Education for All can do better

Steady progress has been made since 1998 towards universal primary education (UPE) and gender parity among the poorest countries, but the pace is not enough to reach the six Education for All (EFA) goals by 2015. Increased political will and funding is required if countries are to meet the commitments they set at the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000.

UNESCO's 2006 Global Monitoring Report draws on data from the 2002 to 2003 school year to forecast which countries are likely to achieve the goals of UPE, gender parity in primary and secondary education and a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015.

Public spending on education has increased in about 70 countries. Aid for basic education more than doubled between 1999 and 2003. UPE has been achieved in 47 countries with another 20 on track to achieve it. Girls' primary enrolments have risen rapidly, especially in some of the lowest-income countries of sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia. Gender and educational quality measures are increasingly visible in national education plans.

However, 23 countries are at serious risk of not achieving UPE by 2015 as their enrolment ratios are declining. The 2005 gender parity target has been missed by 94 countries. 76 have not reached gender parity at primary level, and the disparities are nearly always at the expense of girls. 86 countries are at risk of not achieving gender parity even by 2015.

The EFA Development Index (EDI) provides a summary measure of a country's situation, covering four goals: UPE, adult literacy, gender and quality of education. Significant progress (by more than ten percent) was made in Cambodia, Ethiopia and Mozambique. Low-EDI countries registering sharp decreases include Chad, Guyana and Papua New Guinea.

- About 100 million children are still not enrolled in primary school, 55 percent are girls.
- Fewer than two-thirds of pupils finish primary school in 41 countries.
- Primary-school fees – a major barrier to access – are still collected in 89 countries.
- High fertility rates, HIV/AIDS and armed conflict continue to pressure countries with the greatest EFA challenges.
- Enrolments in early childhood care and education (ECCE) programmes have remained static.
- In the Arab States, low adult literacy rates pull the EDI down.

Policymakers need to focus on:
- teacher training: in many countries, primary teacher numbers would have to increase by 20 percent a year to reduce pupil:teacher ratios to 40:1 and to achieve UPE by 2015
- increased public spending: in nine countries, including Indonesia and Pakistan, the share is less than two percent of Gross National Product
- ECCE: it needs to be a domain for public policy rather than private initiative
- gender inequalities: ensuring that teachers, curricula and learning materials do not reinforce stereotypes
- low-cost school health interventions: they can reduce dropout rates and increase school achievement.

EFA Global Monitoring Report Team
UNESCO, 7, Place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP, France
T + 33 1 45 68 17 06   **F** +33 1 45 68 56 52
efareport@unesco.org

Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006, UNESCO, November 2005
www.efareport.unesco.org

Can private schools in India offer inclusive education?

Can private schools provide children who are not currently in school with an education that is appropriate to their needs and gives them equal opportunities. Three examples of private school outreach initiatives in India provide evidence of very different ways of dealing with this dilemma.

Private school outreach means going beyond the fee-charging education and extending services through 'outreach programmes', to provide a free or affordable education to children in local areas who are 'out-of-school'. It is a relatively new phenomenon among established private schools.

The three examples of outreach programmes from schools are:
- A Catholic girls day school in Kolkata, West Bengal. Half the girls attending are paying full fees and half are on concessions, mainly from slum neighbourhoods. The outreach programme serves 200 street children.
- A Vivekananda school in Kolkata – a larger mixed-sex day school. The outreach programme caters for 550 children through 10 schools in different slum communities.
- A Krishnamurti school in Andhra Pradesh – a smaller mixed-sex boarding school. The outreach programme serves 520 children through 18 schools in remote rural communities.

All three programmes have tried to make learning non-formal, and based around the circumstances of the children, to increase the likelihood that they will attend. Challenges faced include:
- how to teach a range of ages and abilities where attendance is irregular
- how to sustain the interest of learners who are mainly the first generation from their family to attend school.

All three outreach programmes seek to integrate a proportion of their children into formal government schools.

Therefore how inclusive are these initiatives? If the aim is to offer outreach children equal educational opportunity to children attending government schools then the three schools are largely successful. However, if the aim is to offer them equal educational opportunities compared to the private school children, only the Catholic school is successful.
- The Catholic private school aims to meet the basic needs common to all students, using as a baseline the needs of the most disadvantaged, including them into the private school itself.
- In the other schools the needs of the two groups of children are seen as very different, and private school structures prohibit including outreach children.

It could be argued that the education provided by the Vivekananda and Krishnamurti schools helps the group as a whole. Whereas the Catholic school seeks to help the individual, providing the child an opening to a higher social level.

Exclusion can be reduced by:
- providing outreach programme children with additional support as a group, to prevent them from dropping out
- changing the structures within the formal schools to attract all children.

