



United Nations Educational, Scientific
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The Newsletter
of UNESCO's
Education Sector

Education TODAY

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Investing in education can be very profitable for individuals and societies. But who pays the bill? Focus, a four-page report, explores how countries rich and poor are increasingly looking to the private sector, parents and NGOs to share the burden.

EDITO

There is a correlation between education and economic growth but a correlation is not a cause-and-effect relationship. Does economic growth lead to greater investment in education or does more and better education stimulate economic growth? It's probably a bit of both, although the examples of countries like Germany, Japan and the Republic of Korea, in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries respectively, suggest that an educated population is a springboard for jumping to high economic performance.

The correlation between good education and a growing economy throws up several questions. How do you explain those cases where states outperform their neighbours educationally but not economically? Part of the explanation may be that economic growth is a blunt instrument for measuring a society's success. More subtle and comprehensive measures, such as UNDP's Human Development Index, may indeed show that the overall quality of life is higher in better-educated communities. However, another part of the explanation must be that some states have done better than others at creating the economic and political frameworks that allow educated people to work productively for their own and the common good.

There is a more difficult question. If education is good for the economy, why have so many countries not yet achieved Education for All? Most governments claim that their aim is to deliver economic growth, yet many have singularly failed to use the tool of education in its support. Is it the absence of the freedom and democracy that prevents the people from voicing their demand for education? Is it because maintaining educational and economic inequality actually suits the ruling elite? Political leaders have become adept at articulating the rhetoric about the importance of education, but are less inclined to acknowledge that importance at budget time.

Yet there is no avoiding the state's role in funding basic education. The World Bank flirted with the idea of fee-paying education but now holds firmly that universal primary education will not be achieved unless it is both compulsory and free. Achieving that will require some states to economize on their spending at other levels, such as in higher education, where research shows that free tuition for all students actually tends to reinforce existing elite power structures.

John Daniel
Assistant Director-General for Education

Forming citizens in Namibia

Pupils in fifteen Namibian schools study human rights and democracy

“I look forward to turning 18 because then I can vote,” says 14-year-old Injomoka Toromba from a rural school in Namibia. “I have an older brother and when he gets irritated with me I don’t answer back or get angry. I just apologize if I do something wrong. I don’t want conflicts, they must be resolved,” she says slowly, carefully choosing her words in English. Her classmate, Elliot Kaipiti, comments that the Constitution is the most important document in Namibia.

Injomoka and Elliot go to primary school in the village of Ovitoto, tucked away in a scenic valley, 120 km northeast of Windhoek,

Education, Training and Employment Creation through the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) were involved in running the project.

A new approach

The project’s history goes back several years. A regional workshop in Windhoek in 1998 brought together curriculum and human rights experts from the three countries. They drew up a core curriculum for human rights and democracy education and agreed that specific subjects like history, moral and civic education, social studies and languages

boards, voter education manuals, a copy of the Constitution, booklets on human rights, summaries of the labour law, Namibia’s policies on gender and the disabled.

In addition to classroom activities, pupils did mini research projects: they interviewed their parents or observed life situations in their community. In one project they asked parents about their understanding of peace; in others they looked at how people greet each other and the significance of colours in different cultures and ethnic groups.

They also observed how village meetings were run and, based on this experience, discussed the question of democracy.

No dull lessons

“Pupils learnt about human rights through play and not in dull lessons,” says Ben Boys.

The schools selected represented urban and rural areas and Namibia’s eleven ethnic groups. Arthur Erasmus, vice-principal of the urban JTL Beukes Primary School in the town of Rehoboth, 90 km south of Windhoek, says that during assemblies, individual pupils now raise human rights issues and interpret them. “The events of 11 September spawned many a debate on violence, war and peace. Teachers taped news items and brought them to school for children to see,” he adds. Today, teachers continue to use the kit and make use of newspapers to further explore certain topics.

The \$1.8 million pilot project was funded by DANIDA, Denmark’s aid agency, and UNESCO is seeking funds to spread the programme nationwide. Meanwhile, the National Institute for Educational Development is revising the syllabuses for most grades to include, inter alia, human rights education.

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Injomoka and Elliot from Namibia are now much more aware of their rights

Namibia’s capital. In the past two years they have learned about human rights and democracy. Their school is one of fifteen Namibian primary schools to have benefited from a pilot project on education for human rights and democracy in Southern Africa. The project, which ended last year, also ran in Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

“We wanted to see how human rights and democracy issues could be mainstreamed into the school curriculum,” explains Ben Boys of UNESCO Namibia. UNESCO, the Namibian Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture, the Ministry of Higher Edu-

cation, Training and Employment Creation through the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) were involved in running the project. lent themselves to more specific human rights lessons. A teacher’s resource manual *Education for Human Rights and Democracy in Southern Africa*, was then developed, targeting mainly teachers working with pupils from Grades 5 to 7.

