



United Nations Educational, Scientific  
and Cultural Organization



The Newsletter  
of UNESCO's  
Education Sector

# Education TODAY

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For UNESCO the ultimate biennial rite of autumn had arrived, the 32nd General Conference, attended by over 100 Education Ministers. *Education Today* seized the opportunity to ask thirteen of them how education is fairing in their countries. Focus, an 8 page dossier, reports.

### EDITO

One of UNESCO's great strengths, which Director-General Matsuura and I strive hard to sustain and develop, is its close relationship with ministers of education around the world. Country visits, regional ministerial gatherings, the annual meeting of the High-Level Group on EFA and, of course, the General Conference, are just some of the numerous occasions each year when my colleagues and I can meet ministers of education and update our understanding of the issues that they face. At the recent General Conference *Education Today* took advantage of the presence of over a hundred ministers in Paris to conduct the interviews that are recorded in this issue.

UNESCO's task is to respond to the requirements of its Member States. I am pleased to observe that the Education Programme and Budget approved by the General Conference last October maps on well to the ministers' concerns. That is the outcome of a systematic planning process, which places the needs expressed by countries within UNESCO's overall strategic plan.

The major element of the programme – accounting for 80% of the budget – is the campaign for Education for All (EFA). We push towards EFA in two ways. First, we respond to requests from Member States for help in reaching each of the six Dakar goals. Needs differ. Some countries may want help to improve their provision of early childhood education while others may want advice on extending literacy among adults. Second, we have the task of co-ordinating the efforts of all the international agencies, bilateral donors and civil society towards EFA. That is going well; particularly now the Fast-Track Initiative for funding faster progress to universal primary education is open to all low-income countries.

The remaining 20% of our budget has to address a wide range of issues that preoccupy ministers. Preparing good secondary education systems for the increasing numbers of children who will seek it once universal primary education becomes a reality is a pressing concern. More and better teacher training is essential to the achievement of EFA – which in turn puts more pressure on higher education as it grapples with the opportunities and challenges posed by globalization. Finally, ministers are paying more and more attention to the quality of education at all levels, encouraged by parents' growing interest in the outputs of this fundamental public service.

John Daniel  
Assistant Director-General for Education

# Learning to read in a month

## Great success for non-formal learning centres in Madagascar

In just one month Jocelyn, 12, has learnt to read. He is attending one of Madagascar's 260 learning centres scattered in villages in the poor provinces of Fianarantsoa, Majunga, Tamatave and Toliara. The centre is Jocelyn's first contact with an educational institution. Like many children living in rural Madagascar, Jocelyn's parents, who are farmers, could not afford to send him to school. "I hope the courses won't stop. I want to continue to learn," Jocelyn says, while proudly reading to his parents from his book.

Madagascar's government and the UN System Joint Programme to Promote Basic Education for All Malagasy Children\* are behind this innovative non-formal education programme. Launched in 2001, it offers learning opportunities for out-of-school children, illiterate and jobless youth and adults. Today, one out of three children are not in school in Madagascar, while one out of three adults cannot read or write.

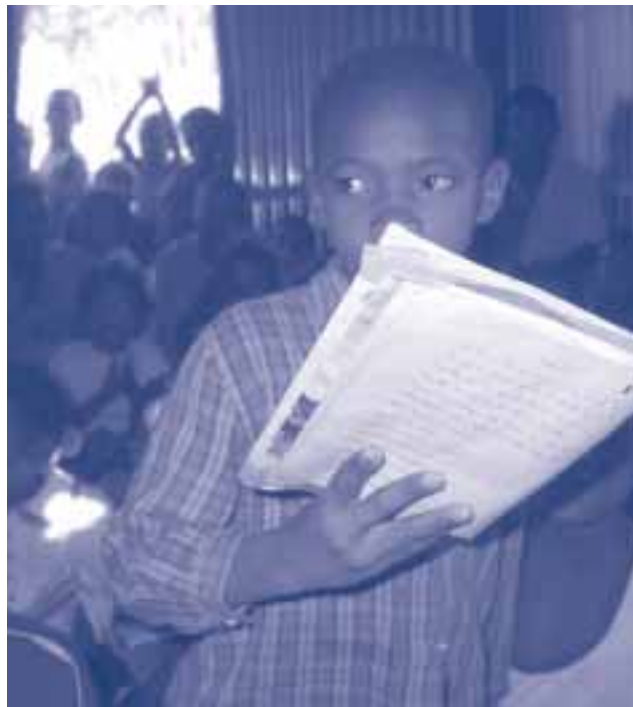
### A clearly effective approach

The mobilization has been overwhelming. People in most of the targeted villages have built their own education centres – a square building of metal or baked clay – that they look after themselves. Despite the rudimentary premises and lack of materials, the mood in the classrooms is upbeat. Children, mothers with babies in their arms, teenage girls (some of them pregnant) follow the classes with the same eagerness, showing just how keen they are to learn.

The Programme is based on the innovative reading-for-all approach which targets primary-school-age children. The approach uses the imagery of consonants and vowels through a familiar story told to the chil-

dren, which helps them to learn and memorize the alphabet in a play setting, sitting on the ground with their books on their laps. All materials have been translated into Malagasy.

"The children can read after a month of classes," says UNESCO's Ibrahim Sidibe, founder of the Joint Programme. "They are then ready to move on to a formal educational institution, depending on their age."



*A non-formal learning centre is Jocelyn's first contact with an educational institution*

For adolescents like Jocelyn, specialized centres have been set up in each province to give them a chance to catch up with five years of primary schooling. In just ten months they receive intensive training which permits them to pass the end-of-primary school exam.

For illiterate youths and adults, the way to literacy is different. They attend the 'intensive functional literacy for development' courses, in two phases: An initial course of forty-eight days where learners become

familiar with reading, writing and numeracy. The rhythm of the course has been adapted to their needs. The second phase of thirty-six days provides them with basic technical and professional training. The aim is to give them skills to find jobs or improve their earnings. Sixteen areas are proposed, including farming, fishing, carpentry and sewing.

The life of Tombotsara, 16, has changed since he started literacy classes. He lives in a small village, Tanambao Befotoana, and has spent most of his childhood helping his parents in the field. Today he is the best student in his literacy class. What he likes best is to read the posters on the village walls and explain to his friends what they say.

### A good start

UNESCO and partner agencies want to further develop the Programme and build schools in remote areas. The goal is to have 500 non-formal learning centres catering for roughly 20,000 adults, youth and children by 2005.

This programme is exceptional, says the national programme coordinator Raymondine Rakontondrazaka. "It's the first time that a major collaborative effort has catered for disadvantaged people," she says, adding that it has prompted Madagascar to draw up a non-formal education policy. "We realize of course," she says, "that we only meet a fragment of the demand for education. But it's a good start!"

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\* International Labour Organization, UN Population Fund, World Food Programme, UN Development Programme, World Health Organization, UNESCO and UNICEF.

# A restaurant with a difference

A UNESCO programme is helping young people make Hanoi a better place to grow up in

©Sara Cortes-Garcia



Former street children get a new chance in the hospitality industry

Four days a week, Vu Van Hieu, 19, a former shoeshine boy, greets international visitors in KOTO, a restaurant situated close to one of Hanoi's most famous cultural sites. At the age of 16, Hieu left his home in the northern province of Hung Yen and since then had eked out a living shoe shining in the Vietnamese capital. "I had to work fourteen hours a day just to earn \$1," he says, adding that sometimes customers refused to pay him.

## Life in the city

Rapid urbanization was one of the consequences of Viet Nam's adoption seventeen years ago of its *doi moi* (renovation) policy of economic and social reform. Like Hieu, many young people flocked to the cities in search of a better life. It is estimated that Hanoi today counts roughly 5,000 street children.

"Cities are failing to meet the needs of young people and their families," says Sara Cortes-Garcia, who runs the Growing Up in Cities programme at UNESCO Hanoi. She explains that this programme is a global UNESCO effort to help address the issues affecting urban children and youth. It is cur-

rently running in cities in both developed and developing countries, such as Argentina, Australia, Canada, Lebanon and South Africa.

