



United Nations Educational, Scientific
and Cultural Organization



The Newsletter
of UNESCO's
Education Sector

Education TODAY

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As countries are calling a halt to school fees, millions more children are exercising their right to education. But after securing a place in school, how much are these children learning in overcrowded classrooms? Focus, a four-page dossier, looks at the trade-off between access and quality.

EDITO

Helping countries achieve education for all is the top priority for UNESCO. Although the action framework developed at the Dakar Forum on Education for All held in 2000 guides our current activity, the aspiration of providing education for everyone is in the UNESCO constitution of 1946. Another cornerstone of our work is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, which states that 'education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages' adding that education at this level should be compulsory. UNESCO has always followed this injunction. In the 1990s some of our partners flirted with the idea of creating a market and charging fees for primary education, but all have now returned to the principle of free education at this level. Sadly, the reality is that direct or indirect fees are still widespread, even in countries that have legislated against them.

Fortunately, the Fast-Track Initiative through which countries can access external help for achieving universal primary completion provides a mechanism for addressing the issue. Not surprisingly, countries like Kenya, Malawi and Uganda that have abolished fees in a determined manner have seen dramatic increases in enrolment. This obviously creates an immediate challenge. More attention is now being paid to managing in an orderly manner the consequences of abolishing fees. UNESCO believes that it is better to uphold the principle of free primary education and to address energetically the quality challenge posed by an enrolment surge than to ration access to school through fees.

The unity of view on this issue between UNESCO and the World Bank is most encouraging, as is the close collaboration between our two agencies in designing and implementing the Fast-Track Initiative. This teamwork is just one example of the success we are achieving together in the vital drive towards Education for All.

By the time you read this I will have moved to Vancouver, Canada, to take up exciting new responsibilities as President and CEO of the Commonwealth of Learning, an agency that helps the fifty-four Commonwealth countries to develop policies, systems and applications for using open and distance learning. I take this opportunity to thank all readers of *Education Today* for their support and extend to you all my very best wishes.

John Daniel

Former Assistant Director-General for Education

Full marks for effort

The Open School programme is curbing youth violence in Brazil

On Sundays, when schools are usually quiet and deserted, the Pretre-Nercio-Rodrigues school in the Beberibe district of Recife (north-eastern Brazil) reverberates with the sound of rhythmic drumming. Maitre Lua, a famous percussionist, is teaching a three-hour class to a group of excited, enthusiastic kids, as he does every weekend in six schools of the Open School programme run by UNESCO Brasilia.

Thanks to the programme, 192 schools in some of the city's poorest and most troubled areas are staying open at week-ends, offering activities chosen by the students, ranging from soccer, dance, and capoeira to chess, theatre and reading.

Vital statistics

The programme is more than simply educational and recreational, says Adriana Bezerra, a young psychologist. She leads week-end dance workshops in Recife's seedy Rat Island district. On her way there on Saturdays, it is not unusual for her to see a dead body lying in the street, a youth gang member killed in a shoot-out. "It reminds me of why I signed up with the programme," she says.

Before the programme, the only playground for underprivileged young Brazilians outside of school hours was the street. "Kids often became delinquents. Now they're still poor but they're not delinquents," says the principal of Pretre-Nercio-Rodrigues school, Miriam Maria de Paz. "Some are even helping to run the programme," adds Maitre Luna.

The statistics, produced by Julio Jacobo Waiselfisz, a sociologist and UNESCO regional coordinator in Recife, are impressive. Overall violence in schools participating in the programme from the beginning has dropped an average of 60 per cent. The rates of suicide and armed robbery by students have fallen dramatically in schools that have the programme – all the way down to 0 per cent in schools that started participating in 2000. Theft, drug use, carrying weapons and sexual aggression have also decreased significantly.



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Week-end school keeps the children out of trouble

Back in 2000, shocking statistics on youth violence in a UNESCO publication created the momentum for starting the programme. Brazilians discovered that young people between 15 and 24 had the highest rate of violent deaths. The peak numbers of homicides were registered on week-ends, when schools were closed.