In Namibia, the resource material came in a kit containing a teacher’s guide on such topics as the country’s history, conflict and peace, violence, environment and the Constitution. Suggestions for class activities, questionnaires for pupils, illustrations and related newspaper articles were part of this guide. The kit also contained posters, game

Supporting youngsters in Indian slums

Project helps underprivileged children and youth in India make sense of their schooling

“We have a computer in school but it’s always with the teacher,” complains 15-year-old Parampal Singh. “We have a library but it’s always locked. They tell us the key can’t be found.” Parampal’s serious complaints are conveyed in good humour. “If the key is found, it’s turns rusty. If the rust is cleaned and the room opened, the books crumble in our hands!”

Parampal goes to a school in the slum cluster of Giri Nagar in New Delhi. But he gets much of his ‘real’ education through the teachers of the Sri Ram Goburdhun Charitable Trust’s We Help Youth (WHY) project, which offers educational support to children and youth both in and out of school.



©Shamika
These Indian children and youth get much of their “real” education on the roadside

A promising project

Sitting with his friends, he speaks of the regularity and commitment of his teachers here. The learning environment may be less than modest – classes conducted on the roadside in a slum cluster, a mat to sit on, a thick plastic sheet as roof and a makeshift blackboard – but this is where Parampal and his mates grapple successfully with their school curriculum.

Anuradha Bakhshi is the woman behind the project, which is being promoted by UNESCO as one of the promising practices in the education of children and youth living in difficult circumstances. Bakhshi founded SRGCT, the NGO that runs the WHY project, in 1998. The first halting steps she took in Giri Nagar in the Indian capital was to distribute vitaminized biscuits to children. But it was the disturbing sight of a disabled young man, Manu, lying around filthy, neglected and humiliated, that triggered a major change in her. “I realized that he had no option but to be re-integrated into his milieu, right here on the street where he lived.”

This small, accidental encounter was the site of germination for WHY. The project grew slowly but surely. “We had first-generation learners in Grade 4 who could neither read nor write,” Bakhshi explains. “Many of them have working parents – hawkers, sweepers, small-time vendors – and most parents

are illiterate or semi-literate. No wonder these children lack confidence outside their community.

Scaling up

Today, the project has broadened to include 516 underprivileged children of all ages, from pre-school to secondary school, and drawn from all communities: Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists and from the neighbouring slums. The project was scaled up and modified along the way, in response to the demands of local residents. Today it includes the teaching of all subjects, even computers, and caters to different needs. Children with disabilities are given toilet training and taught simple tasks such as bathing, dressing and eating.

“We have 10- to 27-year-olds here with spasticity, mental retardation, muscular dystrophy, deafness,” says Shamika, their teacher. In the tiny rented room in the slum, the children learn not just prayers, reading, exercising, and wielding pencils to draw and copy; they learn to make embroidered jute and paper bags, bead necklaces and bracelets and floating candles. Some even join computer classes. Their little domain – plastered with their paintings – expresses everything that words cannot.

Nearly all the staff belongs to the community; some are school dropouts, others have basic degrees in various subjects; all were unemployed or considered unemployable. For example, Mohammad Hussain was once a sweeper. “Today, thanks to WHY, I have 50 students whom I teach on 6 computers.

More than mere curriculum

WHY also discovered that the community needed more than mere curriculum help for schoolchildren. So day nurseries were set up, preventive health and nutritional programmes were put in place, sport facilities were made available, as a result employment opportunities – and loyalties – were created.

