

Education for All An Achievable Vision



Education for All

Education is a fundamental human right. It provides children, youth and adults with the power to reflect, make choices and enjoy a better life. It breaks the cycle of poverty and is a key ingredient in economic and social development. Mothers' education has a strong impact on health, family welfare and fertility.

- In Uganda, four years of primary education raise a farmer's output by 7 per cent;
- The child of a Zambian mother with a primary education has a 25 per cent better chance of survival than a child of a mother with no education;
- In Bangladesh, women with a secondary education are three times more likely to attend a political meeting than are women with no education.
- Educated girls generally have a significantly lower risk of HIV infection



The Challenges

At the dawn of the new century 875 million of the world's citizens are illiterate. One out of every five children aged 6-11 in developing countries – an estimated 113 million – is not in school, 60 per cent of them are girls.

Nine countries – Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan (E9) – are home to 70 per cent of the world's illiterates.

Girls and women are most at risk. In South Asia an estimated 60 per cent of women are illiterate. Worldwide, one woman in four cannot read.

In South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, less than three out of four pupils reach Grade 5.

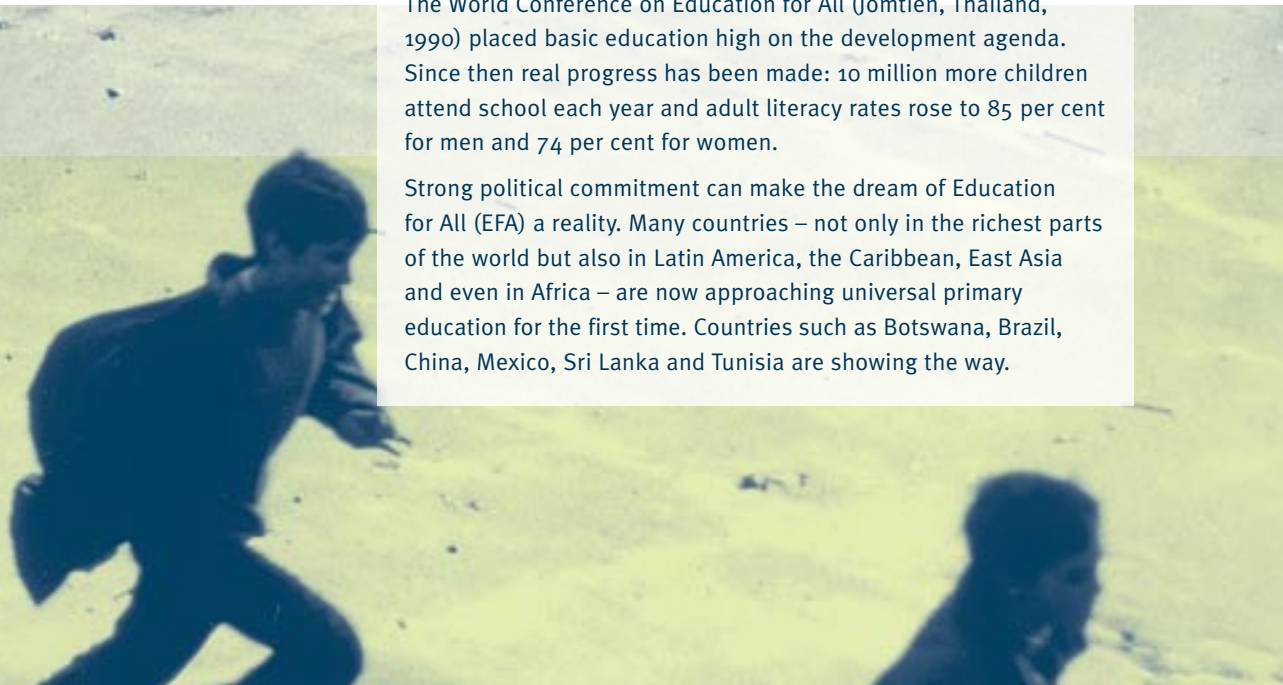
The HIV/AIDS pandemic threatens to wipe out much of the progress made in boosting literacy and general education levels. Up to 10 per cent of teachers are expected to die in the worst-affected African countries.



Some Advances

The World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990) placed basic education high on the development agenda. Since then real progress has been made: 10 million more children attend school each year and adult literacy rates rose to 85 per cent for men and 74 per cent for women.