"It's not poverty that creates violence. It's exclusion and lack of perspective," says Jorge Werthein, Director of UNESCO Brasilia. "There's no infrastructure in the poor districts, no activities for youth. The only free safe space is school. But it took three years to convince the state that the Open School programme was useful."

Economic sense

He explains that simple reasoning along with the statistics finally swayed the authorities. Brazilians go to school for an obligatory eight years – but due to poverty or school failure, 25 per cent drop out. If dropouts can be incited to resume their studies with scholarships, and if schools can get the kids off the streets on week-ends, the state saves a hefty amount of money on police, judges and hospitals. "We calculated that a drop-

out costs the state three to four times more than a kid in school," says Werthein.

The Open School programme, meanwhile, costs a mere 0.30 Euros per pupil per month. It is entirely free for the students. UNESCO donates almost 1 million dollars and the participating states another 10 million. Two years along, five out of twenty-seven Brazilian states joined the UNESCO programme and most other states have created their own versions. "The final goal," says Waiselfisz, "is for UNESCO to withdraw and let communities take over."

Response from students has been overwhelming, and 120,000 kids are involved in the Recife area alone, with 2,200 volunteers, 350 coordinators and 160 teachers to look after them. The decrease in violence is undeniably encouraging, but the challenge remains constant. "I've known kids who got off drugs completely, and others who went back to them," says Bezerra. "And when I see some of the girls not coming back to my dance classes, I know they're falling into prostitution."

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Isolation vanquished

Community learning centres are reaching out to poor hill tribes in northern Thailand

In the streets of the tiny village of bamboo huts on stilts, lost in the mountains of Thailand close to the border of Myanmar, a group of children are running to greet visitors. "Sawaddi kha!" ("Welcome!"), they shout, as they swarm around Ni Wa, director of Non-Formal Education for the Omkoi district (Chiang Mai province) in north-east Thailand.

Their enthusiasm is a tribute to the effort that Ni Wa and his team have made to visit the Karen tribal village. It takes four hours to cover less than 40 kilometres in a four-wheel vehicle, and that's when the roads are usable. Sometimes during the rainy season the only access is on foot or by elephant. "And you have to avoid the leeches that fall out of the trees and suck your blood if they land on you," adds Nantaporn Viravathan who works with the Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Foundation, which sponsors the programme.

Harsh conditions

The Karens are the most numerous of the hill tribes in Thailand – an estimated 275,000, many of them refugees from Myanmar. They are among the poorest people in the country and beyond the reach of the national school system. Until 2001 the Karen community had no school. To fill that gap, UNESCO, working with volunteer teachers and villagers, set up Community Learning Centres (CLC). The twenty-four centres now operational are used as pre-schools and primary schools during the day and youth and adult learning centres in the evening.

Volunteer teachers from the Ministry of Education's Non-formal Education Department, most of them Thai, staff the centres. Their task is considerable. They teach children rudimentary reading, writing and counting, but also basic agriculture, community development and hygiene. The spartan conditions can come as a shock to new volunteers. "A teacher's first days in a

village are difficult," admits Ni Wa. "It also takes time before they are accepted by the community."

In Non Eng Ne, a village of 135 people where huts are raised on stilts to keep out the pigs and chickens, the community built the CLC. Tu Tara, 28, has been the teacher there for the last three years. The centre consists of one large room that is used as schoolroom and canteen. Thirty-five children, aged 6 to 14 and divided into four levels, are squeezed together on lopsided benches made by their parents. Behind the blackboard, which hangs from the beams, a bamboo barrier

The centres promote better nutrition



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forms a big playpen for the pre-school pupils, eleven toddlers Tu Tara also looks after. In the back of the room, sitting on milk crates, mothers smoke their traditional pipes and follow the class. Because Tu Tara's Karen is still rudimentary, a young Karen girl who speaks Thai assists her at the blackboard.

Language is the teachers' biggest barrier as the majority of the Karen do not speak Thai.

They therefore receive training in Karen as well as in modern teaching methods, developing learning materials and how to run the centres. "Children are keen to learn when they can communicate with their teachers," says Darunee Riewputik, education specialist at UNESCO Bangkok.