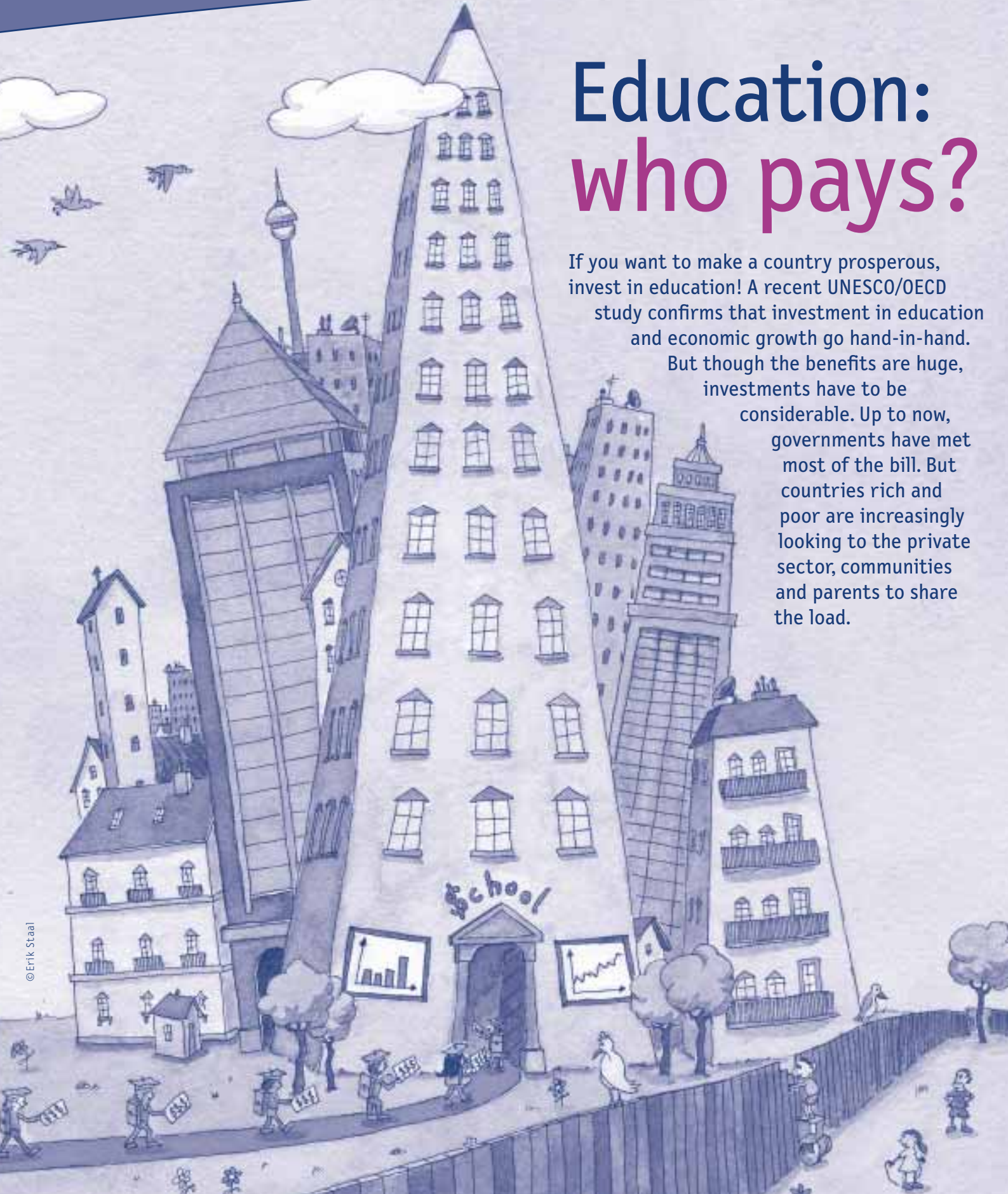
“Parents had to be taught negotiating skills,” comments Bakhshi, “but first we had to persuade them that situations were not just a matter of winning or losing, that there were shades of grey. This is how our project helps resolve personal problems; this is in itself a kind of social transformation.”

An example is the young men who were once idle and potential troublemakers. “Now they are helping us after school, doing whatever is needed, even taking the disabled to the toilet,” Bakhshi says.

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Education: who pays?

If you want to make a country prosperous, invest in education! A recent UNESCO/OECD study confirms that investment in education and economic growth go hand-in-hand. But though the benefits are huge, investments have to be considerable. Up to now, governments have met most of the bill. But countries rich and poor are increasingly looking to the private sector, communities and parents to share the load.



Investing in education can be very profitable for individuals and societies. People were once sceptical, but now there's proof – investment in education and economic growth really do go hand-in-hand. And it's true for secondary and university level education as well as for primary, according to a survey *Financing Education – Investments and Returns* that reports on sixteen developing countries.¹ The study was recently published by UNESCO and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Developing countries that have invested in human resources over the past two decades are reckoned to have added half a percentage point to their growth rates. Such progress is also felt by individuals, since those with educational diplomas have a better chance of getting a job, keeping it and earning more money. The higher one gets on the educational ladder the better it gets. In Paraguay, for example, a man with higher education earns on average 300 per cent more than a man with only a secondary school diploma.

So investment in education makes a country prosperous. Except when it doesn't.

Longterm investment

"The figures show there's a link between the two, but it isn't necessarily cause and effect," says Karine Tremblay of OECD, one of the survey's authors. Growth is not automatic when a country invests in education. It can be cancelled out by a high birth rate, natural disasters and political crises.

The benefits are also far from immediate. In 1960, adults in the 16 countries studied had spent an average of 3.4 years at school. In 2000, that figure had risen to 7.6, compared with 10.2 in rich countries. At that rate, it will take another 30 years for the countries furthest behind to catch up with the rich nations.

The survey is one more argument in favour of Education for All. Investment in education is not just what ought to be done –

1. Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Malaysia, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Thailand, Tunisia, Uruguay and Zimbabwe – all of them involved in the World Education Indicators programme, which compares the development of their education systems.

helping people to blossom and giving them an opportunity for a better standard of living. It is also an economic necessity.

"It's very simple," says Serge Péano, senior programme specialist with UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP). "Education is the root of any society's growth. There's no other development model for people who can't read or write."

Brain power

The strength of rich countries is based on education, he says. "Brain power is still their trump card in a competitive world." This is particularly true in the context of globalization and a knowledge economy, where the number of unskilled jobs is shrinking. By 2020, industrial production in many developing countries is expected to double, while jobs in the unskilled sector will fall to between 10 and 15 per cent of the labour force. Hence the importance of getting as many children into school as possible.

But to do this, enormous investment is needed. Until now, governments have come up with the bulk of the money, whatever the education system or political, economic and ideological situation. However, in many developing countries individuals bear an increasing part of the cost of education and often subsidize governments.