## A fresh perspective

Things began to look up for Hieu when he was accepted in KOTO (Know One Teach One), a training centre and restaurant set up in 2000. Hieu and some forty other youngsters receive thirty-six hours of practical and theoretical training a week. Volunteer trainers teach English and life skills, and provide training for the hospitality industry. The youngsters earn \$35 a month, and are provided with uniforms and accommodation.

Hieu's situation improved further with the granting by the Growing Up in Cities programme of \$18,000 to KOTO. Some of these funds will be used to enlist the energy and ideas of young people to bring about change. "Children and youth are seldom involved in the construction of their environment," adds Cortes-Garcia. "They are considered too young and inexperienced, yet their fresh perspective is vital." This is precisely what the Growing Up in Cities programme does.

A host of young people in Hanoi are currently acting as data collectors in a research project to better understand street children's and adolescents' perspectives on the places they live in, their concerns about their environment and their proposals for change. It is also looking at the effects of the participatory processes on those involved. Some young people are being trained as "peer researchers," performing all the tasks involved in collecting and analysing data. "We intend to use this research to make recommendations for creating more responsive urban policies," says Khat Thu Hong, Director of the Centre for Social Development Studies, a non-governmental organization and partner in the programme.

## Jobs in sight

The funding will also mean that KOTO can continue to improve its training programme and access to jobs, explains Jimmy Pham, its Director. He will also be able to add lessons on the HIV/AIDS prevention, drugs and sexual abuse and open a resource centre where trainees can find information on the problems that concern them.

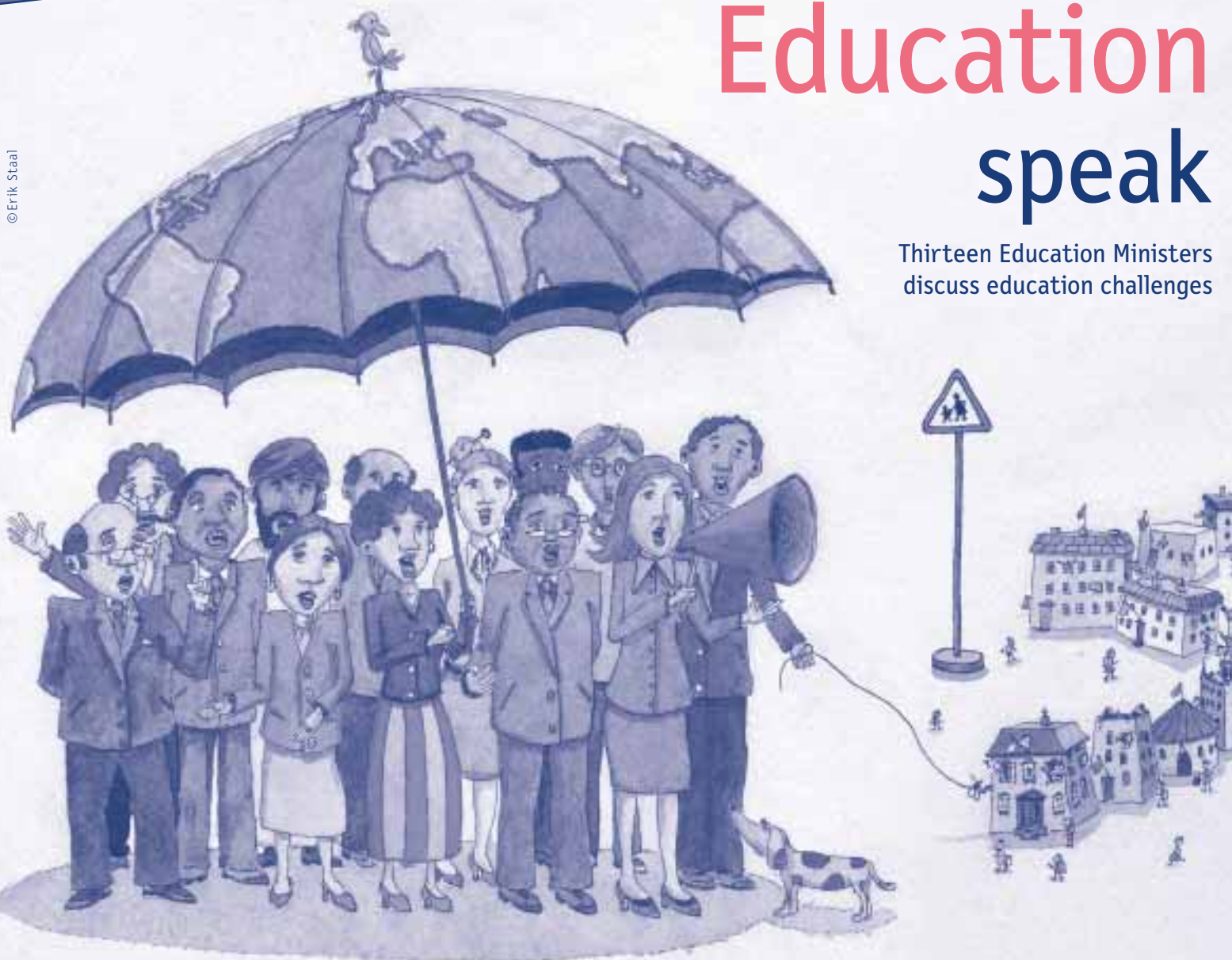
Immediately after their three-year training the first thirty-four trainees found jobs at Hanoi's leading international hotels. Today, another thirty-four are attending the third and fourth courses. "We guarantee employment for each group of trainees," says Pham.

Hieu will graduate from KOTO next September. He too is determined to get a position at an international hotel. He doesn't want to return to his previous life. "Sometimes I see my old friends on the street trying to persuade passers-by to have their shoes shined," he says. "This was a golden chance for me. It's changed my life."

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# Education speak

Thirteen Education Ministers discuss education challenges



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**I**t was an opportunity not to be missed. They had come to Paris from Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe to take part in UNESCO's General Conference in October 2003. Some 120 education ministers from the world over were in the same place at the same time, and it was a rare chance for us to talk to some of them about education. Thirteen were selected, representing a cross-section of very different countries<sup>1</sup> with a variety of historical, cultural, religious and political backgrounds: small island and large mainland communities, transition and emerging economies, socie-

ties in conflict and in transformation. The idea here is not to draw comparisons; it is simply to gain some insight into how education is faring today in these countries, and to get a sense of where it is going. The idea is also to hear what some exceptional people have to say, people who for the most part have been teachers themselves. What follows are excerpts from our interviews with them. Basic education statistics<sup>2</sup> as well as what the ministers consider as 'education milestones' in their countries are featured in a series of boxes. The full interviews are available online [www.unesco.org/education](http://www.unesco.org/education)

Regardless of the ministers who were interviewed or the specific contexts of their countries, it became evident that all of their education systems were under some sort of pressure, such as meeting demand, ensuring quality and equality, providing adequate facilities and IT access, and doing all this often with limited resources.

## The crucial role of teachers

The overriding concern that was shared by all, however, was the role of the teacher in education today. For while all stressed that qualified teachers are key to any education

# Ministers out

from across the globe  
in their countries



system and that teaching can be a very rewarding profession, they pointed out that it has lost much of its prestige, with relatively poor salaries and difficulty in attracting enough qualified candidates to meet demand.

“The main challenge for education in Brazil is the teacher,” says Education Minister Cristovam Buarque, “because the teacher is both the problem and the solution. It’s not so much the number of teachers – there are 2 million teachers in Brazil for 34 million school children. The problem is that of the 2 million teachers, some 300,000 have no, or practically no, training.” He also says that “it’s the

last profession parents think of for their children. The salaries are low and teaching has lost its social status. It has to get this back.”