Strong political commitment can make the dream of Education for All (EFA) a reality. Many countries – not only in the richest parts of the world but also in Latin America, the Caribbean, East Asia and even in Africa – are now approaching universal primary education for the first time. Countries such as Botswana, Brazil, China, Mexico, Sri Lanka and Tunisia are showing the way.

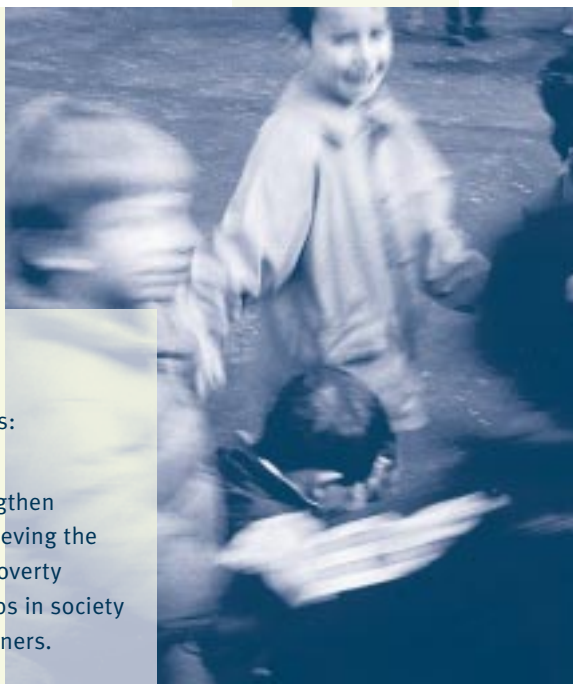
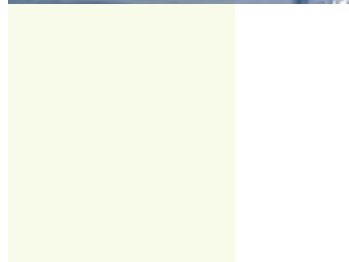


The Commitment Renewed

In April 2000, more than 1,100 delegates from 164 countries reaffirmed their commitment to EFA at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal. They adopted the Dakar Framework for Action – a bold, practical document laying out goals and strategies for achieving Education for All.

The six Dakar goals:

- 1 Expand early childhood care and education.
- 2 Free and compulsory education of good quality by 2015.
- 3 Promote the acquisition of life-skills by adolescents and youth.
- 4 Expand adult literacy by 50 per cent by 2015.
- 5 Eliminate gender disparities by 2005 and achieve gender equality in education by 2015.
- 6 Enhance educational quality.



Three Milestones

The Dakar Framework for Action sets three major deadlines:

2002: FINALIZING NATIONAL ACTION PLANS

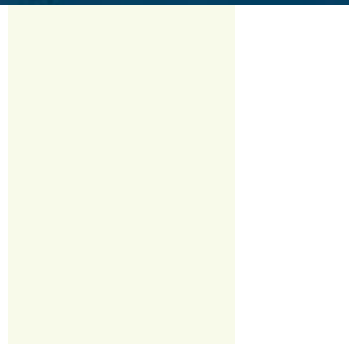
By this date all states are requested to develop or strengthen national plans of action with concrete strategies for achieving the Dakar goals. These plans must be part of existing anti-poverty strategies and be prepared in consultation with all groups in society including community leaders, teachers, parents and learners.

2005: ENSURING EQUALITY FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

The aim is to achieve equality for boys and girls in access to both primary and secondary education by this date.

2015: ACHIEVING EDUCATION FOR ALL

This is the deadline for the realization of universal primary education and a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy.





Key Actors in the Education for All Drive

Countries

Education for All is the responsibility and prerogative of countries. They are responsible for mobilizing efforts and additional resources and must secure the involvement of all stakeholders. Their determination is key to the success of the EFA drive.

Civil society

Non-governmental organizations, teacher unions, religious organizations, parents and learners play a major role in education as they work with communities in providing alternative solutions where state provision is absent or insufficient. They have the advantage of being flexible, more innovative and closer to the grassroots and local cultures.

Development partners

Bilateral and multilateral development agencies are supporting countries' action through technical assistance, funding support, enhanced monitoring of EFA progress, greater co-ordination of efforts and strengthened partnerships between governments and civil society.