Worldwide, 63 per cent of the cost of education is paid for by the state, with families, communities, the private sector and NGOs providing 35 per cent and international aid 2 per cent. OECD governments spend as much as 12.7 per cent of their budgets on education, making it one of the biggest items, and an average \$4,229 a year on each primary school pupil.

The bill gets heavier as the children grow older. A secondary school pupil costs \$5,174 and those in higher education \$11,422 a year – 230 per cent more than a primary school child. In some countries, the salary gap between primary-level teachers and university lecturers accounts for this but mostly it is the different teacher-pupil ratio in secondary and higher education.

Private funding of education is quickly catching on, though it still represents only 12 per cent of education spending in the OECD countries. Such private sector growth

● Educational funding worldwide

Government:	63%
Private:	35%
International aid:	2%

● Amount of external aid needed to achieve universal primary education \$5.6 billion a year between now and 2015

● Education's share in OECD country budgets:

12.7%

● Annual government spending per pupil in OECD countries

Primary:	\$4,229
Secondary:	\$5,174
Higher:	\$11,422

● Primary school-age pupils in private schools

Developing countries:	1 in 6*
OECD countries:	1 in 10

● Years in school

Developing countries:	7.6
OECD countries:	10.2

● International aid for education

1999:	\$5.98 billion
2000:	\$4.72 billion

● Recipients of international aid to education (2000)

Africa:	47%
Asia:	23%
Latin America:	7%
Middle East:	6%

*16 countries involved in the World Education Indicators programme, surveyed in the UNESCO-OECD report.

is fastest in Denmark, Canada, Australia and the Netherlands. In the last three, it accounts for between 16 and 37 per cent. The trend is more visible in higher education (see the report on privatization of this sector in *Education Today*, No.3).

The constantly increasing number of students is the main reason for the increase in private funding. To achieve maximum enrolment, more money is needed.

But this is perhaps not the main thing. "It's not so much a question of numbers but of

Education: who pays?

political choices that is important,” says Nico Hirtt, a teacher and essayist, author of *l'École sacrifiée*. “For quite a while now, the state has been pulling out of education,” he adds.

So countries are tempted to look to private investors to share the burden. People also want schools to cost less or at least to be more productive. The big debate these days is whether education is cost-effective, according to OECD's 2002 report *Education at a Glance*. In fact, more and more schools

are funded by governments but managed by private firms.

The much-publicized company Edison School today manages more than 100 schools in the United States. Most are “charter schools,” which means they get government money according to how many pupils they have and parents do not have to pay any fees. Starting out in the United States, this formula has now spread to the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and other countries.

The controversial system of school vouchers is part of the drive for results. It started in Florida in 1998 and involves grants to parents who want to send their children to private or religious schools.

“These initiatives are based on the idea that you can run schools like companies and foster excellence by making them compete with each other,” says Igor Kitayev, an IIEP programme specialist.

Creating social ghettos

This is what defenders of state-funded education fear—creating two-tier education systems, by favouring schools in better-off residential areas or by setting very high educational standards. “This kind of thing creates social ghettos,” says Hirtt.

“Why should the way a company is run always be the model?” says social scientist Christian Laval, author of *L'école n'est pas une entreprise*. “To get results,” he comments, “you have to make students want to learn. You can't calculate or count that.”

Privatizing education is also spreading to poor countries, many of which have not always made the necessary effort to enrol the maximum number of children. The *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002* points out that 70 countries are unlikely to achieve the Education for All targets by 2015.

Families pay more

Poor countries are spending relatively less per pupil than the rich OECD countries. In 2000, Jordan only spent 5 per cent of its budget on education, not much more than Guinea-Bissau (4.8 per cent), compared with 11.3 per cent in Spain and 15.6 per cent in Norway. Meanwhile the amount of international aid shrinks (see box) so governments are looking to families themselves to help bear the cost—paying for such things as equipment, supplies, uniforms and, increasingly, school fees.

In the 16 countries surveyed by UNESCO and OECD, one sixth of all children go to a private school (most of which are subsidized by the state), compared with one tenth in the OECD countries. In Chile, China and Paraguay, more than 40 per cent of educational funding comes from the private sector.

Decline in aid to education

Increasing scepticism among donors about the effectiveness of aid

Education has never been a hotter issue than it is today. Last year, it was on the agenda of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the UN International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey and the G-8 Summit, which called for universal primary education. And yet, and yet...

Over the past decade, international aid for developing countries has steadily declined. The *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002* states that bilateral aid for education fell by 16 per cent between 1990 and 2000. The total annual amount spent on education even fell in 2000, from \$5.98 to \$4.72 billion. The *Report* estimates that \$5.6 billion a year of external aid may be necessary—in addition to national investment—if the goal of universal primary education for both boys and girls is to be reached by 2015.

“Funding agencies are more and more sceptical about the effectiveness of aid—especially assistance through projects,” says Steve Packer, deputy head of the team that produced the *Report*. “Relatively large sums have been spent in the last 40 years without always that much to show for it.”