## Teacher shortage

“For several decades to come, the principal actor in education in Africa will still be the teacher,” points out the Minister of Secondary and Higher Education in Burkina Faso, Laya Sawadogo, “and if teachers are at the centre of education, they need to be of good quality and sufficient in numbers,” a sentiment that was echoed by his counterparts in Togo, Uganda and South Africa. “The biggest challenge we face in education in Togo today is training teachers,” says Minister of Higher Education, Kondi Charles Agba. “That is what we lack the most.” In Burkina Faso, for the school year 2002/2003, there was a deficit of 1,197 teachers at the secondary level, and some 12,500 vacancies at the primary level. “I will soon open a training centre for secondary school teachers and implement incentive measures,” adds Sawadogo. The Education Minister of Uganda, Kiddu Makubuya, makes the same point: “We must create an environment where teachers are highly respected. But salaries unfortunately do not correspond.”

## BRAZIL

- ▶ Population: 170.4 million
- ▶ Adult literacy: 86.9%
- ▶ GNP per capita: \$3,580
- ▶ Primary net enrolment: 96.74%

### Cristovam Buarque



“The ‘Bolsa Escola’, a nationwide education grant scheme that pays families a monthly stipend so that their children can attend and stay in school. Today, 25 per cent of the school-age children in Brazil (40 million) receive this grant.”



## BURKINA FASO

- ▶ Population: 11.5 million
- ▶ Adult literacy: 23.9%
- ▶ GNP per capita: \$210
- ▶ Primary net enrolment: 35.5%

### Laya Sawadogo



“Our 10-year plan for basic education. Our goal is to achieve 70 per cent enrolment by 2010, which means that in less than fifteen years we have to overcome fifty years of neglect.”



In South Africa the teaching profession has yet another obstacle to overcome. “Teaching is still closely associated with the apartheid system, and it has been downgraded as a consequence,” explains Education Minister Kader Asmal. “The teachers were appalling and not qualified; generation after generation has gone through school with them. We are now making money available to attract good people to teaching, and have launched a big campaign to make teaching your preferred choice.”

## Low prestige

In the Czech Republic, the teaching profession is also suffering from low prestige, albeit for different reasons. “Our biggest problem in society today is the little appreciated position of teachers,” says Education Minister Petra Buzkova. “This problem has its origin in the communist regime, and was neglected over the last decade.” Along with developing higher education and research, she considers her top priority to be upgrading the social and economic status of teachers.

Yet for the Education Minister of Pakistan, Zobaida Jalal, raising the status of the teaching profession is also the responsibility of the teachers themselves. “I ask the



## Education Ministers speak out

→ teachers in Pakistan, how do you raise respect for this profession? It's not only money. As a teacher, what are you giving to the community? When you demand respect, people give it to you. We look at teaching as a profession, and not as a last resort for people who can't get a job."

In some other places, even under very difficult circumstances, efforts to improve the working conditions of teachers are bearing fruit. "We are keeping the education system alive and are developing it, despite the situation of conflict we are in. Teachers are an important part of this," notes Na'im Abu Al-Hummus, Education Minister of the Palestinian Territories. "We're working hard to raise their salaries, which have increased by 20 per cent. In 1994 there were 16,000 teachers, and now the government employs 45,000. We've spread education all over Palestine, especially to villages and for girls."

### CHINA

- ▶ Population: 1.3 billion
- ▶ Adult literacy: 85.2%
- ▶ GNP per capita: \$840
- ▶ Primary net enrolment: 92.7%

Zhou Ji



**“**The introduction in 2000 of compulsory primary education and the eradication of illiteracy among young and middle-aged people. And also the increase in higher education enrolment from 7 million students in 1998 to 16 million today.**”**



In China, "considerable measures have been taken to build up a robust corps of teachers," says Education Minister Zhou Ji. "You need to incite society to respect teachers and teach teachers to love their students." In order to attract enough qualified teach-

ers to rural areas, the government has increased their salaries so that they now earn more than local civil servants.

For Rod Paige, the United States Secretary of Education, a qualified teacher is the most important ingredient in ensuring a quality education: "As part of the 'No Child Left Behind' Act, we are seeking to ensure that there is a qualified teacher in every classroom. This law protects teachers from being forced to teach a subject they don't know well, and ensures that students have a quality teacher."

### In a quandary over quality

Besides the teacher issue, the education ministers pointed out a number of other pressing challenges. A deep concern for many is providing education for all while at the same time ensuring quality.

Jamaica now has universal primary education, explains Education Minister Maxine Henry-Wilson, but there is a great need for better quality in education. "There are students who go from primary to secondary without reading at the adequate level. Once they get into high school they get lost, and automatic promotion doesn't help them because we're not able then to reverse whatever damage has been done in terms of literacy."

"If after four years a child can't read or write, what kind of education is that child getting?" wonders Pakistan's Zobaida Jalal. She remarks that there should be education for all by now, but for years the good intentions and focus were not there. The challenge for her government now is providing the needed resources and facilities for 140 million people in an economic context that is far from favourable.

What is important to South Africa's Education Minister is setting objectives that are realistic and achieving them one by one: "You say that by 2015 all children should have access to free and compulsory primary education of good quality. You can't do both. We want ten years of compulsory education and a higher retention rate."

### CZECH REPUBLIC

- ▶ Population: 10.3 million
- ▶ Adult literacy: 99.7%
- ▶ GNP per capita: US\$5,250
- ▶ Primary net enrolment: 90.3%

Petra Buzkova



**“**Two crucial education reform acts now before parliament: one will change the structure, organization and content of the education system and give schools more freedom and responsibility in designing educational programmes; the other will improve the economic position and social status of teachers.**”**



"The biggest challenge for China is to meet the great demand for better education, particularly in science and technology," explains Zhou Ji. "While we are increasing access, we are attaching much importance to quality – in terms of funding, teaching level, management and philosophy of education. That's why China needs more reform and innovation in education." And according to Fiamé Naomi Mata'afa, the Education Minister of Samoa "the overarching challenge is now a quality issue, part of which is closely linked to curriculum reform and better teacher training."

Even in the United States, which has some of the best schools and universities, providing a quality education for all is a goal that has not been reached. "We have a substantial number of students – mainly from disadvantaged backgrounds – who are being left behind," says the US Secretary of Education. "Despite decades of effort and billions of dollars in spending, the achievement gap persists."

### Not only primary

Another major issue that several education ministers raised was the problem of post-primary education, of providing onward linkage to secondary and higher education, and to the working world. They stressed

→ that there is a tendency – especially by the international community – to focus on basic education, rather than taking the whole education system into account. In their view, this approach is undermining the development of secondary and higher education, and making it more difficult for them to develop the skills their countries so desperately need, such as teacher and vocational training, and training in science and technology.

### Considering the entire system

“The IMF, the World Bank and other donors are all targeting basic education,” remarks Laya Sawadogo of Burkina Faso. “But how can we develop our education system without including secondary and higher education, which are vital for the development of our country?” Today, in Burkina Faso, 80,000 students want to go on to secondary school, but there is room for only 20,000. When the Education Minister of Togo was asked in what area his country needed the most help, he replied that it was secondary education: “We have achieved a lot at primary level and received aid, but secondary education was neglected.”

In Uganda, where there has been a massive universal primary education drive, the most pressing challenge now, according to Kiddu Makubuya, is to provide education for the next level. “It must prepare young people for further education in tertiary institutions, and for the world of work. We need more funding for the post-primary sector, and change the curriculum to include comprehensive secondary education. If there is no way to continue, people won’t come to school and they won’t stay in school.”

Education Minister Kader Asmal feels that “if you have limited resources, you should target the whole education system and not choose between primary and higher education.” South Africa is thus maintaining its expenditure on higher education, and has implemented a national financial aid scheme that makes it possible for millions of young South Africans to go on to higher education. “We have very high unemployment for ages 15 to 25. That’s why it’s so important for us to build up skills, develop technical colleges and invest more in training teachers.”