UNESCO's Tasks

UNESCO was mandated by the World Education Forum to co-ordinate the global efforts to achieve Education for All by 2015.

Its key tasks are to:

- facilitate the development of EFA partnerships, in particular between governments and civil society organizations;
- ensure that the activities of all EFA partners are compatible with one another and consistent with the EFA agenda.

UNESCO's Director-General convenes annually a high-level, small and flexible group to sustain political momentum and mobilize resources for basic education. UNESCO also brings together an EFA working group of experts to receive technical guidance, build and sustain partnerships and support regional and sub-regional networks.

An EFA Observatory has been set up within the UNESCO Institute for Statistics to monitor progress towards EFA. New indicators are being developed and countries receive assistance in collecting educational statistics.



EFA is Affordable

Making Education for All a reality is affordable: the cost of providing the world's children with primary education by 2015 will require between \$8 billion and \$15 billion extra spending a year – less than 2 per cent of the annual estimated military costs worldwide. Most of the money will come from the countries themselves, through changing priorities and adopting cost-effective measures. A new global initiative is seeking to ensure more effective donor co-ordination and increased aid to basic education, in particular through accelerated debt relief.





EFA is Achievable

Universal primary education

This goal will remain a distant dream unless a major effort is undertaken to accelerate the current trends. Primary schools in developing countries will need to accommodate about 156 million more children than in 1997, an increase of 27 per cent. At a minimum, this will require maintaining the previous enrolment effort.

- A particular effort will be needed in sub-Saharan Africa, which will have to find 88 million additional school places. Particularly large increases of more than 10 times the previous effort are needed in Angola, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Liberia, Niger and Somalia.
- South Asia will have to enrol about 40 million more children – an increase of one third – requiring at least the same pace of effort as in the 1990s.
- The Arab States need twice the previous effort to accommodate some 23 million additional children, representing an increase of 72 per cent.

Adult literacy

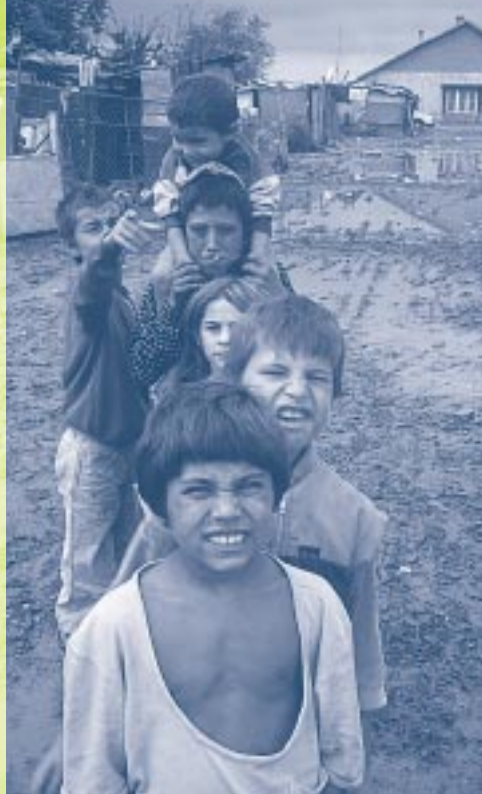
To expand adult literacy by 50 per cent, the number of adult literates will have to increase annually by 92 million. This implies speeding up previous efforts by 1.3 times.

Africa and South Asia face substantial challenges, in particular in the least developed countries, where success will require more than a doubling of past efforts. Some regions of the world, notably East Asia, the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean will reach the goal by maintaining nearly the same level of effort as in the past decade.

More Targeted Efforts Needed

Urgent action is needed in countries in crisis and with high HIV/AIDS infection if the EFA goals are to be reached. Fifty countries around the world are in situations of emergency, caused by armed conflict, chronic crisis or natural disasters. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has become a development disaster, cutting a deadly swathe through education systems in several African countries.

United Nations agencies are working with bilateral donors and civil society on inter-agency flagship programmes to accelerate efforts, by co-ordinating action, providing technical assistance and developing knowledge and experience to put these countries on track. Other areas of concerted action are the education of girls and women and school health.



Further information

Visit the Education for All website on

www.unesco.org/education/efa

or contact the Dakar Follow-up Unit,
Education Sector, UNESCO

7, Place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP, France

Fax: 33 (0) 1 45 68 56 26/27 · E-mail: efa@unesco.org