This is especially true in the least developed countries, which some experts say do not have the infrastructure and the institutional capacity to use large sums of international aid in the short term. Should schoolbooks continue to be sent to countries that cannot distribute them to the schools? And is it useful to give aid to countries where up to 10 per cent of salaries go to ghost teachers and occasionally to non-existent schools?

So even as the international community urges developing countries to achieve universal education by 2015, they are getting less and less help. “This is a contradiction,” says Packer. “But at the same time, international aid practices are changing. Aid is coming to education in different ways, increasingly under the broad heading of poverty reduction. Aid organizations are funding development strategies more than individual sectors. So there's more money going to education than the figures actually show,” he comments.

To speed up progress toward the achievement of universal primary education, the World Bank has launched the Fast-Track Initiative designed to provide additional external funding for countries committed to reform. Countries provide evidence of their commitment to poverty reduction and educational reform in return for extra aid. Seven countries—Burkina Faso, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Mauritania, Nicaragua and Niger—are expected to be the first beneficiaries, if both sides can agree on how to implement the scheme. ●

→ The private education on offer comes in different forms – including entirely private institutions, private tuition which is increasingly important especially in Asia, schools contracted by the government and schools runs by NGOs or local communities. The community school model has especially caught on in Africa to make up for the state's failings. Such schools are usually in remote country areas and aim to provide the largest number of children with a basic education.

In Mali, for example, where illiteracy tops 70 per cent, the number of community schools has grown from 175 in 1995 to over 1,500 today – more than one third of all primary schools. Enrolment in private schools increases sharply at secondary and university levels. Independent private schools educate 63 per cent of youth at these levels in Brazil and 73 per cent in the Philippines.

So access to education for the poorest children is still very irregular. "Equal opportunity has to remain the target," says Albert Motivans of UNESCO's Institute for Statistics, who was involved in the UNESCO/OECD survey. "If we want to reduce poverty, we have to share the cost fairly," he adds.

If this is not done, the world's 115 million children with no access to education are likely to face a closed schoolroom door for many years to come. ●

Are private schools more efficient than public schools?

A study by Clive R. Belfield and Henry M. Levin of Columbia University, soon to be published by the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), provides a highly nuanced response to this controversial issue. The authors closely examine the situation in six countries (Colombia, Chile, the United Kingdom, the United States, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic) that have introduced privatization into their educational systems in varying degrees, either through fully private schools, publicly funded schools run by private service providers, or the allocation of school vouchers distributed to parents of school-age children which allows them to select the school of their choice.

The survey found that, generally speaking, private management does not appear to result in better grades. In Chile, where a school voucher programme was introduced during the 1980s, private school students do not fare better than public school students. "Nothing indicates," note the authors, "that private schools are more efficient than public schools." The experiment appears to be more conclusive in Colombia, where school vouchers were allocated only to families living in underprivileged areas. The vouchers allowed a greater number of students to gain access to private schools. Students benefiting from the vouchers fail grades less frequently and attend school for a greater number of years.

In a certain number of cases, however, privatization does appear to be a factor in inequality of education. One example is the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, launched in the United States in the 1990s. More than ten years after the programme's launch, it appears that wealthier and more educated families have benefited most from the freedom to select schools of their choice.

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Education is not only a question of money. It is also about motivation

Girls' education: Getting the balance right

Some fifty countries are unlikely to meet the target of gender parity in education by 2005



The arguments for girls' education are well known: lower infant and maternal mortality, smaller and healthier families, higher agricultural productivity and increased per capita income. More fundamentally, education is a human right for girls and boys. "It's about gaining the power to reflect, to make choices and to acquire the tools to improve one's life," says Bah-Diallo.

Girls' Education Initiative to help governments expand quality education for girls.

A few examples: Malawi has cut the costs of schooling for parents by eliminating school fees and abolishing compulsory uniforms. Guinea has raised the marriage age and made it an offence for male teachers to harass female pupils. Safe drinking water, free meals and small schools close to home have also proved effective. Even building separate toilets for girls can be enough to keep them in school.

Teachers' attitudes as well as textbooks and curricula also hinder girls' education. UNESCO has developed a *Gender Sensitive Training Manual* to sensitize educational managers, curriculum and material developers and media professionals to gender concerns.

"Only by educating girls today," says Bah-Diallo, "can we get the gender balance right in tomorrow's society".

Today, women make up two-thirds of the world's 862 million illiterates.

Girls' education is the theme of this year's Education-for-All Week and of the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003.

In isolated hamlets of Upper Egypt, 12-year-old girls are convincing their parents to postpone marriage until they graduate from school. In rural regions of Bangladesh, girls' enrolment in secondary school has doubled in less than a decade.

Even in some of the world's most deprived areas, girls are gaining the right to go to school, marking one point in the drive to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by the year 2005.

"The goal of gender parity by 2005 is the most challenging of the six Education for All goals," says Aïcha Bah-Diallo, Deputy Assistant Director-General for Education and Director of UNESCO's Division of Basic Education. "It demands political will and profound changes in the way societies are structured."