Laura Day Ashley
School of Education, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT, UK
T +44 (0)121 4158563   **L.dayashley@bham.ac.uk**

'From Margins to Mainstream: Private School Outreach Inclusion Processes for Out-of-school Children in India', *International Journal of Educational Development* 25 (2005) 133-144, by Laura Day Ashley, 2005

Bringing the hardest to reach into the classroom

Can the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of universal completion of primary education and ending gender inequality in education by 2015 be acheived? What do parents, governments, donors and civil society have to do to ensure them?

A report from the UN Millennium Project sets out findings from a two-year project to identify what is required to achieve equal enrolment of boys and girls and provide excluded groups with education.

On average, primary completion rates in low-income countries are only rising by 1.5 percent per year. In Africa only 51 percent of children (46 percent of girls) complete primary education. Figures in South Asia are 74 percent (with 63 percent girls).

In West and Central Africa less than half of poor children complete even a single year in school. Income gaps increase gender inequality: for wealthy children in India the difference between boys and girls completing primary school is only 2.5 percent, whereas for poor children the gender gap is 24 percent.

Those who are particularly unlikely to attend or remain in school live in rural areas, come from ethnic or linguistic minorities, are affected by armed conflict or live with disabilities. Of the hundred million children of primary age who are not in school, it is estimated that 40 percent have some form of disability.

Some very poor countries are on course to meet the education MDGs due to:
● being practical about reducing costs: using low-cost school construction methods, resisting pressure to reduce class sizes, employing teachers on contracts and shortening pre-service training
● emphasising student-centred teaching: using local languages in early primary years, designing quality curricula and books and giving teachers incentives
● allowing high-quality private education for the wealthier families and contracting out with private providers
● allocating resources across regions and schools and monitoring performance
● developing accelerated programmes to get children who have dropped out back into education.

Providing quality education and targeted subsidies and incentives is not cheap. At the moment only a third of education aid goes to basic education in sub-Saharan Africa. Even if these countries manage to double or triple their primary spending, achieving the MDGs will require an increase of five times the current level of aid to basic education – around US$1.2 billion per year.

Most developing countries need to increase access as well as improve quality. This requires strategies to:
● encourage children to attend school by abolishing school fees, providing conditional cash transfers, using school feeding programmes and improving security for girls
● support mothers to gain literacy and a basic education
● enhance secondary education so parents see value in getting their children to complete primary schooling
● providing scholarships based on needs, particularly for poorer girls
● improve accountability, parental engagement and teacher commitment through greater local control of schools
● agree targets and impact evaluations so that donors can engage constructively with national governments.

Nancy Birdsall and **Ruth Levine**
Center for Global Development, 1776, Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington DC 20036, USA
T + 1 (202) 416-0700   **F** +1 (202) 416-0750
nbirdsall@cgdev.org

Is education compatible with pastoralism?

Education authorities have long taken the view that if pastoralists want their children to be educated they must change their lifestyle. However, in Kenya and elsewhere, this is a price most have not been prepared to pay. If pastoralists' right to education is to be fully realised education systems will have to become more flexible.

Research from Oxfam GB points out that inequality in providing education between the pastoral areas of Kenya and the rest of the country is the biggest obstacle towards achieving Education For All (EFA) and education that is equal for boys and girls.

In Kenya, as in other nations with substantial pastoral populations, the relationship between settlements and the provision of education has been controversial. Policymakers have encouraged settlement by providing services such as education, water supplies and health centres.

In recent decades the massive expansion in Kenya's primary education provision has left behind the north-east province where more than 70 percent of the population continues to live on, and move across, the rangelands. Only one in five girls is in school.

While the state has carried on with the failed policy of building more schools in settlements, community groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have started programmes which acknowledge that EFA is more likely to be achieved if boys and girls are not forced to choose between herding and schooling. Education needs to meet the mobility and labour demands of a herding lifestyle.

Oxfam challenges the common belief that pastoralism is an obstacle to achieving EFA.
● Recent growth in the urban school population in the north-east province is primarily driven by poverty and the absence of alternative options.
● There is deep gender bias in pastoralist societies that means girls are not seen to have the same right to education as boys.
● Education authorities blame cultural traditions but do little to introduce policies to get more girls into school.
● It is simplistic to assume that families either want to send their children to school or do not.
● Pastoralists are adapting and taking up education to diversify the household economy, and some are prepared to send children to towns to attend school.

Kenyan educational planners need to realise that:
● The education system needs to become more flexible. Education reform, including non-formal and formal provision will be needed if EFA is to be achieved in pastoral societies.
● The reluctance of pastoralists to send their children to school is based on sound reasoning and practical problems, rather than prejudice.
● Pastoralists recognise education as a way of investing in options for income.
● There will not be gender equality unless public policy develops effective ways to challenge existing attitudes.
● A dedicated unit within the education ministry is needed to focus efforts on raising the enrolment levels of pastoralist children, especially girls.

Ian Leggett
People & Planet, 51 Union Street, Oxford OX4 1J, UK
T +44 (0)1865 245678   **F** +44 (0)1865 791927
ian.leggett@peopleandplanet.org