Motivated teachers

But teaching in Omkoi goes beyond the classroom. Teachers must also prepare meals for their charges and be ready to dispense first aid because there is little or no access to medical care in the mountains. Health is a problem, with a scarcity of clean water and an infant mortality rate that is twice what it is in the lowlands. Over 20 per cent of the children are malnourished and 21 per cent are stunted. In an effort to promote better nutrition, the project encourages the community to grow vegetables and raise chickens and pigs. Parents take turns helping teachers cook lunch.

What motivates teachers to stay in these harsh conditions? "They work so closely with the people that they become part of the community and are loath to leave them," says Riewputik. She explains that the project tries to recruit Karen university graduates rather than outsiders to encourage long-term commitment.

The centres have been financed by the French supermarket Carrefour to the tune of \$420,000 and UNESCO \$50,000 for the period 2001-2004. UNESCO intends to top up with an additional \$50,000 when Carrefour funding ends next year. Efforts need to be kept up because progress, even if slow, is being made.

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The price

By abolishing tuition fees, countries
As a result, millions more children are
The challenge is to ensure access while

Reading a newspaper article halfway around the world, you could feel the emotion surge across Kenya after President Mwai Kibaki followed through on his campaign promise to abolish school fees in 2003. Propelled by pent-up hope, frustration and new expectations, parents swarmed overnight to enrol their children in school. But the rosy reports soon dimmed with stories of principals turning away pupils and the spectre of “the masses” swamping an already fragile education system.

Today, the good news is that more than a million new pupils are squeezing into classrooms. But unfortunately, the expected foreign assistance has not fully materialized. In short, “school fees were abolished with great euphoria but little planning”, according to Andiwo Obondoh of the Global Campaign for Education who promotes free primary education in Eastern and Southern Africa.

The African movement

The confusion is just a rite of passage in the bold but tumultuous move towards free primary education as seen to varying degrees in Malawi, which took the plunge in 1994 followed by Uganda (1997), Cameroon (1999), the United Republic of Tanzania (2001) and Zambia (2002). Today any debate on free primary education must inevitably focus on the experiences of these African countries. Their progress and setbacks offer valuable insight for Africa as well as for countries with high tuition fees such as Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Nepal, Pakistan and Papua New Guinea.

Steve Packer of the *EFA Global Monitoring Report* was in Malawi when the government removed all school fees. “Enrolment surged from 1.9 to 3.2 million in just three months. Some said it was crazy – the quality of the system was already appalling. In one sense, they may have been right. But from a human



of school fees

are releasing the demand for education that experts have long dreamt of tapping. entering primary school. But how much are they learning in overcrowded classrooms? maintaining the quality of schooling.

rights perspective, can you deny millions of children ANY education, even if it is poor quality?"; he says.

No is the resounding answer by UNESCO, which has long championed a rights-based approach to education. "UNESCO believes that it is better to uphold the principle of free primary education and to address energetically the quality challenge posed by an enrolment surge than to ration access to school through fees," according to John Daniel, Assistant Director-General for Education until May 2004 (see Edito).

A policy shift

While UNESCO focuses on the normative and policy front, UNICEF has taken a hands-on approach, launching a campaign to eliminate all primary education user fees in Africa. "Two major events led us to intensify our efforts," says Cream Wright, UNICEF's Chief of Education. "First, we have repeatedly seen that once you remove school fees, the demand for education soars. On the negative side, AIDS is leaving a wake of orphans while devastating the community and extended family networks that used to help poor kids go to school. Without drastic action, more and more children will have no chance."

Even the World Bank has joined the bandwagon, by making a 160° turn in policy and encouraging countries to remove school fees. Who can forget the mantra of "cost recovery", which the Bank began hammering in the late 1980s, by insisting that loan-hungry countries charge fees for educational 'services', for instance textbooks. Today, the Bank's lead education specialist, Bob Prouty, is trying to help countries remove those same fees.

According to Prouty, the Bank was caught off guard by the African movement to abolish fees. For education experts in the field, these bold decisions were historic, unleash-

ing the demand for education they had only dreamed of tapping. But the mood was not so buoyant back at Bank headquarters, where officials watched with scepticism that gave way to amazement. "We never would have expected such a response ten years ago. These countries have achieved the biggest success in Education for All overnight," comments Prouty.