### Facing enormous problems

Over and over again, many of the ministers stressed the difficulties their education systems have inherited and the hardships they must now overcome due to past neglect, unjust policies and misguided priorities. Add to this, crushing present-day poverty, large populations of many ethnic origins speaking a multitude of mother tongues spread over vast geographic areas, in many cases lacking even the most basic infrastructure.

“We now know that the biggest disability that children suffer from is poverty,” observes Kader Asmal. “The first challenge for South Africa is to remove the effects of apartheid. We have a school system consisting of the former white schools and the old schools in the townships. These are gross sources of inequality. About 30 per cent of the old black schools don’t have water, sanitation or electricity. How can you have information technology when you don’t have the most basic things?”

Also for Cristovam Buarque, bringing all the schools in Brazil up to standard, especially in

the country’s most remote areas, is a difficult task. “We have 180,000 schools in Brazil, and among these 32,000 don’t have toilets and 30,000 don’t have electricity,” he notes, “but in some we have computers powered by solar energy.”

### PAKISTAN

- ▶ Population: 141.3 million
- ▶ Adult literacy: 43.2%
- ▶ GNP per capita: \$440
- ▶ Primary net enrolment: 60.1%

Zobaida Jalal



“For the first time we’re looking at education in its entirety and not focusing on one part of it, like primary. This sector-wide approach is owned at the grassroots level. There are more opportunities now for civil society organizations, communities, philanthropists and educationists to supplement government efforts, and the madrasas (Islamic schools) are entering the mainstream of education.”

“People would gladly go to school, but often the road doesn’t go to where they live,” says Togo’s Kondi Charles Agba. In such remote areas parents have created local initiative schools, rudimentary shelters where someone who has gone to school teaches children who can’t go to one. Moreover, although Togo is small (4.5 million inhabitants), there are forty-four different ethnic groups, speaking totally different dialects. “We need to find ways to interact more,” adds Agba.

Geographic dispersion is also a challenge for Education Minister Mohamed Ahmed Rasheed: “Saudi Arabia is a huge country – almost the size of continental Europe – with a population scattered in many villages. We have 30,000 schools and more than 100,000 teachers, that’s a lot.” Another challenge is that “each segment of

### JAMAICA

- ▶ Population: 2.6 million
- ▶ Adult literacy: 86.9%
- ▶ GNP per capita: \$2,610
- ▶ Primary net enrolment: 94.9%

Maxine Henry-Wilson



“The 1957 and 1963 government decisions to offer scholarships for high school, which helped to break the social barrier. Now we try to place almost all children in secondary schools. Also, the state-run examinations, which have democratized secondary education.”

## Education Ministers speak out

→ society wants education to go in a different direction, and we have to accommodate many different schools of thought.”

For the Palestinian Education Minister Na'im Abu Al-Hummus, conditions are dramatic because “many roads are closed and our teachers cannot reach their schools. More than 500 students have been killed and 3,500 injured, and 200 schools have been damaged or totally destroyed. Today we have 1.2 million students and some 50,000 teachers surviving in this emergency situation.”

### A matter of political will

So the challenges that these thirteen countries face in education are many and they are formidable. The education ministers stressed, however, that giving priority to education issues is essentially a political choice. “It is by political will that we are spending 31 per cent of the national budget on education, we could be spending it on something else,” says Kiddu Makubuya of Uganda. Yet underlying all political decisions and distribution of resources for education is the question of how much education is valued not only by those in government, but by society as a whole. Several ministers mentioned that they are witnessing greater participation in education by parents and local associations, which they feel is crucial for improving education in their countries.

“When we did a review of the education system in the early 1990s, my government decided that education and health were core to its development aspirations,” explains the Education Minister of Samoa. “It wasn’t just money. It was also involving different sectors in what education can mean and deliver for all of us.” Saudi Arabia’s Mohamed Ahmed Rasheed notes that some people think of education as a service but “to us it’s an investment. When you put money into education and improve quality, the returns will be great. Once you have a good school, you’ll have a good future.” In China, education is seen as playing a strategic role in the country’s future, demanding both commitment and patience. “Many officials are not far sighted and focus on

immediate results. But the results of education cannot be noticed right away,” observes Zhou Ji. “It takes ten years to plant a tree and see it grow, but it takes hundreds of years to develop education.”

### Persistent illiteracy

There seems to be general agreement that education is crucial for socio-economic development, and more and more countries appear to be giving education priority. “Worldwide, higher educational attainment is correlated with higher incomes,” says the US Secretary of Education. “Countries that placed an emphasis on education over the past decades experienced more rapid economic development than those that did not.”

#### PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

- ▶ Population: 3.2 million
- ▶ Adult literacy: 91%
- ▶ GNP per capita: \$1,660
- ▶ Primary net enrolment: 96.8%

Na'im Abu Al-Hummus



“Establishing the Palestinian Authority in 1994. That was a historical moment for us. For me personally it was establishing the first ministry of education in Palestine, and developing a new education system and curriculum.”

But, why is it that nearly 1 billion adults today are still illiterate?

“Until recently,” explains Uganda’s Kiddu Makubuya, “education was the preserve of the elite; it’s only now that we’re talking seriously about education for all and people are listening.” In Uganda, where sending a child to school costs about \$5 a year, 5 million can’t afford to go. He further remarks that “people today are still surviving on

centuries-old modes of production, and they wonder why they should go to school when it doesn’t improve their lot.”

#### SAMOA

- ▶ Population: 159,000
- ▶ Adult literacy: 98.6%
- ▶ GNP per capita: \$1,450
- ▶ Primary net enrolment: 96.9%

Fiame Naomi Mata'afa



“Making Samoan the language of instruction along with English, and changing the curriculum to make our education system more equitable. It used to be a pyramid, and the pyramid is now opening up.”

Kader Asmal thinks that past practices certainly play an important part in the persistence of illiteracy today, which is about 10 per cent in South Africa: “We did not have compulsory education in South Africa until 1996, two years after freedom. Before then access to education was first for whites, the coloured, the Indians and then for Africans—in that order.”

“The colonizing countries knew very well that with more education people would become more conscious of their interests and their demands would become more insistent,” says Laya Sawadogo of Burkina Faso. “For a long time these countries were responsible for the lack of progress in education and literacy.”

Cristovam Buarque makes a similar observation: “Brazil is now giving education and literacy priority. But this has taken such a long time because the Brazilian elite is selfish and did not think of the poor. If illiteracy were a disease that could contaminate the rich, we would already have solved the problem.” Since the beginning of 2003, Brazil has



→ launched a massive literacy drive to teach 20 million young and adult Brazilians to read and write in four years. “We’re monitoring this very closely,” he adds.

### Devastating HIV/AIDS

Virtually all of the education ministers interviewed – including those whose countries are not experiencing a major HIV/AIDS problem – stressed the importance of informing the people, especially the young, of what HIV/AIDS is, its dangers and the possibilities of prevention.

“Along with joblessness, HIV/AIDS is the biggest issue confronting young people in South Africa today,” explains Kader Asmal. “In the absence of a cure, the only vaccine you have is a social vaccine, and that’s education.” Young people are informed about sexuality, for example, in life skills programmes at school. According to Asmal, the only proper survey of HIV/AIDS that has been done in South Africa so far is a survey of 8,000 people. It shows that 84 per cent of the children surveyed knew about HIV/AIDS from school. “Now that’s a great success for the public school system,” he says.

### Open talk about condoms

Kiddu Makubuya makes a similar point: “In Uganda, we realize that we have a serious HIV/AIDS problem. We have adopted a policy on this. We don’t mystify the problem, we don’t pretend that it’s not there, we’re on the rooftops actually, telling our people that there is a problem and that you can die. The churches blame us for misleading the youth, but we talk openly about condoms because when you tell children to abstain, they ask you when you were their age, what were you doing?”

