

Facts and Actions

Supporting the Millennium Development Goals



Volume 111, Issue 2
Spring 2007

The Millennium Development Goals

- 1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- 2) **Achieve universal primary education**
- 3) Promote gender equality and empower women
- 4) Reduce child mortality
- 5) Improve maternal health
- 6) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- 7) Ensure environmental sustainability
- 8) Develop a global partnership for development

Information and text from:

www.earthinstitute.columbia.edu/endorfpoverty,

www.bbc.co.uk,

www.millenniumcampaign.org,

www.sendmyfriend.org and ,

"The Millennium Development

Goals Report 2005 & 2006",

published by the United Na-

tions

Danna E. Gobel, LSW,

Editor

In conjunction with Pat

Szczerba, DePaul University:

School for New Learning

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dgobel@mccormick.edu

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MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education

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



Quick Facts

- 1 in 4 adults in the developing world— 872 million people—are illiterate (Oxfam UK - Education Now Campaign)
- More than 104 million children ages 6-11 remain out of school . 60 million are girls (UNESCO 2003)
- 46% of girls in the world's poorest countries have no access to primary education (ActionAid)
- More than 1 in 4 adults cannot read or write: 2/3 are women (ActionAid)
- Universal primary education would cost \$10 billion a year—that's half of what Americans spend on ice cream in one year (ActionAid)
- Young people who have completed primary education are less than half as likely to contract HIV as those missing an education. Universal primary education would prevent 700,000 cases of HIV each year—about 30% of all new infections in this age group (Oxfam)

MDG 2 Overview

Education gives people choices regarding the kind of lives they wish to lead. It enables them to express themselves with confidence in their personal relationships, in the community and at work. But for more than 115 million children of primary school age who are out of school, this human right is being denied.

Educating all children presents a significant challenge due to the large number of children who live in remote, rural areas of developing countries. High rates of poverty in rural areas

limit educational opportunities because of demands for children's labor, low levels of parental education, and lack of access to good quality schooling. School fees are also a large hurdle to those already struggling financially.

The loss of potential does not affect children alone. Education, especially for girls, has far reaching social and economic benefits for society as a whole. Educated women have more economic opportunities and engage more fully in public life. As mothers,

they tend to have fewer and healthier children who are more likely to attend school. These are keys to breaking the cycle of poverty.

The education crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa is made worse by the impact of AIDS. In 1999 alone, nearly 1 million children in that region lost their teachers to AIDS. The cumulative effect of these deaths has been placing an untenable burden on many countries that already lack sufficiently trained teachers. When par-

ents become ill, children are often pulled out of school and take on a job to support the family and/or household responsibilities such as caring for their parents and siblings. Moreover, 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 integrated into school curricula. **For immediate results, school enrollment could be increased by:** 1) reducing/eliminating school fees; 2) improving the quality of education; 3) bringing schools closer to home.

The BIG Picture: Road-blocks to educational opportunity

AID Development, including support of education, needs MORE money from wealthier countries. Promises from developed countries (i.e., US, Japan and Germany) are not met and fall short, resulting in less money for poorer countries. This shortfall of aid to poor countries discourages the countries from making plans to improve education. Also, there may be corruption of developing country governance, leading to mis-management of aid.

TRADE Under the present trade system, the poorest countries are forced to remove all trade barriers and allow foreign companies to sell products that often put local farmers out of business. Poor countries are in need of a fair global trading system so their governments can increase spending on pre-school, primary, secondary and adult education.

DEBT Many poorer countries are crippled by debt repayment to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Consequently, countries have to cut spending on services including health and education to service these loans. Among other coping mechanisms, this means having to implement school fees and health care fees.

MDG 2 Take Action

- ▶ Adopt a school or library by visiting the Room to Read site at www.roomtoread.org. Read founder, James Wood's inspiring memoir, [Leaving Microsoft to Change the World](#).
- ▶ Support reform of trade rules so that poor countries may be able to subsidize their farming industries and rich countries remove their trade subsidies, tariffs and other barriers. See Deborah James, Global Justice, report at www.commondreams.org/views06/0114-29.htm
- ▶ Read the Council on Foreign Relations report, "What works in Girls Education: Evidence and Policy in the Developing World", at www.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/Girls_Education_summary.pdf
- ▶ Write letters to your local Congress/Senate Representative. Tell your representatives not to forget about the MDGs. The site www.RESULTS.org has "Action Alerts" and a number of useful tools that can be adapted to help you target both politicians and media outlets in your own country.
- ▶ Youth in the West can join online youth organizations to work on development issues. See www.about.takingitglobal.org

"An undereducated population costs society hugely because human capital is what society depends on for its growth. And the biggest human capital investment is education. So an undereducated population is a population that cannot take advantage of a growing economy."

Geeta Rao Gupta, President,
International Research on Women

MDGs Resources and Further Information

- www.unmillenniumproject.org
- www.millenniumcampaign.org
- www.undp.org/mdg/countryreports2.html (progress reports)

View slide shows

- www.earth.columbia.edu/audio_slideshows/mdgs

Extensive listing of MDGs websites

- <http://condor.depaul.edu/~pszczerb/MDGs.html>