The surge in enrolment also proved what organizations such as UNESCO and UNICEF, had been arguing for decades: fees deny poor children their right to education. Bank officials tried to deflect this argument by pointing to subsidy and waiver schemes intended to ensure that money was never a barrier. "But in reality," says Prouty, "the schemes were very unevenly implemented."

Officially, the World Bank "does not support" tuition fees but experts like Prouty are pushing to actively encourage countries to remove all user fees, especially in Africa. Countries, rich and poor, generally charge a range of fees, including textbook costs or rental fees, compulsory uniforms, exam fees, community contributions to district education boards and the like.

Unexpected costs

According to a 2001 World Bank survey in seventy-nine countries, only Algeria and Uruguay do not have fees of any type. In the rest, about one third of the fees are "unofficial" or illegal, meaning they are not in accordance with national laws or constitutions (see box p. 7). This does not include indirect costs, like transportation, which in Cambodia, for instance, amounts to 21 per cent of household spending on education. The very poorest families are also hit with

“ I beg every day on the street so we can find food. We came from Mariakani to Mombasa because we didn't have food to eat. I don't know my father. It was better at home. I went to nursery school, just once, then the money ran out. I'd like to be at school. ”

Source: Global Campaign for Education



Koki on the street in Mombasa, Kenya

the opportunity costs of sending their children to school instead of work.

There are also the 'unexpected' costs, which are carefully documented in a recent report¹ by the United Kingdom aid agency, DFID, comparing how very poor families perceive and cope with primary school costs in rural and urban communities in Bangladesh, Kenya, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Zambia. Officially, primary school tuition fees are illegal in all six countries.

The case of Uganda, committed to providing free education, is most striking. However, parents continue to pay a range of official fees as well as 'unexpected costs', such as teachers' funerals, year-end celebrations, classroom construction and telephone connections. When asked why pupils left primary school, 48 per cent of parents responded that they couldn't afford the expenses. After food, education was the largest household expenditure in Uganda (and the other countries, except for Nepal²).

If primary school tuition fees had not been abolished in Uganda would parents have had to pay these charges? ask the report's authors. "This study does not propose that tuition fees be reintroduced. But it is important for governments to recognize that the removal of tuition fees may result in schools having to insist on other charges (monetary or otherwise), with the overall result that

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The price of school fees



Ana Pacheco in Sotzil, Guatemala

Ana's father, Pedro Hu Pacheco, lives in Sotzil, in Guatemala, Central America, and has eleven children.

“Only one of my children is studying. The others have to work, so that we can support ourselves. I only reached the fourth grade in primary school. Without an education, people have no knowledge, and they aren't able to defend their rights.”

Source: Global Campaign for Education

possibly cannot afford not to have them working.”

While it is too soon to draw any firm conclusions, experts like Mary Pigozzi, Director of UNESCO's Division for the Promotion of Quality Education, are concerned that countries are focusing exclusively on getting children into school without policies designed to keep them there. “There is a common misunderstanding that access to education

a constitutional amendment guaranteeing free and compulsory education up to the age of 14. Yet cash-strapped schools continue to charge tuition and textbook fees.

From Latin America to East Asia, governments argue that they cannot possibly remove school fees without compromising the quality of education. Even formerly communist countries, which used to be intransigent on the right to free education, are introducing new fees. Whether or not you agree with this decision, there is no denying the fiscal constraints. But the situation changes when bilateral aid agencies use the concern for quality as an argument against abolishing school fees. “Quality is a very poor excuse to justify the marginalization of international development assistance for education,” says Katarina Tomasevski, named the first Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education by the UN Commission on Human Rights in 1998.

→ parents end up paying the same or even more than when tuition fees were paid.”

In all of the countries surveyed, the authors found that households routinely make a range of sacrifices to continue paying for their children's education. In Kenya, for example, parents tended to skip meals, while in Sri Lanka, they would defer medical treatment before pulling their children out of school. But the decision to make these sacrifices was not based upon cost alone. While price is a major barrier it alone does not determine the demand for education.

must always precede attention to quality,” she says. “We must get schools up and running as soon as possible. But we need to do so with a vision of the future needs and expectations of students. Quality clearly costs money but can we afford NOT to address it?”