In Togo and Burkina Faso, where official HIV/AIDS rates are 6 to 8 per cent of the population, the approach is much the same. “Raising awareness, there is nothing else,” says Togo’s Kondi Charles Agba. “So we have introduced textbooks, cartoons and programmes to teach our school children about HIV/AIDS.” Laya Sawadogo notes that Burkina Faso has developed preventive

education modules on HIV/AIDS for primary, secondary and higher education, and that 3,000 teachers have already been trained for that purpose.

“We’ve recently drafted a policy and launched an education programme on HIV/AIDS,” indicates Jamaica’s Maxine Henry-Wilson “and we’re trying to get this programme as deeply into society as possible.” For China’s Zhou Ji, HIV/AIDS prevention is important for the sustainability of the education system. And while “it’s not really a problem in Samoa,” according to Fiamé Naomi Mata’afa, “we have very strong awareness programmes because for a small state, that kind of thing can just wipe us out.”

### Towards gender parity

Another area in education where there now seems to be greater awareness – and progress – is gender parity. One of the goals of the EFA initiative is reaching gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2005. Most of the education ministers were pleased to say that their countries were very close to this goal, had reached it already, or had more girls than boys in school to begin with.

Until 20 years ago people were opposing education for girls in Pakistan, points out Zobaïda Jalal. “But in the last 10 to 15 years

### SOUTH AFRICA

- ▶ Population: 43.3 million
- ▶ Adult literacy: 85.2%
- ▶ GNP per capita: \$3,020
- ▶ Primary net enrolment: 88.9%

Kader Asmal



**“** Setting up a single, integrated educational structure. Introducing a new curriculum, reflecting the values of our society and celebrating our diversity. Also, making education part of the central debate of the country. More and more parents are involved in school governing bodies; this is the biggest participation in our democracy. **”**



there’s been a huge change. Now even in the tribal areas, the first demand is female education.” Pakistan, however, will not be able to reach the EFA target of gender parity by 2005 because “the economic resources are not there and access and opportunities for education are still fewer for girls than for boys,” she says. “Nonetheless there’s progress, and we’ve had unprecedented increases in the development budget for schools, training, and incentives for girls. We hope that we’ll achieve gender equality by 2015.”

### Underperforming boys

“If you’re governing, you can’t let yourself dream, you have to plan for the future,” remarks Laya Sawadogo. The gender parity goal will not be reached by 2005 in Burkina Faso due to a lack of resources within the country, he explains, and also due to problems with international financial support “because the attached conditions are such that we can’t do what we would like to do.” He notes that around 42 per cent of the children are in school, and only 8 to 10 per cent of these are girls. “Closing that gap will require an ongoing effort. So we’re giving scholarships preferably to girls to incite them to go to school and incite their parents to keep them there.”

### SAUDI ARABIA

- ▶ Population: 20.3 million
- ▶ Adult literacy: 76.2%
- ▶ GNP per capita: \$7,230
- ▶ Primary net enrolment: 57.9%

Mohamed Ahmed Rasheed



**“** Establishing the ministry of education in 1953. And, more recently, integrating commercial technology with education. **”**



## Education Ministers speak out

→ Several ministers also voiced the concern that more and more boys are now under-performing at school and dropping out sooner, often to go to work. “Amazingly, we have more girls in school than boys,” says Jamaica’s Maxine Henry-Wilson. “The higher you get in the system, the starker the contrast becomes – 75 per cent of students at university are women.” She is concerned, however, that the men are under-performing and that such a large percentage of the population is not taking advantage of educational opportunities.

Likewise, in Brazil, there are more girls than boys at all education levels. “But there is a parity problem with regard to black students,” indicates Cristovam Buarque, “there are practically none at the university level.” He also points out that there is a higher drop-out rate for boys than for girls, as poor families often want the boys to be working. “That’s why in poor countries we have this problem of keeping children in school.”

### Liberalization of higher education

The liberalization of higher education is becoming an issue for many countries, especially since the World Trade Organization’s recent position to include education as a tradable service. When ministers were asked what they thought, most felt that this was an opportunity, but one that could pose risks for their countries and that needed to be closely watched.

“We’re a small country and we believe in opening ourselves up to the world,” says Na’im Abu Al-Hummus. “Higher education opportunities in Palestine in the 1970s were not sufficient, so our students went all over and we have now established many links between our and foreign universities. This is positive and gives our students experience with other education systems.”

According to Laya Sawadogo “the government can’t do everything, so we need the private sector, which has developed very quickly in Burkina Faso. We already have a free university, a Catholic university, and an Islamic university.” Uganda’s Kiddu Makubuya also believes that providing edu-

cation cannot be the preserve of the state alone and should be a partnership: “The participation of other providers – churches, foundations, private sector investors – is a very positive development in education, as long as we provide the curriculum, monitor standards, and ensure that the training will help to make our students into responsible citizens.”

### TOGO

- ▶ Population: 4.5 million
- ▶ Adult literacy: 57.1%
- ▶ GNP per capita: \$290
- ▶ Primary net enrolment: 91.2%

Kondi Charles Agba



“After independence, students in Togo, Benin and Niger who wanted to go to university had no other choice than going to Dakar. Then, in 1970, we founded our own university. We had to commit a great deal of resources to get good teachers to train our professionals. This university, which was built to accommodate 6,000 students, now has 16,000. So we are creating a second university.”



In Pakistan, where a virtual university has been set up and linked to different universities, Zobaida Jalal feels that “it’s more learning, more information globally for students, professors and others. But the commercialization of it all is a concern. Does this mean that higher education will be limited to an elite, to those who can afford it?”

### Not a merchandise

“While a certain level of liberalization cannot be prevented,” explains Maxine Henry-Wilson of Jamaica, “the terms need to be clearly defined. When universities set up programmes we have to be careful about

what’s being brought in, both in terms of quality and equivalencies.”

“We don’t think that education is a merchandise and we’re not in favour of the WTO position which aims to make education into one,” points out Cristovam Buarque of Brazil. “But we’re not against having more private universities in our country. There’s much pressure to go to university, and the government doesn’t have enough money to ensure that everyone who wants to go to public university can be accepted.”

And South Africa’s Kader Asmal takes this stand: “I think we were one of the first countries to oppose the WTO decision. We have our own priorities for training and education, and we will not concede to opening up our country to investment on a non-discriminatory basis. We have to support our public education system and give it subsidies.”

Rod Paige, however, points out that in the US “public, state-supported institutions exist side-by-side with a diverse private higher education sector. I know that some people are concerned that loosening government control of higher education will lower its quality, but I would say that our experience has shown that that does not need to be the case.”

### The unkept promise

At the World Education Forum held in Dakar in 2000 the international community promised that no country with a sound national EFA plan would lack funding. When asked if this promise had been kept, most of the ministers felt that it had not. Saudi Arabia’s Minister of Education said that for the “poor countries, that’s for sure, but even some of the wealthy countries have not kept their promise.” For Togo’s Kondi Charles Agba, there’s always much euphoria at these conferences, but he remains skeptical. “Even if your plan is perfect, the promises haven’t been kept. We haven’t received any international aid for the last ten years, despite the efforts we’ve made. If we want to develop our country, we have to keep sovereignty over education.”

→ Maxine Henry-Wilson has reservations about the nature of the aid Jamaica has received: “I know that we’ve gotten international funding for some of our most pressing demands. The problem is that most of this aid is loans. So this is a question less about international assistance than it is about funds that won’t cost the next generation.” Laya Sawadogo of Burkina Faso makes a similar point: “I am both satisfied and dissatisfied. The international community should be more flexible on the conditions it sets for assisting us. If they want to impose a bad solution, we shouldn’t do it.”

## UGANDA

- ▶ Population: 23.3 million
- ▶ Adult literacy: 67%
- ▶ GNP per capita: \$300
- ▶ Primary net enrolment: 91.2%

Kiddu Makubuya



“Introducing universal primary education in Uganda in the mid-1990s, which was like a wake-up call for the people in our country. Now we have accepted that education is a right, and that an educated population is better than an uneducated population.”