Today over 56 per cent of the world's 115 million out-of-school children are girls. The risk of dropping out is also much higher for girls. An average 6-year-old girl in South Asia can expect to spend six years in school – three years less than a boy the same age. For some fifty countries, the 2005 target remains remote.

But good arguments are not always enough. Getting girls into school means acting on what keeps them outside the classroom in the first place. Poverty tops the list. Parents need their daughters to fetch water, help out in the fields and care for siblings.

Gender concerns

Yet changes are underway. To speed up progress, thirteen United Nations agencies are pooling efforts in the United Nations

Education-for-All Week

Global EFA Week is the major annual advocacy event of the Education-for-All drive. It serves to recall the EFA goals set at the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000.

The deadline set by the Dakar gathering for putting equal numbers of boys and girls into school is 2005. Accordingly, the theme of Global EFA Week 2003 is girls' education. The Week and its special theme are intended as a wake-up call to governments to urge them to multiply their efforts to eliminate boy/girl disparities.

UN country offices, civil society organizations, NGOs, teachers and academia around the world

are organizing a host of activities to mark EFA Week, celebrated from 6 to 13 April.

UNESCO headquarters and many of its country offices are participating in the Global Campaign for Education's attempt to break the world record of the largest simultaneous lesson in history, as registered in the Guinness Book of Records. Anyone, anywhere can join in, on 9 April at either 4am GMT, 8am GMT or 2pm GMT.

More on www.campaignforeducation.org

Check out the EFA Week website: www.unesco.org/education/efaweek

Much more on

3 questions to Carlos Zarco Mera

Carlos Zarco Mera participated in the 3rd World Social Forum in Porto Alegre in January 2003 in his capacity as Secretary-General of the Council of Adult Education in Latin America and the Latin American focal point for UNESCO's Collective Consultation of NGOs on EFA. A critical voice from the civil society movement.

1 The World Social Forum is saying that another world is possible. What does this mean for education?

First, the Forum is a learning process. It's an intensive course for thousands of people who exchange and reflect on how to create another and more just world. More than 1,200 workshops took place every day. Second, education is increasingly critical for the Forum because a better world is possible only if people engage in meaningful educational activities. This is also why the World Education Forum is organized prior to the Social Forum.

2 What were the hot issues in education?

Our discussion focused on education as a human right, how the quality of education is defined by teachers, educators and NGOs, and the importance of finding new ways of learning. 'Popular education' in Latin America provides a good methodology because it tries to put

people at the forefront, insisting that all of us are intellectuals in the sense that we are knowledgeable about different aspects of life.

3 What is the division of responsibility between governments and civil society?

Education is a right and the main responsibility must lie with the state. Education is a public good that states have to pay for. It's a lie to say that the market will resolve the problem of illiteracy and out-of-school children. But governments don't have the sole responsibility. The quality of education is the main responsibility of civil society – teachers, students, NGOs, parents, etc. In my opinion, governments should provide the schools, equipment and train teachers, and then leave it to civil society to decide on the kind of education needed. Governments must learn to delegate responsibility and civil society must take on more social responsibility and have the courage to act.

Davos tackles UN goals

To most, the annual World Economic Forum in Davos rhymes with mighty corporate interests and untrammelled globalization, yet a closer look tells a different story. Taking the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on board, the Forum launched its Global Governance Initiative aimed at giving the world's heavyweights a progress report card by the time they meet again in January 2004.

"A short report will assess how well the world has done over the last twelve months on moving toward all the goals," explains Professor Christopher Colclough, who is chairing the expert group on education. This group brings together half a dozen highly respected international figures charged with evaluating efforts to ensure universal primary schooling by 2015 and to eliminate gender disparities in education.

For more information: www.weforum.org

World tour

→ Some 200 policy-makers, representatives of regional, sub-regional and non-governmental organizations, donors, members of parliament and experts met in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso in March to examine crucial issues including education within the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Today, three-quarters of the population of sub-Saharan Africa survive on less than two dollars a day. Of the 49 least developed countries in the world, 34 are African.

→ Although most countries have now elaborated preliminary versions of national EFA plans of action, many of them have to be improved, according to a recent UNESCO survey. Based on 66 responses, the survey shows that countries need immediate technical support in such fields as cost analysis, policy dialogue and formulation, analysis of the macro-economic framework and data processing.

→ In recent months, donor countries, UN agencies, the European Commission and the World Bank have discussed the financial and practical implications of the Fast-Track Initiative. They have agreed on a framework for the Initiative, which will be reviewed at the World Bank's Spring meeting in April.

→ African educational planners took part in a seminar in Dakar, in March, on how to ensure coherence between the various development plans and frameworks required by the international community. The seminar was organized by UNESCO Dakar and the French Co-operation.

→ As part of UNESCO's efforts to provide African educational planners with a sound grounding in economic principles, a seminar was held in Dakar, in January, for experts, education planners and economists from the public and private sectors in West and Central Africa. The UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa organized the seminar.