The question has sparked soul-searching in countries like South Africa. How can the Rainbow Nation possibly charge fees for primary education? Because it doesn't have the money to expand enrolment and maintain standards. India is also struggling with

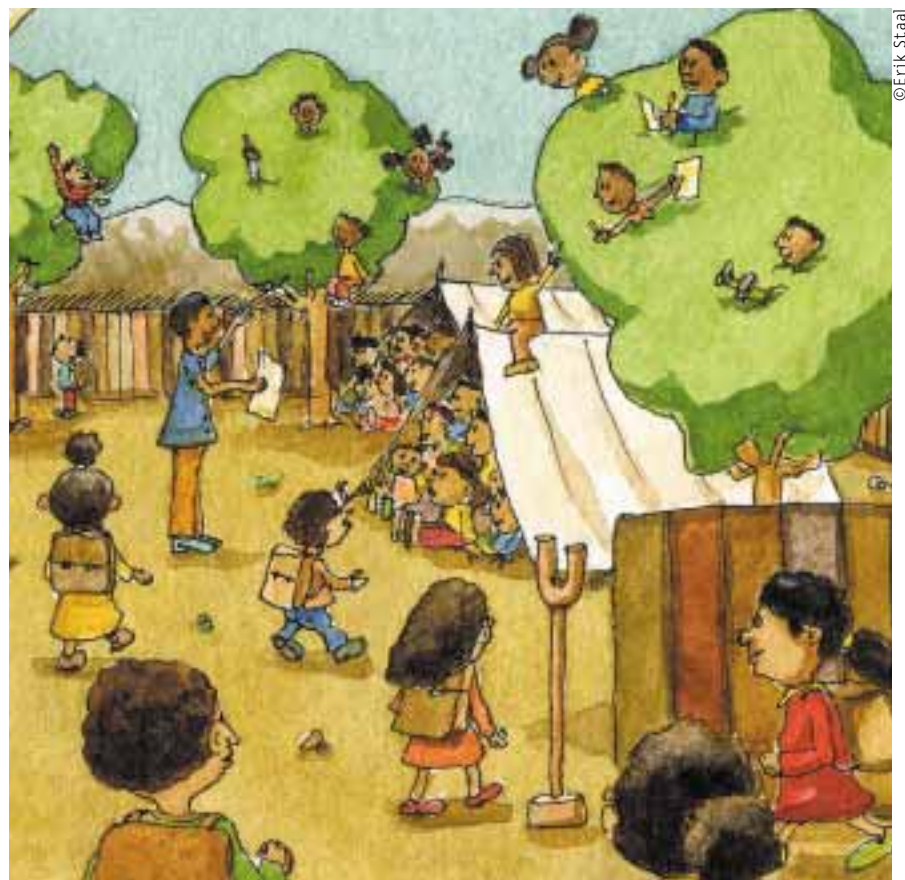
Supporting countries

For Tomasevski, the funding gap is not about economics but the lack of international consensus to provide free primary education. “Look at the Millennium Development Goals— →

Ensuring quality

Quality is more or at least as important as price, in all of the communities surveyed. All poor families appraised were theoretically willing to pay slightly more for what was seen to be “good” education. On the contrary, when standards are not up to expectations, parents stop making sacrifices to cover the costs.

When Uganda, for example, abolished school fees in 1997, total net enrolment reached 84 per cent but fell to 76 per cent by 2000. Some experts argue that the quality of education is to blame. With the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005* focusing on quality, Steve Packer has seen evidence of rising dropout rates, usually one to two years after countries have abolished tuition fees. “To what extent is it caused by a classroom filled with 100 kids without textbooks and a teacher unsure about how to handle the situation? Then again, these are also children from the very poorest families who



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→ not a word about guaranteeing free education. The Dakar Framework for Action does insist on free primary education. But it is still disappointing as earlier commitments to basic education have been redefined to mean primary education, which in countries like Angola, only lasts three years," she says.

Tomasevski comments that none of the governments that took the initiative to abolish fees are getting firm pledges that their efforts to enrol and keep pupils at school will be rewarded by generous aid and debt relief.