“Unless there is investment from outside, proper trading patterns and proper subsidies, none of the developing countries will be able to meet the EFA targets,” points out Kader Asmal of South Africa. Yet for the US Secretary of Education “achievement of the Dakar goals is a work in progress, and one that will take considerable time.” Uganda, for example, has an EFA Fast-Track Initiative agreement, but Kiddu Makubuya regrets that “it is moving slowly and results have not yet materialized.”

The Palestinian Education Minister strikes a more optimistic note: “The European Union

and international organizations have played an important role in developing our education system and in building schools. We did not have a government from 1967 to 1994, and so many NGOs have become very involved in education and health in Palestine.”

## How can UNESCO help?

While several ministers pointed out that UNESCO’s limited resources also limit what the organization can do, they all felt that it can help them in many different ways.

“Naturally, we all feel that UNESCO should be putting in more funds, but I know that UNESCO has a different game to play,” says Zobaida Jalal. “It can help Pakistan with technical assistance, capacity building in education and strengthening institutions.” For Zhou Ji of China, UNESCO can provide expertise in rural education and support for higher education reform. Maxine Henry-Wilson of Jamaica thinks that “we can benefit from communication about best practices in education and monitoring achievement,” and the Czech Minister indicates that the organization can provide opportunities for “an open and relevant exchange of experience and ideas.” The Education Minister of Samoa, for example, would like UNESCO to realize how “well we work together as a region of small states – changes can be effective very quickly and done with very little.” She also appreciates the standard-setting role of UNESCO.

For Brazil’s Cristovam Buarque, UNESCO’s efforts to support literacy and the teaching profession are very important, and for Laya Sawadogo of Burkina Faso it can “raise awareness about the situation of teachers in Africa, and help us implement our national EFA plans and use information technologies.” The Education Minister of Uganda would welcome UNESCO assistance with education after the primary level and the teaching of science, technology and mathematics. “And you can connect us with other possible partners,” he suggests. Kondi Charles Agba of Togo makes the same point and adds “you can assist us to draw up good projects and proposals so that they will be well received by our partners.”

## UNITED STATES

- ▶ Population: 283.2 million
- ▶ Adult literacy: 97%
- ▶ GNP per capita: \$34,100
- ▶ Primary net enrolment: 94.9%

Rod Paige



“First, the 1954 Supreme Court decision, holding that a segregated education system was inherently unequal and therefore illegal. That set the benchmark for civil rights in education in our nation. Second, the passage of the ‘No Child Left Behind’ Act, which ensures that all children master the skills that they need to succeed in today’s global economy.”



The most important thing for UNESCO, according to Kader Asmal of South Africa, is to target its resources to a certain area, rather than trying to do too much. “I also think that UNESCO has to go back to its founding principles. The world has been riven by the clash of cultures, so it’s important that there is a UNESCO leadership role against exclusion in broad terms.”

“UNESCO could be a bridge between all countries,” says the Education Minister of Saudi Arabia. “There is much misunderstanding about cultural values, on our part and on the part of others. So we support its efforts in education to promote understanding between cultures.” The US Secretary of Education also thinks that “UNESCO can help us to learn from the experience of other nations, and our students to learn more about the rest of the world, especially about different cultures.” ●

1. Brazil, Burkina Faso, China, Czech Republic, Jamaica, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Togo, Uganda, United States.

2. Based on data reported to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics for the school year 2000/1, published in the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4.

## The uphill battle for girls

Act on poverty and learning to achieve gender equality, says Report

In the decade to 2000, the number of girls in primary school increased faster than that of boys, with the global Gender Parity Index (GPI) rising from 0.89 to 0.93 (a GPI of 1 indicates parity between the sexes). This average conceals wide disparities. Two of the world's most populous countries are at risk of not achieving parity by 2015: China, for secondary, and India, for both primary and secondary. While girls tend to be at a disadvantage, in some cases, the balance has tipped in their favour because too many boys are not finishing secondary school (examples include Bangladesh, Trinidad and Tobago and the United Kingdom).

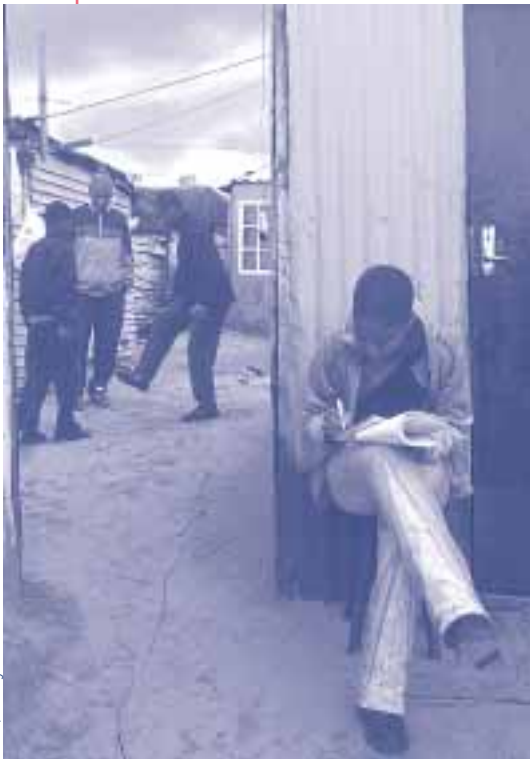
Why are girls still held back? In societies where women are confined to the home, discrimination against daughters starts in the earliest years of life. Household poverty exacerbates inequality: where choices are to be made, girls are more likely to be held back. The schooling experience is all too often a negative one: stereotypes and prejudice in curricula, textbooks and teaching styles are common currency in

many countries. Nor are schools safe havens: girls are disproportionately victims of sexual violence, heightening their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

### What must be done

While there is no magic bullet to achieving gender parity, the Report highlights strategies that make a difference. The state must play the leading role in promoting equal education for all. Legislation has an influential role to play in improving the status of women. Much can be done to reduce the costs of education: where school fees exist at primary level, they must be removed. Measures to reduce the need for child labour can drastically reduce dropout rates. Curricula, textbooks and teacher training must be scrutinized through a gender lens so that stereotypes are undermined, not reinforced. Finally, empowering women through tailored literacy and skills training programmes enhances the chances that young girls will receive an education.

More information on [www.efareport.unesco.org](http://www.efareport.unesco.org)  
To order: <http://upo.unesco.org>



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Despite progress in the 1990s, girls continue to face sharp discrimination in access to schooling throughout the developing world, according to the 2003/4 EFA Global Monitoring Report, "Gender and Education for All, The Leap to Equality," released last November.

On current trends, more than seventy countries are unlikely to achieve gender parity in primary and secondary education by 2005, the first milestone on the international agenda to which the world community committed in Dakar.

### Some good news

"While not a complete surprise, these results are obviously a cause for deep concern," says Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO. "Gender parity in education is a priority not only because inequality is a major infringement of fundamental human rights but because it represents an important obstacle to social and economic development."

## Join the Big Lobby

EFA Week 2004, to be celebrated from 19 to 25 April, will focus on the more than 100 million children all over the world who never see the inside of a classroom. UNESCO and the Global Campaign for Education will organize the Big Lobby by children for children. This lobby is a chance for millions of children to voice their right to education and ask politicians what they will do to make that right a reality.

On 20 April 2004, children will gather at parliaments or assemblies all over the world to tell their elected representatives to do more to provide education for all

children. In order to sensitize politicians and communities to this problem, schoolchildren will also create a map of their village or neighbourhood (a missing-out map), indicating the households that have children not attending school. Finally teachers will invite Members of Parliament or elected officials to visit their schools during EFA Week. On that occasion, they can be informed of the results of the missing-out map.

