



United Nations Educational, Scientific  
and Cultural Organization



The Newsletter  
of UNESCO's  
Education Sector

# Education TODAY

## EDUCATING TEENAGERS

The growth in secondary education in recent years is unprecedented. The result is overcrowded classrooms filled with teenagers from diverse social and cultural backgrounds. Focus, a four-page report, looks at the problems of overburdened teachers and bored students.

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### EDITO

Is Education for All (EFA) the business of the whole world, or merely a concern for developing countries? This question is posed in UNESCO's recent landmark publication *Education for All: Is the World on Track?*, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002*. Making universal primary education a Millennium Development Goal may have given the impression that EFA is only for poor countries. It is not. All countries should strive for EFA because none are fully satisfied with the education that their residents receive.

One EFA goal is to ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and lifeskills programmes. Many take this goal as shorthand for secondary education, which most countries find problematic. Some of the issues are explored in this number of *Education Today*. Developing countries want to expand secondary education so that it equips youngsters to contribute to the society and the economy in which they live. Industrialized countries already provide universal secondary education but now find that these schools are lightning rods for contemporary storms in society.

Most of us would like youngsters to emerge from secondary education as autonomous and motivated people who aspire to contribute to their communities by making a satisfactory living for themselves and furthering the common good. How can we achieve this?

Richer interaction between teachers and pupils is one approach. Cuba has recast the first three years of secondary school so that youngsters have the same teacher for all subjects except physical education and modern languages. The aim is to create closer relationships and a broader view of knowledge.

Another approach stresses personal values. Scotland's Columba 1400 Centre [www.columba1400.com](http://www.columba1400.com) has shown that even short courses, if centred on the principles of awareness, focus, creativity, integrity, perseverance and service, can change the attitudes and subsequent life choices of demotivated youth.

Another principle is to associate the wider community with the challenge. If the crisis at secondary level expresses tensions in the wider society, then the community must help to address them through the joint efforts of parents, employers, politicians and pundits. Civil society must reproduce itself.

John Daniel

Assistant Director-General for Education

# Education grant takes children off the street

The Brazilian government pays poor parents to send their children to school

“I help my mother a lot because I go to school. Now we can pay the electricity bills and buy books, pens and even toys and sandals,” says Geislane Jose da Silva, a shy 8-year-old girl enrolled in a public school in *Cidade Ocidental*, a small town 50 kms. outside the capital Brasilia. Despite her age, Geislane is the main breadwinner in her family. As long as she attends school regularly, her mother receives a monthly grant. “My Mum keeps telling me that I have to stay in school,” she says.

nance from the father of her three children. For her – and poor parents like her – the education grant means a fixed income that allows her to send her children to school.

## Tackling dropout

The *Bolsa Escola* initiative was launched two years ago with the aim of reducing dropout. In Brazil, one out of four pupils drop out before the end of primary school. Today, the programme reaches 8.7 million school-children and the goal is to reach 11 million.

Beneficiaries are poor parents whose income is below or equal to half the minimum monthly wage. They receive a monthly allowance of \$5 per child aged between 6 and 15 for a maximum of three children. Payment is made on condition that children attend at least 85 per cent of classes. In most cases, the allowance is paid to mothers, who with a special bankcard can draw the allowance directly at any cash point.

## Economic benefits

“The programme is remarkable because it tackles exclusion and poverty, the cause of dropout and child labour,” says Jorge Werthein, Director of UNESCO Brasilia. An initial UNESCO/UNICEF evaluation highlights the positive results of *Bolsa Escola*. Not only does the programme reduce absenteeism, dropout and repetition, it also motivates the children concerned, combats child labour, improves quality of life and strengthens family self-esteem, especially that of women.

The programme also makes economic sense, comments Werthein. It costs some \$100 annually to enrol a child in primary school, which is lost if the child drops out and only \$60 a year more for a child under *Bolsa Escola*, who will probably stay in school.

## The Robin Hood principle

The \$660 million a year programme is financed by a new tax on financial transactions. “This is the Robin Hood principle put into practice,” says Floriano Pesaro, secretary of the national *Bolsa Escola* programme until January 2003. “We take from the rich and give to the poor.”

The key to success, he says, is the high degree of decentralization and a well-developed bank system for money transfers. Today, 99 per cent of Brazil’s 5,545 municipalities take part in the scheme.

In the rare cases, where the national *Bolsa Escola* programme is not available, NGOs such as Missão Criança take over. “For example, we take care of people living in garbage villages,” says Cristovam Buarque, president of Missão Criança and recently appointed Education Minister.

In *Cidade Ocidental* there are now fewer children begging on the streets and school attendance has increased significantly. “Before, children were enrolled in school but had no incentive to come. Now they are more motivated,” says school principal Beatriz Sobriho de Meio.

*Bolsa Escola* has convinced not only the Brazilians. Similar schemes are mushrooming throughout Latin America (Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Mexico) and pilot projects are running in Mozambique and the United Republic of Tanzania.