Gaining donors' confidence

This is where the World Bank is trying to step in through its Fast-Track Initiative (FTI), considered to be the biggest and most important financing initiative for EFA. Eligibility basically means having a formally approved "credible" action plan. Mindful of the damage caused by the rigid requirements of its Structural Adjustment Programmes, the Bank is trying to avoid imposing a strict set of criteria for FTI eligibility. Instead, it has developed a set of benchmarks based on the general characteristics of successful EFA countries. For example, the credible plan should work towards directing 50 per cent of the education budget to primary schooling, and, more controversially, the average teacher's salary should not exceed 3.5 times per capita GDP.

These benchmarks are supposed to inspire the confidence of donors. Instead of individual agencies picking pet projects, they will contribute to the primary education plan. This marks a major shift for the Bank, which used to avoid financing recurrent expenditures, such as teachers' salaries.

"I think the FTI will provide a much better understanding of whether aid is moving to the right places," says Packer. "But I am deeply sceptical that it will be able to mobilize the large resources which developing countries are now expecting." According to the Report, about 5.6 billion dollars are needed each year to achieve universal primary education and gender parity.

Whether or not that money will arrive, countries are indeed lining up to join the FTI,

Fees of every stripe and colour

According to a World Bank Survey (2001)*, the type of school fee charged varies considerably from region to region. In Africa, community contributions are the most common type of fee (81 per cent of countries surveyed), followed by uniforms (48 per cent) and tuition (41 per cent).

Tuition fees, collected unofficially, are found throughout the transitional economies of Europe and Central Asia, marking a complete turnaround from communist uncompromising insistence on free education. In contrast, there are almost no tuition fees in Latin America, with the exception of Colombia. Textbook fees are also relatively rare (29 per cent of countries surveyed) but compulsory uniforms (76 per cent) and community contributions (65 per cent) are the norm.

Most of the Middle Eastern and North African countries have the constitutional right to free education. Yet tuition fees are still collected in Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia and Yemen. In addition to community contributions, textbook fees are charged in half of the countries.

Private tutoring is common in South Asia, where Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan charge tuition, although the fee is legally sanctioned only in Bhutan and Pakistan. Over half of the region impose textbook fees and require community contributions.

Turning to East Asia and the Pacific, uniforms and community contributions are obligatory in 80 per cent of countries, followed by textbook fees (70 per cent). Tuitions exist in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands as well as China and Viet Nam.

These fees represent as much as 20 per cent of all education spending, and an estimated 30 per cent in Africa and even 40 per cent in the Commonwealth of Independent States and Eastern European countries.

**User Fees in Primary Education* by Raja Bentaouet and Nicholas Burnett

with the number of eligible members expected to grow from eighteen to more than forty next year.

This is where experts like Abby Riddell, a UNESCO programme specialist on educational planning, step in. UNESCO is an FTI partner, working as a policy advisor for governments. While lauding the World Bank initiative, "there is always a trade-off," says Riddell. Foreign aid negotiations used to focus on the details of a specific project. "Now, the donors are virtually underwriting social sector budgets of the most aid-dependent countries to get the money flowing" says Riddell. "But they may be jeopardizing the quality of education."

The role of aid

Riddell points to Malawi, Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. "In all five, you see similar visions of education," she says, "but they are dealing with very different circumstances." Uganda was able to abolish school fees in part by building on a tradition of decentralized govern-

ment with truly representative local school boards. Zambia does not have this base, yet the policy reforms look the same.

Riddell points to the example of Zimbabwe, which moved towards free primary education after independence in 1980. But just five years later, the government reintroduced fees because parents chose to send their children to private schools. This time round it's different, largely because these five countries have won a place at the negotiating table of foreign assistance.

The challenge lies in developing school systems that don't simply try to catch-up with industrialized countries. To do so, Education Ministries will have to master the 'budgetary speak' of aid agencies to fund home grown visions of quality learning. ●

1. *Reaching the Poor – The Costs of Sending Children to School*, by Siobhan Boyle, Andy Brock, John Mace & Mo Sibbons, U.K. Department for International Development, August 2002.