More information on:

- [www.campaignforeducation.org](http://www.campaignforeducation.org)
- [www.unesco.org/education/efa](http://www.unesco.org/education/efa)

## The EFA High-Level Group meets

“Education should be free. School fees and all materials related to school should be free.” This text – part of a 20-point Declaration – was read out by two children at the opening of the 3rd Meeting of the High-Level Group on Education for All (New Delhi, 10-11 November). The Declaration was the outcome of the Children’s Parliament on the Right to Education, held two days earlier in the Indian capital. The children’s words set the tone for the discussions to follow on the progress being made towards EFA and gender parity in particular.

Echoing the children’s concern, the need for free and compulsory primary education was stressed by many participants. The Communiqué, issued at the close of the meeting, notably called on governments to introduce national legislation to enforce children’s right to free and compulsory quality education, prevent child labour and

prohibit early marriage. It also called on participants to the donors’ meeting in Oslo, (20-21 November) to reach agreement on a clear framework to improve the effectiveness of the Fast-Track funding Initiative (FTI).

During discussions on this initiative, some countries complained that FTI had failed to deliver, but World Bank Vice-President Jean-Louis Sarbib reminded the assembly that FTI “was only eighteen months old”. FTI had succeeded, he said, in giving “a higher profile to EFA in countries, including with finance ministers”.

The meeting brought together heads of state, education ministers, multilateral and bilateral agencies, NGO networks and individuals. In all some forty participants. The next meeting of the Group will be held in Brazil in November 2004.

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## 3 questions to Kailash Satyarthi

Kailash Satyarthi is Chairperson of the Global Campaign for Education, a coalition of more than 400 NGOs working in education.

### 1 Is it not unreasonable to ask poor countries to enrol all children in school when many of these countries lack trained teachers and even school buildings?

The EFA goals represent a compact between rich and poor countries. Poor countries committed to increase their own spending and improve their policies in order to achieve the goals. Rich countries promised to assist any country that produced a sound EFA plan. Unless both sides keep their side of the bargain, there will never be enough teachers and classrooms for everyone.

### 2 What concrete result do you expect to achieve from the EFA Week “Big Lobby”?

The Global Campaign achieves results by doing advocacy work the year round, but Action Week is what gives real political momentum to the campaign because it mobilizes the public and the media in a visible way. Internationally, the “Big Lobby” will increase pressure on the G8 to

deliver major resources for EFA in 2004. At the national level, the “Big Lobby” will help civil society groups to push through laws that will help more children go to school – for example, stamping out child labour, ending school fees or protecting girls’ safety and dignity at school.

### 3 Why involve children in the “Big Lobby” when the responsibility for providing for their education lies with governments?

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child not only guarantees the right to education, it also upholds the right of children to express their opinions and have a voice. The Global Campaign believes that children’s perspectives on education are especially important for all of us to hear. They speak from direct experience. They can tell us the truth about the daily realities that decide whether a child goes to school or doesn’t and whether he or she learns anything once there.

## World tour

→ Representatives of nineteen National EFA Forums met at the Second Regional Education for All Meeting in Latin America, 23 and 24 September (Santiago, Chile). The gathering reviewed national EFA plans of action and the workings of the regional and national forums.

→ EFA Coordinators from nine countries gathered in Bangkok from 20 to 24 November to discuss how to make the EFA national plans gender responsive and what should be the role of the EFA coordinators in this process. After the meeting, the EFA Coordinators received training on their roles as national gender focal points.

→ UNESCO Beirut organized two one-day information workshops for NGOs working in education – 18 October in Damascus and 19 October in Amman.

→ Representatives from fifteen Asia/Pacific countries met in Bangkok from 24 to 29 November for the first of a series of capacity-building workshops organized by UNESCO Bangkok on planning, monitoring and evaluating education for all.

→ The 2nd Baltic Sea Sub-regional Conference on Quality Education for All took place in Vilnius, Lithuania (23-25 October). The Conference, attended by representatives from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Russian Federation as well as Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland, issued a resolution pledging their co-operation in pursuing the EFA goals.

→ Participants at the Third Consultation on the Fast-Track Initiative, (Oslo, 20–21 November) assessed progress made in this funding scheme and explored ways of channeling funds more efficiently to recipient countries.

→ The United Nations Literacy Decade in Africa was launched in Mauritius on 4 December during the Association for Education in Africa (ADEA) Biennale.

## Education rights of indigenous peoples

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“On your first day at school you find that the teachers do not speak your language, in fact, they don’t even want you to speak your language. The teachers don’t know anything about your culture – day by day you are torn by two worlds.

Ole-Henrik Magga, Chairperson of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues recounted the typical educational journey of an indigenous child, during a public debate on education rights for indigenous peoples organized by UNESCO in Paris last November. Yet, despite the problems Magga remained optimistic: “Indigenous peoples do not come to you with problems to be solved. We come to you with our own answers and we ask your assistance in ensuring these solutions are systematically and fully implemented.”

Today, the world’s 350 million indigenous people are vocalizing their demands for education. Yet, according to Rodolfo Stavenhagen, UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples, despite the opening up of new spaces for indigenous peoples to express their demands much still remains to be done. The right to education, he emphasized, is a human right which has not received sufficient attention.

The debate that followed focused on such issues as the goals of indigenous education, the question of equity vs. equality, the effective targeting of resources, and the expanded vision of quality education.

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## Africa gets 150 new community multimedia centres

UNESCO and the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation has launched a multi-million dollar project to provide marginalized communities in Mali, Mozambique and Senegal with access to information and communication technologies, including Internet.

Drawing on UNESCO’s experience in establishing Community Multimedia Centres, the project will give local populations the possibility of exchanging information in their language and provide them with learning and training opportunities. The centres combine radio, telephone, fax and computers connected to the Internet. Some of the services they offer are commercial, helping them become financially self-sustaining.

A total of 150 centres will be created, fifty in each of the three countries.

The key to the centres’ success is that they belong to, and are managed by, the communities they serve. The centres contribute to development through activities such as literacy classes, particularly targeting women, spreading health messages, and collecting and disseminating information about agriculture.

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## Rebuilding Iraq’s universities

A multi-million dollar initiative to rebuild and revitalize Iraq’s once thriving universities was launched last October by Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Misnad, Qatar’s First Lady, and UNESCO. The International Fund for Higher Education in Iraq is administered by UNESCO and governed by the Qatar Foundation. It is open to all interested donors for contributions in cash or in kind.

The state of Qatar has provided the first donation of \$15 million to the Fund.

Assistance provided under the Fund will be closely co-ordinated with Iraqi universities themselves so as to ensure that priority needs are the first to be addressed.

The first six projects, selected in early December for immediate implementation, address emergency needs such as laboratory equipment, Internet access, and reference materials.

After years of economic hardship, the impact of war-related damage on Iraqi universities has been devastating. Enormous investment will be required to serve the needs of some 300,000 students from Iraq’s twenty universities and forty-seven technical colleges and institutes. The total cost of reconstruction and rehabilitation of higher education facilities is expected to top \$2 billion.

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## Education at the World Summit on the Information Society

Equitable access to education is key in the building of knowledge societies. This was one of UNESCO’s key messages to the World Summit on the Information Society last December, in Geneva, Switzerland. “No society can claim to be a genuine knowledge society if access to knowledge and information is denied to large proportions of the population due to lack of education,” said UNESCO’s Director-General Koichiro Matsuura. “Indeed, increasingly in today’s world, limited access to knowledge and information through ICTs is in itself a constraint upon educational opportunities,” he adds.

UNESCO organized a series of events during the Summit, including a High-Level Symposium and thematic round table discussions of which two focused on the role of education: “Education and Knowledge Societies” and “Languages, Literacy and New Technologies”.

**Website:** [www.unesco.org/ws/is/events/](http://www.unesco.org/ws/is/events/)

## Repetition at high cost in Latin America and the Caribbean

Due to low performance, high numbers of students repeat the school year in many Latin American and Caribbean countries. According to UNESCO, one in four primary students repeated the 2001 school year in Brazil, 14 per cent repeated in Guatemala and 11 per cent in Peru. Repetition is partly responsible for an estimated 18 per cent of pupils in the region who do not complete primary schooling.