Ten years to reduce illiteracy

“Literacy as Freedom” is the theme for the United Nations Literacy Decade – Education for All (2003-2012), launched in New York on 13 February. The aim is to provide new impetus for the campaign against illiteracy. The issue is a highly crucial one: according to UNESCO statistics, one out of five over the age of 15 can neither read nor write. If no action is taken, one out of six adults will be illiterate by the year 2010.

“This is an intolerable situation, and it underscores the need to bolster our efforts for everyone,” said Koïchiro Matsuura, UNESCO’s Director-General during the UN Literacy Decade launch. He emphasized that priority will be given to the most underprivileged groups, notably women and children, ethnic and linguistic minorities, indigenous populations, migrants, children without access to school and the disabled.

The UN Literacy Decade is part of a series of international initiatives promoting Education for All. UNESCO is coordinating the Decade and has laid out an International Plan of Action to work toward literacy for all.



©Sabir Artist, Pakistan/Provided by the Asian Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO

One of UNESCO’s key projects for the Decade is the Literacy and Non-formal Education Development in Afghanistan (LAND-AFGHAN) project, which aims to reduce illiteracy in a country where only 51.9 per cent of males and 21.9 per cent of females can read or write. Another key initiative is the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Program (LAMP), an international survey to measure various literacy levels.

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Mother Language: for exclusion or integration?

As regional minority languages gain increasing recognition in Europe, what is the condition of the languages spoken by immigrant communities on the continent?

In 2000, more than one third of the population under age 35 in urbanized Western Europe came from immigration minority group backgrounds, according to a working document entitled *Language Diversity in Multicultural Europe*, published by UNESCO on this year’s International Mother Language Day (21 February).

The authors argue that while European countries have recently taken steps to ensure the survival of regional languages, they have made no specific provisions for the teaching and practice of immigrant languages.

“The learning and certainly the teaching of immigrant minority languages are often seen by speakers of dominant languages and by policy-makers as obstacles to integration,” the authors note. The working paper calls on European authorities to adopt a charter on multilingualism concerning all minority languages without exclusion.

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Associated Schools Project Network 50th Anniversary

The Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) is marking its 50th anniversary this year. Launched in 1953 to translate UNESCO’s ideals into concrete action, the network currently includes more than 6,700 educational institutions, ranging from pre-school education to teacher training, in some 166 countries. To celebrate the half-century of ASPnet’s existence, various activities are being organized throughout the year, including a photography contest for educators; winners will be announced in May 2003. The highlight of these activities will be the ASPnet international congress, to be held in Auckland, New Zealand, in August.

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A virtual campus for the Mediterranean Basin

An ambitious project involving open distance learning in fifteen countries, primarily in the Mediterranean Basin, was launched on 17 March. The Avicenna Virtual Campus has financial backing of 3.7 million Euros from the European Commission’s EUMEDIS programme and 920,000 Euros from various partners, including UNESCO, the project’s main coordinator.

In contrast to open distance learning projects in Africa and the Mediterranean Basin, where courses are available via a long-distance central server, Avicenna works through “knowledge centers” – generally universities – within the fifteen countries: Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Spain, France, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, the United Kingdom, Syrian Arab Republic, the Palestinian Territories, Tunisia and Turkey. Each centre can create its own national network to diffuse courses to other higher learning centers.

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Excellence explained

What makes outstanding schools outstanding? A recent Latin American qualitative study set out to find the answer by looking at schools with students whose parents are poor and have little or no education.

In fact, no single factor explains why these students perform well, the study reveals. Nevertheless, outstanding schools share a number of characteristics. Decision-making tends to involve a large number of individuals and groups, and non-authoritarian approaches to management are common. These schools enjoy a high degree of autonomy and can take their own administrative and pedagogical decisions. The study found no common pattern in terms of size, location and type of administration.

Teachers in the schools studied are innovators, committed, seek academic performance and have high expectations for their students. Teaching materials, though not abundant, are used efficiently, and innovation is encouraged. These schools foster close relationships with parents, and respect and empathy in and around the school are the order of the day. No common pedagogical or theoretical approach could be identified.

The schools selected for this qualitative study were those that performed well in the First international Comparative Study of Thirteen Countries carried out by the Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of Quality in Education at UNESCO Santiago in 1998. The study was conducted through collective interviews and observations in thirty-one schools in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba and Venezuela.

“While the findings cannot be taken as a recipe,” says Juan Enrique Froemel of the Laboratory that conducted the study, “they nevertheless give some indications of how some schools achieve results against the odds.”