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Geislane José da Silva, 8, has to attend school regularly to support her family

Geislane’s mother is among the more than 2.5 million poor parents in Brazil benefiting from the nationwide education grant scheme, *Bolsa Escola*. Like the great majority of women in her neighbourhood, she is a single mother, has no stable job and does not receive mainte-

# Lifeskills and small loans

A project is breaking the vicious circle for young women in Kenya's slums



*Violence against young women is part of everyday life in Kenya*

At 17, many girls in Nairobi's slums have married, given birth and even divorced. A number of them hold on to their marriages, not out of choice but necessity. They are lured by men who promise to cater to their basic wants – food, shelter and clothing – which they cannot satisfy at home.

These girls are easily attracted as they often come from broken homes or single-parent families and seek the love and psychological support they have never known at home. But in many cases, domestic violence puts an end to such marriages. When they break up, some of the girls are forced into prostitution as they do not have alternative sources of income. It is a vicious circle that is hard to break.

## Survival tactics

“Such girls learn survival tactics early enough,” says Susan Nkinyangi, senior education adviser at UNESCO Nairobi, “but these tactics are limited because they are illiterate, having dropped out of school early. Many get into prostitution but that exposes them to all sorts of dangers, the most lethal being HIV/AIDS.”

It is against this background that K-Rep, a leading microfinance development agency in Kenya, with UNESCO support, launched a programme last June to assist such girls by providing them with loans to set up small-scale businesses from which they can earn a living. While K-Rep provides the start-up funds, UNESCO through its Chair at the University of Nairobi, offers mentoring and lifeskills education to help young women develop positive attitudes about themselves. The businesses include selling second-hand clothes and shoes, running retail kiosks, welding, tailoring and shoe repair, while the loans range from \$25 to \$130.

## Learning lifeskills

The lifeskills education includes communication skills, dynamics of man/woman relationships, business tips, coping and managing stress and peer pressure, leadership and family planning, as well as making healthy and safe choices. Other critical elements are preventing HIV/AIDS, widespread in the slums, and eliminating violence against women.

So far, UNESCO has trained a cadre of mentors who offer lifeskills to the young women. One

of them, Rita Njenga, is in charge of two groups, and says the programme is beginning to yield fruit. The groups meet once every week in the slums where they go through the various lifeskills lessons and also contribute some money, less than a dollar each, which is saved and later used as collateral to secure a loan from K-Rep. Some have started getting loans while others are still going through the process of induction.

## Building confidence

“We are here to help the teenage girls to cope with their situations, understand themselves, their relationships and look at life positively,” Rita Njenga says. Her group in the Kibera slum consists of 30 Muslim females aged between 16 and 23, most of whom never went to school and had to marry early to escape misery at home, only to land in deeper problems in their marital homes.

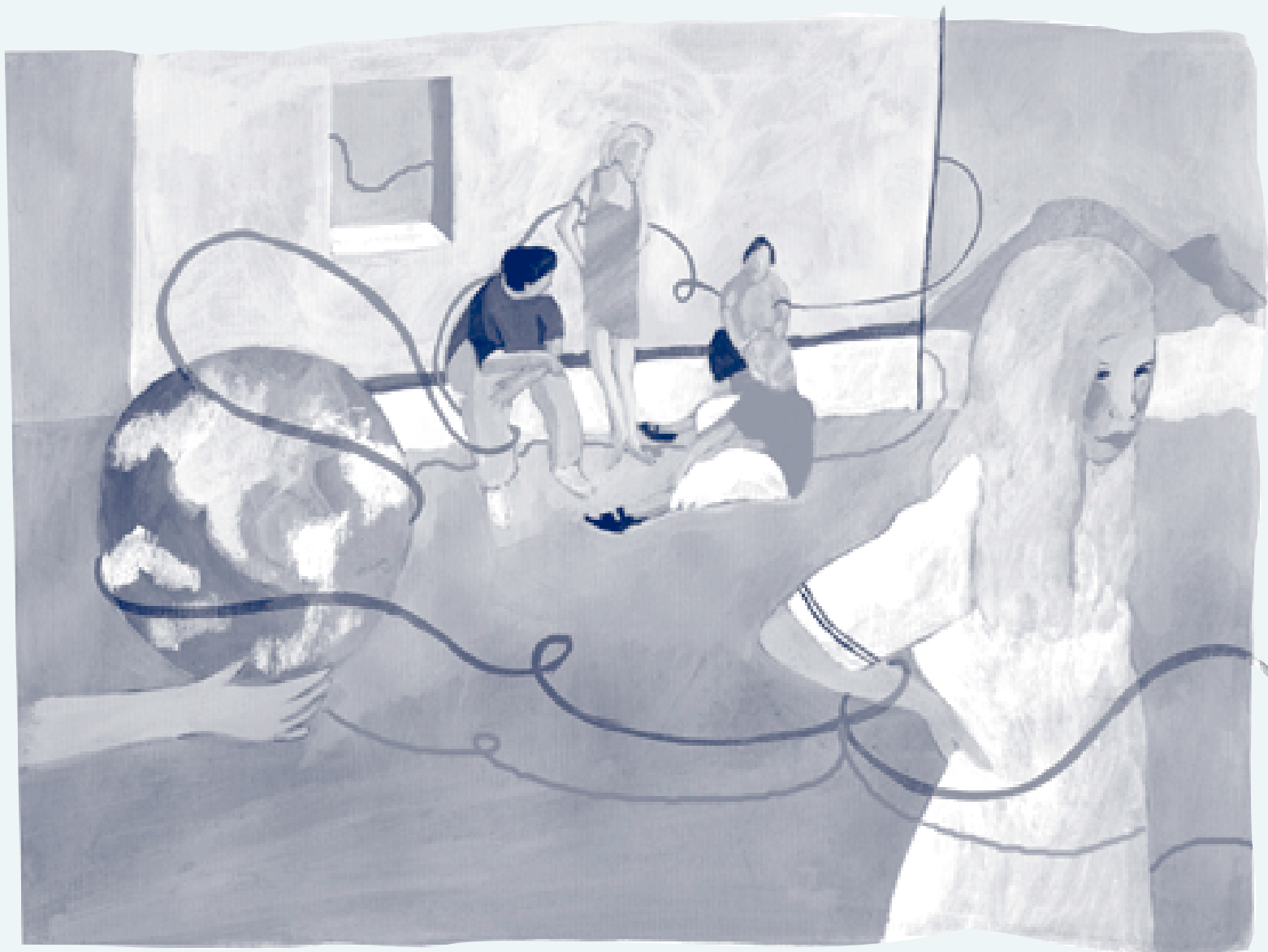
Rispa Were, who has two groups in Kayole and Mathare slums in the eastern side of the city, says the greatest challenge the young people face is opening up and trusting others. Many of them have been victims of economic, sexual and social exploitation that makes them suspicious of everyone. Nevertheless, through the use of role acting, games and group-work approaches, she has helped them talk about their predicament and learn to make little savings to enable them secure loans.

