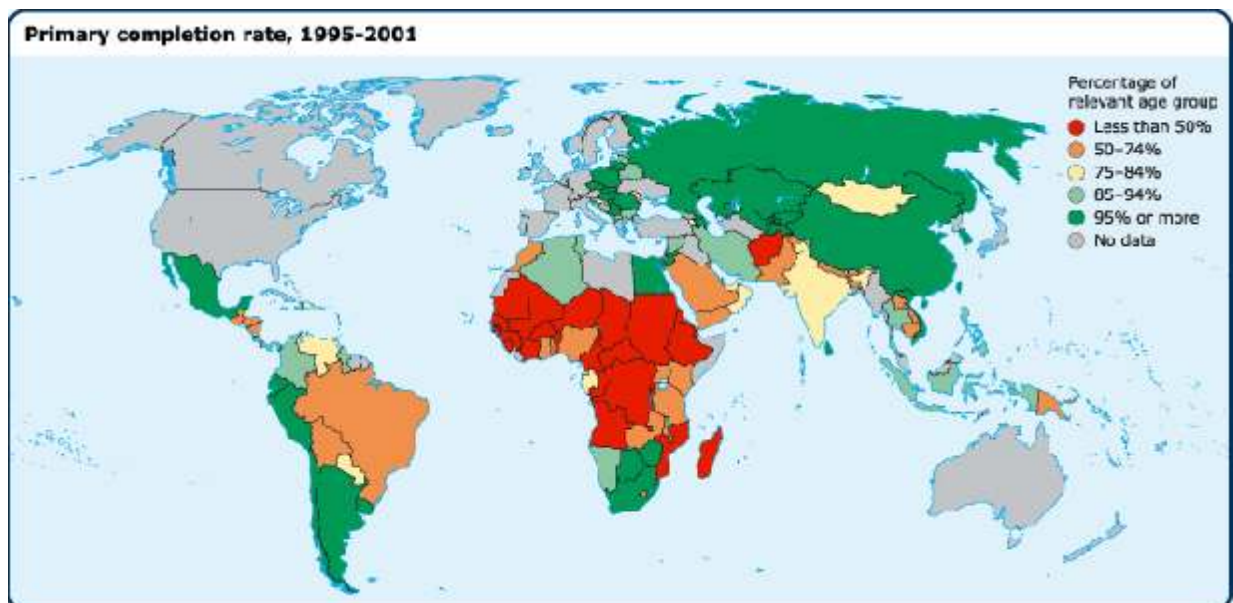
Usually associated with the slums of Latin America and the Indian subcontinent, street children are a global and growing phenomenon. Ranging in age from three to eighteen, most are adolescent boys, although the number of girls is increasing. About 40 per cent of them are homeless, the other 60 per cent work on the streets to support their families. Street children rarely attend school regularly, and even when they do, most of them drop out because it does not meet their needs.

Households suffering from poverty, the strain of civil war and the HIV/AIDS pandemic may no longer be able to send their children to school...or even keep them at home.

Other disadvantaged groups

Many children are also excluded from school because they are from ethnic minorities or castes or from different cultures, or they may come from dysfunctional or broken families. They may be pregnant girls, or HIV/AIDS positive, or suffering from any number of handicaps that stigmatize them as being unfit for school.

Most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have very low primary completion rates, with many less than 50%



Best Practices

Numerous individuals, communities and international organizations are seeking solutions to the problems of educational access.



Some of these include:

Bunad Literacy Community Council (BLCC). Founded in 1994, Bunad is a non-governmental, non-political and non-profit organization. Bunad seeks to deliver education to girls in the rural areas through non-formal structures. Active in eleven districts of the Punjab, its programmes, in addition to literacy and non-formal education, address child labour, women's empowerment for poverty alleviation, saving and micro credit, community development, integrated farming and sanitation, reproductive health and environment.

Community Learning Centres (CLCs). CLCs seek to empower individuals and promote community development through life-long education for adults, youth and children of all ages. The main beneficiaries are pre-school and out-of-school children, women, youth, and the elderly. The CLC Project was initiated in 1995 by APPEAL and is currently being implemented in eighteen countries across the Asia-Pacific Region. Some provide primary schooling and others experiment with active learning methods. Others group schools in clusters of five to seven to allow for exchange of experiences and resources.

The Barefoot College. Initiated in 1972 in Tilonia, Rajasthan, the Barefoot College encourages practical knowledge and skills through a learning-by-doing process of education. The College was entirely built by local people and benefits the poorest of the poor. An individual's will to learn and aptitude for learning is more important than any formal degree. This concept of learning is the foundation for the Barefoot College. It is applied in every field. At Tilonia, all of the activities are related and workers are encouraged to move from one field section to another. Basic literacy, health and first aid skills are also taught.

Community Schools: Egypt's experience. Founded in 1992 by the Egyptian Ministry of Education and UNICEF, Egypt's community schools are making girls and women the beacons of a new learning experience. Communities donate space, ensure that children come to class and manage the schools through an education committee in each hamlet. The Ministry pays facilitators and provides textbooks while UNICEF is responsible for the overall development of the programme.

Street children imagine their future. "What does the future mean for street children? Too busy coping with the daily task of survival, these children rarely have the opportunity to ponder over such questions. Yet, deprived of the possibility of imagining their future, they cannot participate actively in society nor come to terms with schooling.

UNESCO, teaming up in a pilot project with PAU Education, a Spain-based publisher, and ENDA Tiers Monde – gave Malian and Honduran street children the chance to imagine their future. After months of work with their educators and expressing themselves through texts and drawings, they explain their fears, dreams and hopes in *The White Book of our Future*.

Blind Children attend regular schools. The Tay Ninh Blind School Project was founded in March 2000 by UNESCO and the Christina Noble Foundation to address these children's needs. The project gives up to fifty children the chance to grow up in safety, attend classes and develop orientation and mobility skills. It also leads to a profession in basket weaving, creative writing, massage or music. Lessons in Vietnamese, literature and math are provided and other subjects follow later.

What Youth Ought To Be Doing



Politicians and leaders in 105 countries came face to face with children during the World's Biggest Ever Lobby (April 19-25 2004), when more than 850,000 people joined the GCE Action Week to speak out for the right to education.

Don't lose the momentum.

The World's Biggest Ever Lobby generated a fantastic amount of publicity and excitement around the world. But it's crucial to follow up with further actions to influence decision-makers, or the momentum will fade before we have made any lasting impact on the policies that keep children from getting an education. Some of the critical questions include:

- ✍ How can we make sure that MPs and other leaders keep the promises they made when they met with children?
- ✍ Missing Out Maps were valuable in highlighting the specific barriers facing children at a local level. How can we keep communities involved in tackling these issues and holding politicians accountable for progress on the ground?
- ✍ Once the excitement of the Action Week has died down, how can we spark fresh interest from the media and the general public? Will you wait a whole year before mobilising ordinary people, youth and teachers around your issues again, or do you have ideas for another people's action?
- ✍ At a national level, many groups joined hands to organise the World's Biggest Lobby, including some who do not usually work very closely together. Can these alliances be strengthened in months to come? How?
- ✍ Send an email outlining how your group is planning to tackle these and other follow-up challenges to tony@yesweb.org. Attach a scanned or digital photo of yourself if you have one, and don't forget to include your name and job title and where you are based.