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APRIL

6-13

Global Education-for-All Week

The special theme of EFA Week 2003, which marks the 3rd anniversary of the World Education Forum (Dakar, 2000), is girls' education. See article p. 8
Website: www.unesco.org/education/efaweek

14-16

Regional Meeting on the Reform of Secondary Education

Organized by UNESCO • Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic • Contact: s.bahri@unesco.org

28-29

Life Skills: A bridge between Education and Training? Meeting of the Working Group for International Co-operation in Skills Development

Organized by the Working Group for International Co-operation in Vocational and Technical Skills Development in collaboration with the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre • UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre, Bonn, Germany • Contact: michel.carton@iued.unige.ch

MAY

26-27

Globalization and Higher Education: Implications for North - South Dialogue

Co-organized by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research and UNESCO • Oslo, Norway • Contact: s.uvalic-trumbic@unesco.org

12-16

Jury Meeting for the International Literacy Prizes 2003

Organized by the Division of Basic Education, UNESCO Paris • Contact: n.aksornkool@unesco.org

12-16

Early Childhood Consultation Week

Organized by UNESCO Paris • Contact: b.combes@unesco.org

20-22

Regional Workshop on Evaluation of Educational Curricula towards the Use of Science and Technology Education/Literacy Materials in the Arab States

Organized by UNESCO Beirut and UNESCO Cairo in cooperation with UNESCO Paris • Beirut, Lebanon
Contact: s.sulieman@unesco.org

JUNE

23-25

Higher Education Partners' Meeting

Follow-up to the World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE+5)
Organized by UNESCO Paris • Paris, France
Contact: l.simionescu@unesco.org
http://www.unesco.org/education/wche/wche_5.shtml

JULY

22-23

The Fourth Meeting of the Working Group on EFA

Organized by UNESCO Paris • Paris, France
Contact: abh.singh@unesco.org



● **Education in a Multilingual World. UNESCO Education position paper.**

The right to diversity, particularly ethnic and linguistic diversity, is being increasingly called into question as globalization becomes more and more prevalent. UNESCO strongly defends cultural diversity and presents key concepts related to educational and linguistic issues in this document, which includes a series of texts for reference. (UNESCO doc. ED-2003/WS/2.)

● **Guidelines for Education in Situations of Emergency and Crisis**, by Kacem Bensalah. Education in situations of emergency and crisis is vital to the Education for All campaign. Hence the interest of this guide, which provides directions and recommendations for ensuring EFA in emergency situations, from armed conflict to political crises and natural catastrophes. The document, written in collaboration with several partners, is intended for all key decision-makers, ministries, NGOs and members of civil society concerned with the issue. (UNESCO doc. ED-2002/WS/33.)

● **Revisiting Technical and Vocational Education in Sub-Saharan Africa** by David Atchoarena and André Delluc. Published by UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning, this book examines new trends and innovations in technical and vocational education in sub-Saharan Africa. Despite the great diversity in delivery systems, some common trends can be identified, including the use of new financing and certification mechanisms, greater autonomy for institutions and the promotion of private providers and company-based training. An attempt is also made to document the relationship between training systems and donor intervention. E-mail: information@iiep.unesco.org

● **Open and Distance Learning. Trends, Policy and Strategy Considerations**, coordinated by Evgueni Khvilon. Multimedia, the Internet and other new technologies have become essential elements in education in both industrialized and developing countries. Major universities have been open to these technologies for many years, notably by offering open and distance learning. This document sums up the various policies and strategies currently in effect and describes UNESCO's initiatives within the domain.



● **Community Structures for Young Children, Monograph N°19/2002** by John Allen. This document demonstrates how parents and family members can work together to care for very young children. It describes what is required for providing structures for young children at home or within community services, and outlines the conditions necessary for setting up efficient childcare systems. (UNESCO doc. ED-2002/WS/09.)

● **EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002: Is the World on Track? Executive summary.** In just over twenty pages, this document highlights the main findings of the 2002 Report. E-mail: c.guttman@unesco.org. The full report is available from UNESCO Publishing, 310 pages, 24 euros.*

● **Literacy Trends in Pakistan.** Pakistan has one of the world's highest rates of illiteracy. Although the number of people able to read and write has increased, the number of illiterates more than doubled from 20 million in 1951 to 48 million in 1998. The UNESCO Office in Islamabad is publishing this document to draw attention to the situation. The document includes data and figures on the country's educational situation. UNESCO Islamabad has also published a study on policies promoting schooling for girls, entitled *The Future of Girls' Education in Pakistan*. Contact: UNESCO Islamabad. E-mail: unesco@isb.compol.com



● **Monitoring Learning Achievements in Education and Problems of Non-attendance of Children in Tajikistan.** Published with the support of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Tajikistan, this document provides a report of the situation of pre-school education in this country and evaluates various reforms to the education system undertaken by the government over the past several years.

● **A Little, But Enough.** Julien Chapsal, an anthropologist and photographer, spent several weeks with streetchildren in Jogjakarta (Indonesia). This beautifully illustrated book is the result of his work, in which children are more than just subjects to be photographed. By speaking about their concerns and showing the reality of their daily existence, the children participate fully in the project. (UNESCO doc. ED-2003/WS/3.)

● **Koffi... La Rue... Les Drogues et Koffi... La Rue... Le sida** are comic strips published by UNESCO's programme for the education of children in difficult circumstances. They aim to raise awareness among young readers of the perils of drugs and AIDS through the adventures of Koffi, the main protagonist, and Aminata, his friend. Both publications are intended to help educators promote preventive measures.

Unless otherwise stated, all publications are available free of charge from UNESCO's Documentation and Information Service, Education Sector.
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*To order from UNESCO's Publishing Office: upo.unesco.org

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