Richard Mwaniki, another mentor, brings parents and community leaders together in weekly meetings to talk to the young people, answer questions that disturb them and provide encouragement. “We have realized that by engaging in caring ways with these young people, we are able to change their attitude. Even without much money, they are able to start doing meaningful things for themselves. To me, this is so far the programme's greatest achievement,” says Mwaniki.

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# Educating teenagers

The number of students in secondary education has increased tenfold over the last 50 years. Classes have swollen and are increasingly filled with youngsters from more diverse social and cultural backgrounds. Teachers are hard put to deal with the problems of these teenagers at the most delicate period of their lives. Reforms are needed to satisfy both teachers and teenagers.



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Johan, 14, has just been expelled from his third school because of run-ins with the teachers. A cap jammed on his head, this young inhabitant of a tough Parisian suburb blames his failure on the schools. The teachers show him no respect, he says. What's more, he is bored by the lessons and just kicks his heels waiting for the final bell. Far from being an isolated case, Johan is typical of the growing estrangement between schools and teenagers.

"When students get bored in class, they no longer hesitate to let you know it, and that's the hardest part about teaching teenagers these days," says French sociologist François Dubet. The time is long past when students listened quietly while the teacher held forth. Teenagers today insist on the right to speak.

## Misunderstanding

"There is a lack of understanding between the students and teachers", says David Marcihacy, a Spanish teacher at a secondary school in Paris. "The teenagers don't share our moral values, the values of effort and respect for others, and above all they have an enormous lack of curiosity. It is a real challenge to get them interested." Teenagers do not always see things as their teachers do. A Latin American student cited in the just-published "Secondary Education: A Path Towards Human Development", (UNESCO Santiago) claims that "they make us look silly. Just because they're teachers they don't have the right to humiliate you. Respect should be mutual".

According to the Uruguayan educationist, Hilda Surraco, behavioural problems do not always stem from the student's personality. They are often reactions to how the young person is treated.

Repetition engenders boredom, says the biologist Jean-Didier Vincent. He believes that the school should stimulate young people's desire to learn, and this comes, he says, through a culturally appropriate approach. "Young people have a thirst for life, but you can't give the same liquid to everyone. It's the thirst that counts." He regrets that teachers are not trained for this. "Their profile," he says, "corresponds to a school that no longer exists."

## Bored students

Staring at the ceiling, their minds elsewhere, many students cannot get interested in what is being said in the classroom. Nonetheless, school is a preferred place of socialization for teenagers, a place where they feel at ease and even feel fairly well supervised. This is the paradoxical result of a survey of 17 million teenagers in 32 countries by the OECD\* as part of its Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA).

Even if students say they are bored – with record rates for boredom in Germany (67 per cent) and Greece and Spain (66 per cent) – the overwhelming majority see school as a place where they make friends easily (82 per cent), where they feel at home (75 per cent) and where the other students appear to like them (77 per cent). Only 14 per cent feel ill at ease and 10 per cent say they are lonely.

Another of this survey's lessons: that teachers are hard put to impose discipline in their classes. Peace and quiet seems to be especially elusive in Greek, Norwegian and Brazilian classrooms. In Greece, 58 per cent of students say that "more than five minutes go by at the start of each class without anything being done," 46 per cent say there is noise and commotion and 29 per cent say that the students don't listen to what the teacher says. On the other hand, discipline reigns in classrooms in the Russian Federation, Latvia and Poland.

