



---

Awareness. Advocacy. Action.  
Leaders of tomorrow creating change today.

---

## EDUCATION FOR ALL; Opportunities and Challenges

In 2001 the United Nations launched a series of goals to raise the standard of living for millions of people across the globe before the year 2015. These were declared the Millennium Development Goals. Achieving primary education for all was one of the first goals listed. Specifically, the target set was that boys and girls alike will have the opportunity to complete primary school by 2015.

Education and Opportunity: Cognitive neuroscience shows that early childhood is a critical period for the acquisition of cognitive skills. Such findings underline the need for adequate stimulation of younger children, notably early childhood care and education programs. In addition primary education sites act as a favorable context for nutrition and health intervention. Throughout their research, development economists have shown that parents' education and literacy translates into healthier lives, reduced fertility and children who are less disease prone. Women's income will be 10-20% for every year of school completed. An extra year of woman's education has been shown to reduce the risk that her children will die in infancy by 5-10%. A child born to a literate mother is 50% more likely to survive pass the age of 5 years. Seven million cases of HIV/AIDS could be prevented in the next decade if every child received an education.

The Challenge: Some progress has been made, but we are quite a ways away from making this goal a reality. Progress towards this goal has accelerated since 1999 with the global primary net enrolment ratio increasing from 83% in 1999 to 87% in 2005, this is an increase of 41 million students. 100 countries in the Global South have also achieved gender parity in primary education as well. However, 72 million primary school age children remain out of school. Seven out of ten of these children live in sub-Saharan Africa or South and West Asia. The quality of schooling and levels of learning achievement remain major issues everywhere.

### Some facts:

- More than 18 million extra teachers will be needed over the next decade to provide every child with quality primary education. It is estimated that sub-Saharan Africa will need an in flow of 4 million teachers in order to maintain and achieve universal primary education (UPE) by 2015. This includes 1.6 million new teaching posts that will need to be created.
- More than half of the world's out-of-school children are girls, and seven out of ten live in sub-Saharan Africa or South/West Asia. Most of these girls end up taking care of sick family members whom are infected with HIV/AIDS.
- The impact of HIV/AIDS could add an additional \$1 billion to the annual bill for achieving universal primary education due to the costs of prevention education for the region.



---

Awareness. Advocacy. Action.  
Leaders of tomorrow creating change today.

---

## **HOPE NEVER DIES!**

Access to and participation in primary education have sharply increased since the World Education Forum in Dakar 2000 (which outlined a plan of action for achieving the Universal Primary Education aspect of the Millennium Development Goals). The number of out-of-school children dropped from 96 million to 72 million between 1999 and 2005. Most regions are close to reaching universal primary education. In the three regions that are not – the Arab States, sub-Saharan Africa, and South/West Asia – substantial increases in enrollment ratios have taken place in many countries. Recent progress in getting children into school has benefited girls in particular, with 95 girls in school for every 100 boys (2005) compared to 92 in 1999.

Yet obstacles remain . . .

### SOME CHALLENGES HINDERING ACCESS TO EDUCATION

1. **Cost** - The education of children is costly for parents. Costs can include: tuition fees, PTA fees, uniforms, textbooks, teachers' fees, school construction and transportation.
2. **Failure to complete primary schooling** - Many children drop out before they complete their primary schooling (sub-Saharan Africa has less than two thirds of pupils reach the last grade in the majority of countries).
3. **Poor quality education** - Retention and completion rates often reflect the state of learning achievement. To achieve UPE in such cases, it is necessary to improve the quality of primary education and to expand access to secondary education.
4. **HIV and AIDS** - The prevalence of HIV and AIDS, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, is affecting children both at home and at school. Education is probably the single most effective way of preventing the further spread of HIV. Facts about how young people can protect themselves are increasingly being integrated into school curricula.

MUCH CAN BE DONE - National legislation pending that would greatly alter this issue.

**Education for All Act of 2007** - to ensure that the U.S. provides the resources and leadership to ensure a successful international effort to provide all children with a quality basic education.

**How?** –1 billion dollars of funding for 2007 the act will be:

- Eliminating school fees and expanding access to education
- Training teachers and building infrastructure.
- Identifying and replicating successful interventions that improve the quality of education such as school lunch and school health programs.
- Promoting civic education and life skills training.
- Supporting initiatives that reach the most disadvantaged populations.

**Contact your local Senator and Congress Representative and urge them to support this act!**

To get the tools necessary to be an effective catalyst for the Education for All campaign check out these organizations websites; [www.results.org](http://www.results.org), [www.globalactionforchildren.org/](http://www.globalactionforchildren.org/), [www.campaignforeducationusa.org/](http://www.campaignforeducationusa.org/), [www.fasttrackinitiative.org/](http://www.fasttrackinitiative.org/), and [www.aidemocracy.org](http://www.aidemocracy.org).