“Despite close to full enrolment many school-age children have problems progressing in school,” says Albert Motivans of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. Repeaters drain the capacity of education systems. In 2000, Brazil’s school system provided 13.5 years of primary and secondary education – equal to that of Finland or Germany. But “repeated years” account for more than one quarter of the total in Brazil, meaning that students attain less.

The total cost of repetition to education systems is enormous, comments Motivans. UNESCO estimates the cost of repetition among 15 countries (accounting for over 90 per cent of the repetition in the region) at over \$11.1 billion a year. The brunt of these costs, over \$8.3 billion, are faced by Brazil. This amount is equal to one year of schooling for almost 10 million Brazilian secondary students or 2 million university students.

Based on a UNESCO Institute for Statistics study commissioned by the Inter-American Development Bank.

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### JANUARY

14-15

#### Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (CIGEPS)

Organized by UNESCO Paris • Paris, France  
Contact: Hocine-Hamid Oussedik, UNESCO Paris (h.oussedik@unesco.org)

20-23

#### Meeting of Education Ministers from the Arab Region on EFA National Plans: What Action Next?

Organized by UNESCO Beirut • Beirut, Lebanon  
Contact: Nour Dajani, UNESCO Beirut (n.dajani@unesco.org)

22-23

**Assisting the Design and Implementation of EFA Skill Development Plans: Skills Development to Meet the Learning Needs of the Excluded** • Organized by UNESCO Paris and UNESCO’s International Institute for Educational Planning • Paris, France  
Contacts: Miki Nozawa, UNESCO Paris (m.nozawa@unesco.org) and David Atchoarena, IIEP (d.atchoarena@iiep.unesco.org)

### FEBRUARY

11-12

**International Conference for the Promotion of Bilingual Education** • Organized by UNESCO, the Governments of Chad and Niger and the Islamic Development Bank • N’Djamena, Chad  
Contact: Albert Mendy, UNESCO (a.mendy@unesco.org)

15-19

**Sub-regional Workshop on Human Rights Education in the Gulf States School System** • Organized by UNESCO, OHCHR, UNICEF in co-operation with the Government of Qatar • Doha, Qatar  
Contacts: Myriam Karela, UNESCO Paris (m.karela@unesco.org) or Gilane Elgewely, UNESCO Doha (g.elgewely@unesco.org)

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#### International Mother Language Day

Contact: Noro Andriamiseza Ingarao, UNESCO Paris (n.andriamiseza@unesco.org)

### MARCH

1-2

**Using, Choosing and Creating the Future – Consumer Citizenship Network Conference** • Organized by UNESCO and Consumer Citizenship Network • Paris, France  
Contact: Julia Heiss, UNESCO Paris (j.heiss@unesco.org)

8-12

**Third Workshop on “Learning about our Common Past to Build a Peaceful Future”: Teaching About the Causes and Consequences of the Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean** • Organized by UNESCO’s Associated Schools Project • Maputo, Mozambique  
Contact: Jean O’Sullivan, UNESCO Paris (j.osullivan@unesco.org)

15-18

**Skills Development for Employability, Citizenship and Sustainable Development: The European Experience** • Organized by UNESCO Paris and the UNESCO International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training • Bonn, Germany  
Contact: Rupert Maclean, UNEVOC (r.maclean@unevoc.unesco.org)

17-19

#### Latin America and Caribbean Collective Consultation on Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies

Organized by the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies • Panama City, Panama  
Contact: Allison Anderson Pillsbury, INEE (Allison@theirc.org)

23-27

**Asia-Pacific Regional Seminar on Community Learning Centres** • Organized by UNESCO’s Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All (APPEAL) • Chang Mai, Thailand  
Contact: APPEAL Coordinator (appeal@unesco.org)



● **Catalogue of Documents.** This catalogue provides bibliographical references for over 800 documents produced by the Education Sector since 1997. The titles in English, French and Spanish are presented by theme. The documents can be obtained free of charge, depending on availability. This catalogue and a large selection of the documents in full text will be available on CD-ROM (Mac/PC) in early 2004. (UNESCO doc. ED-2003/WS/53)

● **Good Practices: Gender Equality in Basic Education and Lifelong Learning through CLCs – Experiences from 15 Countries.** This report reviews the activities carried out by selected Community Learning Centres in Asia and the Pacific as examples of good practice in the promotion of gender equality in basic and lifelong education.

● **Literacy, Gender and HIV/AIDS Series.** This series focuses on gender-sensitive booklets developed at UNESCO training workshops in Namibia on HIV/AIDS prevention in southern African countries. New titles include: *Don't Play with your Life, Breaking the Silence, Take Care of those you Love, Open Your Eyes or Be Blind Forever, the Wicked Healer* and *Educate a Woman, Educate a Nation.*



● **The Global Education Digest – Comparing Educational Statistics Across the World.** This new annual digest published by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) presents detailed statistical tables from early childhood to higher education, as well as data on foreign students and on how much money governments are investing in their education systems. This edition reports data for the school years 1999/2000 and 2000/2001. Available from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. E-mail: a.motivans@unesco.org

● **Metasurvey on the Use of Technologies in Education in the Asia-Pacific Region.** Launched by UNESCO Bangkok, this study provides an overview of trends in the application of ICTs in education. It shows exciting examples of how ICTs can increase the access to and improve the quality of learning experiences for girls and women, including non-formal education. It can be downloaded at: [www.unescobkk.org](http://www.unescobkk.org)

● **Towards Inclusive Practices in Secondary Education.** It is possible to integrate all students, regardless of their disability, gender and ethnicity, into secondary education. This booklet features examples from Chile, Hungary, Nepal, South Africa, Ukraine and the United States where inclusive practices at secondary level have been implemented successfully.

● **Report of the International Symposium on Rural Education (Hebei, China, 20-23 January 2003).** The objective of this symposium on the theme of rethinking education for rural transformation was to strengthen and re-invigorate education for rural development.

● **Technology Education Guide.** This guide is produced to help educators around the world implement technology education. It describes the purposes and goals of technology education and what it takes to start such a programme. Prepared for UNESCO by the World Council of Associations for Technology Education, the guide includes a course content outline, identifies performance objectives and suggests activities and evaluation procedures.

● **Education for Rural Development: Towards New Policy Responses.** Co-ordinated and edited by David Atchoarena (UNESCO/IIEP) and Lavinia Gasperini (FAO). This book is based on the joint international study by the Food and Agriculture Organization and the UNESCO Institute for Educational Planning on education and rural development. The aim of the book is to review the status of rural education from the standpoint of public policies and to shed light on “good practice”. Available from UNESCO Publishing, 412 pages, 19,82 €. <http://upo.unesco.org>



● **Improving Performance in Primary Education – A challenge to the Goals of Education for All.** This 48-page document presents the findings of a meeting of Directors of Primary Education Departments from thirty-one countries (2001). It focuses on improving the pedagogy of teachers, local governance, the school as a supportive environment and monitoring primary education performance.

● **Literacy as Freedom.** Literacy is indeed one of the fundamental instruments of freedom. The impetus for this volume was a desire to understand better, both in theory and in practice, what literacy as freedom means to people in different contexts, yet linked to the forces of globalization and change. (UNESCO doc. ED-2003/WS/51)

● **Policy Research and Dialogue – Student Loans Schemes in Asia.** Titles in this new series include: *Student Loan Schemes in the Republic of Korea: Review and Recommendations* by Anna Kim and Young Lee, *Student Loans Schemes in Hong Kong* by Yue Ping Chung, *A Review of the Student Loans Scheme in China* by Hong Shen and Wenli Li and *Student Loans In Thailand: Are they Effective, Equitable, Sustainable?* by Adian Ziderman. Available from: [d.altner@unescobkk.org](mailto:d.altner@unescobkk.org)

● **Report of the Fourth Meeting of the Working Group on Education for All.** This meeting in Paris in July 2003 focused on the scope and role of EFA flagships.

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