While readily admitting to being restless, the students say they are fairly well supervised. Six out of ten 15-year-olds say their teacher takes an interest in how each student is doing. But the perception of how supportive teachers are varies enormously by country. In Australia, Portugal and the United Kingdom, more than three out of four 15-year-olds say their teacher shows an interest in each student's progress. But it was just a third in Italy and Poland. In Australia, Canada, the United States, New Zealand and the United Kingdom students feel they get the most encouragement and the most support from their teachers.

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\* OECD countries plus Brazil, Latvia, Liechtenstein and the Russian Federation.

## Violence and frustration

Violence is one of the consequences of this lack of understanding. It is also a symptom of the general malaise in secondary education. Lacking a sense of direction, teenagers take out their frustration on the school as a symbol of authority. Rudeness, swearing at the teachers, attacks, extortion – the list is long. "Schools concentrate every kind of social violence," says Dubet. Paul M. Kingery of the Hamilton Fish National Institute on School and Community Violence in the United States says: "Carrying of firearms and armed attacks have increased considerably in recent years. He argues that the abdication of responsibility by parents, the availability of firearms, media violence, the economic crisis and the decline in the number of social workers underlie the increase in violence".

As for the teachers, they are often ill-prepared to face students from dysfunctional or broken homes who have problems with authority. Even when their working conditions are satisfactory and their classes are not overcrowded, the challenges are immense. Confronted with students from more diverse social and cultural backgrounds, teachers have seen their roles evolve. They are trained to teach a specific subject, but are increasingly called upon to play the broader role of educator. This divergence between their training and their daily work is a source of unease and tension.

This phenomenon is not limited to the industrialized countries. Sofia Caballero, a teacher in Bogota (Colombia), is also confronted by a lack of interest on the part of her pupils, who often prefer "to drop out to get a job or, in the worst cases, join some mafia gang." →

# Educating teenagers

Not only are students less passive and more strident, there are also a lot more of them. Secondary education is the component of formal education that is growing fastest and more and more countries now see it as part of basic education.

## Dealing with numbers

The number of secondary school students has grown from 40 to 400 million worldwide over the past 50 years. Schools have been hard pressed to keep up with this tremendous growth. This is especially so in developing countries, where class size has ballooned because of a shortage of teachers and facilities.

In Sudan, secondary school classes have an average of 50 students. In the Dominican Republic, Malaysia, Viet Nam and the Philippines, the average is more than 40.

This expansion affects the quality of teaching. "In many countries, rising enrolments are accompanied by an increase in academic failure, as evidenced by high repetition rates and drop-out" says Rupert Maclean, Director of the UNESCO International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Bonn. Each year, almost a third of the pupils have to repeat a grade in Latin America.

## Need for reform

Multiple changes will have to be made, says Beatriz Macedo, Secondary Education Specialist at UNESCO Santiago. The most crucial, she says, involves the culture of secondary teachers. "Teachers must realize that the idea is no longer to teach their subject matter but to educate through it." Hilda Surraco recognizes that "it's difficult for teachers to consider the classroom situation as an interaction and students' actions as reactions to the organization of the class."

All agree that secondary education must evolve. But in what direction? This was the question that was tackled by experts at the International Conference on the Reform of Secondary Education, in Muscat, Oman, from 22 to 24 December 2002. "We must ask ourselves once and for all what the purpose of schooling is. In other words, what do we want to pass on, to whom and why," argues Jean-Michel Leclercq, a secondary education expert.

The first challenge is to reform educational content. Teaching cannot continue to be purely academic when you are dealing with students who do not intend to enter university. If not, many of them are likely to give up. In other words, academic disciplines have a place in the curriculum but they can no longer be the only subjects taught.

"Schools must know how to interest students in the world around them. We must foster skills that will help them fulfil their potential as future citizens including a critical spirit, initiative, the ability to organize projects and to communicate," says Sonia

Bahri, Chief of UNESCO's General Secondary Education Section. Schools must also be places where students are made aware of such issues as health and the environment. "This means not only revising educational content and methods but also the way schools are managed," says Bahri.

## Vocational skills

By making school curricula more work-oriented, we will avoid having young people enter the job market without any real skills. This means enhancing the image of technical and vocational education – the school system's poor cousin in many countries. This debate is all the more pressing because a secondary education is becoming more and more necessary for job-seekers. In 1950 in the United States, for example, 60 per cent of jobs were unskilled. But half a century later, only 25 per cent were. Furthermore, people entering the job market today are expected to change their jobs three to five times in the course of their lives. Education must therefore adapt to this evolution.

## Meeting employers' needs in Nigeria

Nigeria derives 65 per cent of its wealth from the oil industry, but only 2 per cent of the population work in this sector. Most of this labour force is foreign. That alone gives an idea of the gulf between employers' needs and wage-earners' qualifications. Although unemployment is approaching 30 per cent, Nigeria has to turn to foreign skilled labour. In an attempt to narrow this gap, UNESCO and the government has launched a vocational education programme.

"Educational policy has in recent years focused on the primary level with the result that secondary education and especially technical skills, have been put on the back burner," says Hashim Abdul-Wahab, UNESCO consultant for the Nigeria reform project. At present, vocational courses are attended by only 1 per cent of students, down from 15 per cent in the 1970s.

Like other countries, Nigeria today realizes the importance of technical and vocational education for the country's economy. This is why some 30 subjects ranging from mechanics to electronics have been introduced into the curriculum in the past 2 years. "Business management courses have also been integrated into programmes so that students will be able to start their own businesses," says Abdul-Wahab.

But these reforms have a price. Technical education costs between 2 and 10 times more than general education. Equipping classrooms with machine tools, laboratories, raw materials and skilled teachers results in a much higher bill than traditional courses. As a result, the Nigerian government has had to allocate an additional \$1.5 billion over 3 years. ●

→ “Education ministers are beginning to realize its importance, but for a long time this branch of teaching was viewed as inferior to general education,” says Wataru Iwamoto, Director of UNESCO’s Division of Secondary, Technical and Vocational Education. There are exceptions. One that is always cited is the German school system which trains two-thirds of its young people in technical skills: electricity, electronics, new technologies, mechanics and so on. Like Germany, more and more countries are realizing the advantage of creating bridges between vocational and general education. In Australia, for example, teenagers are no longer obliged to choose between the traditional secondary school path and a vocational education because the curriculum combines both. When students complete secondary education, they receive a diploma recognized by both industry and universities.

But secondary education reform should not be reduced to its technical dimension. It must involve all of society. “Everyone’s involvement in educating teenagers is the key to academic success and conflict resolution,” says Qian Tang, Director of the Executive Office of UNESCO’s Education Sector. “We must prepare students for university and working life and at the same time produce responsible citizens.”

### More investment

However, the poorest countries, which are in most need of developing general secondary and vocational education are also the farthest behind in this area because secondary education needs more investment than primary. To increase enrolment in secondary education, the State may either increase the expenditure on secondary schools or try to improve school performance.

“For example, having teachers spend more time with the students and extending the school year would reduce the number of repeating grades, which takes a heavy toll on education budgets,” explains Françoise Caillods of the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP).



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*Secondary education is becoming increasingly necessary for jobseekers*

In Uruguay, secondary school teachers, who teach fewer classes than their primary school colleagues, stay on a few extra hours to help students in difficulty. Recourse to other sources of funding such as local authorities, development agencies or NGOs may be alternative options when government coffers run dry.

Zimbabwe found its own way to cope following Independence. There, the percentage of

children attending secondary schools went from less than 15 per cent to 42 per cent. Parents were the first to dig into their pockets for their children’s school fees. Then church communities, municipalities and other bodies followed suit, building new schools and providing funds for secondary education until the government could take over. An example to follow. ●

## UNESCO pushes for reform

UNESCO is drawing countries’ attention to the need to completely rethink the role of secondary education. It is advocating reform that will make lifelong learning a reality so that both young people and adults are better prepared for life in today’s world. UNESCO also argues for more flexibility and interaction between general education and vocational courses. Technical education is a vital link between school and the world of work and general subjects enrich the technical curricula. In order to respond to these needs, UNESCO launched the International Project on Technical and Vocational Education (UNEVOC) in 1992, and on its completion, the International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (UNESCO-UNEVOC) in Bonn, in July 2000.

The UNEVOC Network, co-ordinated by the Centre in Bonn, links over 200 technical and vocational education institutions in 137 countries. In 1999, the Second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education, in Seoul, made recommendations to adapt technical and vocational education and training (TVET) to the needs of employers. These recommendations formed the basis for an updated version of the Revised Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education in 2001, one of UNESCO’s two normative instruments in this field. The other is the Convention on Technical and Vocational Education which was adopted in 1989. ●

## The report card

Nearly a third of the world's population live in countries where quality schooling for all children by 2015 and greater learning opportunities for youth and adults remain a dream.



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Nonetheless, there have been encouraging developments. The percentage of girls in primary education improved in all countries during the 1990s; 86 countries have already achieved gender equality; 35 others are on the point of reaching it; and 31 countries are seriously behind. On current trends, universal primary education is unlikely to be attained in 57 countries. Certain central and eastern European countries have even registered declines in this area. A total of 78 countries will be unable to halve their illiteracy rate by 2015. They include Bangladesh, China, India and Pakistan – home to 61 per cent of the world's illiterate adults.

The report also finds that the EFA price tag was significantly underestimated partly because the cost of AIDS and conflicts had not been adequately taken into account. HIV/AIDS alone will add \$975 million to the annual EFA bill. At least \$5.6 billion in additional allocations will be needed yearly just to achieve universal primary education and gender parity.

Governments will need to increase their basic education budgets and foreign aid will have to be distributed more effectively. The report questions some aspects of aid programmes which support countries with well-designed poverty-reduction strategies, and argues that “instead of the countries with the weakest policy environments receiving least attention from the international community, they must receive most attention”.

The growing teacher shortage is emerging as another obstacle to progress towards EFA. Between 15 and 35 million additional teachers will have to be recruited in the coming years if universal primary education is to be achieved by 2015.

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While some 83 countries should reach the goal of Education For All (EFA) by 2015, set by the World Education Forum in Dakar (Senegal), more than 70 others will not achieve that target. These are some of the findings of the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002 – Is the World on Track?* published by UNESCO and presented at the second meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All in Abuja (Nigeria) last November. “This re-confirms the Forum's diagnosis that almost one third of the world's population live in countries where achieving the EFA goals remains a dream,” says Professor Christopher Colclough, the report's director.

According to the report, 28 countries may not achieve any of the three measurable Dakar goals: universal primary education, gender equality and the halving of illiteracy rates. Most of these countries are in sub-Saharan Africa, but they also include India and Pakistan.

## The High-Level Group speaks out

“We find it alarming that, on present trends, only 83 countries have achieved or have a high chance of achieving by 2015 three of the six Dakar goals – universal primary education, gender equality and adult literacy”.

This is one of the observations in the Communiqué issued by the High-Level Group on Education for All at the close of its 18–20 November meeting in Abuja, Nigeria. The forecast comes from the newly released *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002* (see article opposite).

The 24 member High-Level Group, which includes ministers, donor organizations, UN agencies and NGOs, also voiced its concern about the decline in aid for education and urged the international community to move ahead more quickly.

Countries themselves also need to increase their efforts, said the Communiqué, stressing the importance of good planning and taking into account such challenges as HIV/AIDS and conflict. Civil society involvement in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of EFA efforts, was stressed by the Group, and building the professionals skills required for these tasks.

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Much more on



# 3 questions to Abraham Bablola Borishade

Abraham Bablola Borishade is the Nigerian Minister of Education

**1** The EFA Global Monitoring Report lists Nigeria as one of the countries that may not achieve education for all by 2015, unless progress is greatly accelerated. Are you confident that your country will make it?

I have a lot of confidence that we can. First, it has been admitted by the team that wrote the report that the data used were 1999 data, in other words, prior to Dakar. And since Dakar, there has been a lot of movement. For example, there has been a jump in enrolment from 15 million children in 2001 to 18 million in 2002.

**2** Concretely, what are you doing to push Education for All forward?

We have established infrastructure for mass literacy and lifeskills development and introduced an education programme for nomadic people. We have also included in the constitution the provision that all children must go to school for nine years. We have revised the curriculum to make it more

relevant and are now training about 40,000 teachers annually. We have made a lot of progress and if we keep this pace of change we will achieve the Dakar goals by 2015.

**3** You have stressed the need for substantial external help. How much does Nigeria need to achieve EFA?

We need to spend about \$800 million annually on basic education alone. Nationally we are already making a considerable effort. There has been much criticism against Nigeria over the amount we spend on education. But the Federal and State allocations to this sector add up to more than 26 per cent of the total budget, which is the amount that outside agencies, including UNESCO, say should be spent on education. At the Federal level we will try to do more – to block wastage for example and commit the money saved to education. But we still need help from the international community.

## Global Education for All Week 2003

Expectations are high for the Global Education for All Week 2003 to be celebrated around the world from 6 to 13 April. People and organizations are invited to organize events ranging from television debates, public happenings and other festivities on this year's theme "Building Momentum to Eliminate Gender Gaps by 2005".

"We hope for an even greater mobilization than last year, when 90 countries participated," says Abhimanyu Singh, Lead Manager of UNESCO's Dakar follow-up Unit.

Events are being organized by UNESCO in collaboration with the NGO-driven Global Campaign for Education, but grassroots organizations and international agencies, teachers, universities, the media and individuals are also invited to mark the occasion. By stressing the gender gap in education, EFA Week aims to reduce the widespread disparities between boys and girls in education. Of the 113 million children out of school in developing nations, 60 per cent are girls.

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## World tour

→ Burkina Faso, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Mauritania, Nicaragua, and Niger are the first to benefit from the World Bank's "fast-track" initiative to help countries implement their EFA Action Plans. Work is now under way with these countries to build the required capacity and to close a financing gap, currently estimated at around \$400 million over the next three years (2003-2005).

→ The new 15-year Regional Education Project for Latin America and the Caribbean (PRELAC), expected to stimulate substantial policy changes, was approved by Education Ministers from the region at a conference in Havana, in November.

→ Parliamentarians from Latin America and the Caribbean met for the first time in São Paulo, Brazil, in early November to advance the Education for All agenda. They agreed to make the Inter-parliamentary gathering permanent and to set up a forum for exchange among legislators in the region.

→ In East and Southeast Asia, educational planners from various countries have started to use video conferencing to discuss their national Education for All action plans. Organized by UNESCO and the World Bank, the video conferences will continue in 2003.

→ An international conference on Lifelong Learning in Europe, in Sofia, in November 2002 highlighted the lack of attention to the learning needs of adults in many countries.

→ The draft national EFA plans of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic were reviewed and amended during discussions between UNESCO staff, experts and the EFA teams from these countries at a seminar in Beirut, in October.



## Draw me Peace

The eighteen winners of UNESCO's "Draw me Peace" competition for children aged between 4 and 7 were chosen by a jury of artists and children in Paris on 20 November. Two of the winning drawings are reproduced above.

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## High Commission on Education for Afghanistan

The first meeting of the High Commission on Education for Afghanistan was held at UNESCO from 16-21 December 2002. The Afghan Education Minister Mohammad Yunus Qanooni and Higher Education Minister Mohammad Sharif Faiz participated as well as educators and intellectuals from Afghanistan and other countries, donors and UN representatives.

Created at the initiative of the Afghan government with UNESCO support, the independent High Commission has the task of defining the political and strategic goals needed to rebuild the country's education system. While grappling with 70 per cent illiteracy, a teacher shortage and a lack of resources, Afghanistan must revise school textbooks and curricula and train teachers.

The secretariat started work on 1 January. The High Commission is to meet again in May in Kabul in the presence of UNESCO's Director-General. It will submit its recommendations to the Afghan government in June.

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## African Education Ministers call for action

At least 20 per cent of state budgets should go to education, and 50 per cent of education budgets to the primary level. This is the pledge made by Education Ministers at the Eighth Conference of the Ministers of Education of African Members States (MINEDAF VIII) in Dar-es-Salaam last December.

The proportion of non-salary teaching expenses should be increased to provide pupils with proper teaching materials, and teacher training and salaries must be improved, the Ministers agreed. A pupil/teacher ratio of about 40:1 should be aimed for, repeat rates reduced and the private sector encouraged to take in a high percentage of pupils.

Two major outcomes include:

- the creation of the Regional EFA Forum which will operate with six subregional forums covering sub-Saharan and North African countries; and
- the publication of a two-yearly progress report on education in Africa.

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## Cambodia: AIDS prevention is learned at school

Cambodia is one of the Asian countries where HIV/AIDS has spread fastest. Some 3.5 per cent of its 15 to 49-year-olds are now infected. The epidemic has reached all strata of the population, in cities and countryside, and even the remotest rural areas.

In 1998, UNESCO Phnom Penh and Cambodia's Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports launched an AIDS preventive education programme in the country's secondary schools. Several thousand teachers have already been trained to increase student awareness of the disease.

Today, nearly four years after the programme's launch, an evaluation based on a sample of eleven schools shows that knowledge of the virus increases significantly after training. Correct answers jump from 53 per cent before training to 81 per cent afterwards. Girls do even better. Correct responses go from 51 per cent before training to 89 per cent afterwards.

Secondly, 66 per cent of school principals and 62 per cent of teachers say they are ready to repeat the course.

There was just one discordant note: teachers say it is not always easy to talk about sexual relations in the classroom and 51 per cent admit to having trouble when classes are overcrowded. Some 84 per cent of teachers say they would like to be better trained about the disease and how to protect oneself against it.

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## Seychelles, Mauritius and Kenya get top marks

The students of Seychelles, Mauritius and Kenya have every reason to be proud. They are the best achievers in all of southern, eastern and central Africa. This is the result of a study on the quality of education made public during the Eighth Conference of Ministers of Education of African States (MINEDAF VIII). The study surveyed more than 45,000 students in their sixth year of schooling (average age 13), in a total of 15 countries in the 3 regions.

Mauritius came first in mathematics, ahead of Kenya and Seychelles, while the students of Namibia, Lesotho and South Africa got the lowest marks. The best readers were found in Seychelles, Kenya and Mauritius, in that order, while Lesotho, Namibia and Uganda scored least.

As well as basic knowledge, the survey also looked at factors that influence the quality of education such as government spending, student nutrition and school equipment. In all these countries, it emerged that nearly half the students go to schools without electricity and 15 per cent are without water.

Government spending on education varies considerably, from 28.5 per cent of the total government budget in Swaziland to 7 per cent in the United Kingdom of Tanzania. This study, which received technical support from the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), was the most important survey on educational quality ever carried out in the region.

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### JANUARY

6–9

**The Potential of Distance and Open Learning in the Training of Adult Educators and Grassroots Workers involved in Literacy and Non-formal Adult Education.**

Organized by UIE, the University of South Africa and the Open Learning Campus, New Delhi • Pretoria, South Africa  
Contact: [m.singh@unesco.org](mailto:m.singh@unesco.org)

20–23

**International Symposium on Rural Education**

Organized by the International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education (INRULED) and UNESCO  
Baoding, China • Contact: [beijing@unesco.org](mailto:beijing@unesco.org)

21–23

**Annual Meeting of the Collective Consultation of NGOs on EFA • Porto Alegre, Brazil**

Contact: [ngo.efa@unesco.org](mailto:ngo.efa@unesco.org)

30–31

**The Practice of Rights in Education: A Renewed Commitment to Human Rights Education • UNESCO Paris**

Contact: [m.karela@unesco.org](mailto:m.karela@unesco.org)

### FEBRUARY

13

**International launch of the United Nations Literacy Decade** coordinated by UNESCO

UN Headquarters, New York,  
Contact: [s.aoyagi@unesco.org](mailto:s.aoyagi@unesco.org)

### MARCH

6–7

**Third meeting of the Board of the EFA Global Monitoring Report to take stock of the 2002 report and discuss the 2003 and 2004 editions • UNESCO Paris**

Contact: [u.peppler@unesco.org](mailto:u.peppler@unesco.org)

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**Mediation and Youth • Organized by UNESCO and the Centre for Mediation and Training in Mediation (CMFM) UNESCO Paris • Contact: [a.verdiani@unesco.org](mailto:a.verdiani@unesco.org)**

31

**Pacific Paths • Organized by UNESCO, the CIRCM (International Centre for Conflict Resolution and Mediation) and the Canadian Delegation to UNESCO UNESCO Paris • Contact: [a.verdiani@unesco.org](mailto:a.verdiani@unesco.org)**

### APRIL

6–13

**Global EFA Week – Annual event to recall the EFA goals, take stock of the advances made in this direction, and mark the third anniversary of the World Education Forum (Dakar).** (see page 9)

Contact: [edmedia@unesco.org](mailto:edmedia@unesco.org)



● **Globalization and the Market in Higher Education: Quality, Accreditation and Qualifications** edited by Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić. As higher education adapts to the market culture and becomes the subject of negotiation in the World Trade Organisation, questions are being raised about quality, accreditation and qualifications in education. Universities, NGOs and international organizations give their views. Available from UNESCO Publishing, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP, 212 pages, 22 Euros. To order: <http://upo.unesco.org>

● **Gender Sensitivity: Manual for Sensitizing Educational Managers, Curriculum and Material Developers and Media professionals to Gender Concerns.** This user-friendly manual is the culmination of 13 years of UNESCO's experience in Africa, Asia and to a lesser extent, the Arab States. Its objective is to raise the sensitivity of educators to gender issues. (UNESCO doc. ED-2002/WS/26)

● **Role of Student Services in Higher Education.** A practical manual on developing, implementing, managing and evaluating student services and programmes. Aimed at both governments and institutions of tertiary education, it suggests concrete initiatives and practices that should be effective in improving the quality of life for students. (UNESCO doc. ED-2002/WS/27)

● **Non-Violence in Education** by Jean-Marie Muller. Part of an instructional kit, this review targets educators and young students and anyone interested in peace and non-violence. It is an important publication at the start of the United Nations International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010. (UNESCO doc. ED-2002/WS/23)

● **Assessment Report, Education in the Chechen Republic: Conditions, Problems, Recovery Prospects and Development.** Carried out by Russian and international experts with technical and financial help from UNESCO, this study assesses the educational situation in Chechnya, 184 pp.

● **Multimedia in Education.** This specialized course for educational personnel explains why, where and how multimedia can be used in schools and educational settings, while pointing out their limits as an educational tool. Prepared by an international working group as part of the IITE training programme. Moscow, 2002. Box including 6 Modules and CD. Price: \$98. Order on-line at [www.iite.ru](http://www.iite.ru).

● **Guidelines for Education in Situations of Emergency and Crisis** edited by Kacem Bensalah. This manual aims to assist with the drawing up of national and regional Education for All plans.

● **Secondary Education: a Path Toward Human Development.** This publication brings together work on secondary education by researchers from various countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. It contains analyses from various perspectives and important documentation. Available in English and Spanish from UNESCO Santiago, 247 pp. (E-mail: [cjerez@unesco.cl](mailto:cjerez@unesco.cl))

● **Teacher Training: a Contribution to Discussion – Some Country Experiences.** A compilation of teacher-training experiences in such different societies as Chile, United States, Spain, France, United Kingdom and Israel. Various authors. Available in English and Spanish from UNESCO Santiago, 193 pp. (E-mail: [cjerez@unesco.cl](mailto:cjerez@unesco.cl))

## Brochure on UNESCO and Education.

A colourful introduction to UNESCO's mission in education, its strategy and main priorities. It is currently available in English, French and Spanish. Arabic, Chinese, Portuguese and Russian editions are forthcoming.



## International Review of Education.

In this special issue entitled Education and Human Rights, contributors from all continents offer a view of the current status of human rights education worldwide. Volume 48, Nos. 3-4, July, 2002, edited by Volker Lenhart and Kaisa Savolainen. Available from the UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg, [www.unesco.org/education/uie/](http://www.unesco.org/education/uie/); E-mail: [uie@unesco.org](mailto:uie@unesco.org)

## PROSPECTS, Quarterly Review of Comparative Education.

Prepared especially for the 14th AIDS conference in Barcelona in July 2002, this issue of *Prospects* is an important step in the definition of an overall strategy and its translation into practice. A diverse mix of contributors includes researchers, young people, a minister, UNESCO staff and religious spokesmen. No. 2, June 2002, International Bureau of Education, Subscriptions: [www.ibe.unesco.org](http://www.ibe.unesco.org).

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