2. Because of Nepal's harsh winters, clothing costs outweigh education spending.

The “education vaccine”

Education is the best available means to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS, experts say

A report by the Global Campaign for Education and a new UNESCO and UNAIDS initiative highlight the urgent efforts needed to bring education’s life-saving benefits to the most vulnerable. Universal primary education could save at least 700,000 young people from HIV infection annually – 7 million over a decade – suggests a new analysis by the Global Campaign for Education in *Learning to Survive: How Education for all Would Save Millions of Young People from HIV/AIDS*.

The report argues that while there is increasing awareness that the epidemic requires a multi-sectoral response, the importance of general schooling has been largely overlooked. While targeted campaigns and counselling are important, research shows that a primary education is the minimum threshold needed to benefit from such programmes. Basic education gives young people the confidence needed to act on information and refuse unsafe sex, the report says.

No quick fix

“The main point is that if children get a full and good education, it creates the conditions that turn HIV/AIDS education into changed behaviour. If, in addition, you mainstream AIDS education, you save even more lives,” explains one of the report’s authors, Ben Phillips of Oxfam. “Conversely, if you simply tack on AIDS education to inadequate school systems, it won’t work. There’s no quick fix.” Countries may be dragging their feet where prevention is concerned. Some 40 per

cent of countries have yet to include HIV/AIDS prevention in their curriculum.

Indeed, young people with little or no education may be 2.2 times more likely to contract HIV than those who have completed primary education, the report reveals. This is particularly true for young women, among whom HIV/AIDS is spreading the fastest. Literate women are four times more likely to know how to avoid AIDS, found a thirty-two-country UN study. A good primary education for every child is an affordable and achievable target, costing only about \$100 per child per year.

An AIDS-free generation

UNAIDS and UNESCO, meanwhile, have launched a global initiative, “An AIDS-free Generation in less than a Generation”, to

expand prevention education against HIV/AIDS. UNESCO Director-General Koïchiro Matsuura calls it “a concerted effort to help countries to develop an urgent, scaled-up response.” Designed to complement the ongoing WHO/UNAIDS “3 x 5” initiative to bring anti-retroviral treatment to three million people in developing countries by 2005, the project launched in March 2004 links treatment and prevention in a comprehensive strategy. Key elements are developing a ‘tool kit’ for prevention education that can be adapted to different contexts and countries, and testing the kit in ten pilot countries, chosen from the most afflicted, during the next two years.

Websites: www.unesco.org/aids and www.campaignforeducation.org

3 questions to Gudmund Hernes

Director and Coordinator of UNESCO’s HIV/AIDS Programmes

1 Why is it necessary to create yet another mechanism to fight HIV/AIDS?

The Global Initiative for an AIDS-Free Generation starts from a massive prevention failure. In 2003, there were 5 million new infections, adding to the number who will require life-long treatment to survive. There is no cure. There is no vaccine. But prevention works – studies from Uganda show that it can have the same impact as a vaccine 80 per cent effective.

2 What is the link between the WHO/UNAIDS “3 x 5” initiative and the new scheme?

When treatments become available people in affected communities derive a positive interest in being diagnosed: it is the bridge to help. The “3 X 5” initiative provides hope where there was none before. It would be an enormous opportunity lost if prevention and treatment were not now combined in a mutually supporting package.

3 The Global Campaign for Education study found that about 40 per cent of countries have not yet included AIDS in their school curriculum. How is this possible?

Denial – it can’t happen here – coupled with the lack of imagination and initiative it takes to design informative and engaging curricula. It is an intriguing fact that there are communities where half of the 15-year-olds have had sex, yet parents cannot talk to their children about it. Most people in most places cannot talk freely about sex – the main mode of transmitting HIV. Teachers need to be trained – and they need assistance from professionals, such as young doctors – who can show how to teach without blushing. And there are other media, such as television and video, that can be used to get the message across.

One million lobby for education



Lebanese children on the way to lobby parliament

Well over 1 million people in 110 countries participated in the Big Lobby – this year’s EFA Week campaign to raise awareness of the more than 100 million children who are denied an education.

Schoolchildren, street kids and children with disabilities lobbied in national assemblies around the world. Parents, teachers, parliamentarians, education ministers and heads of state also participated.

Promises were renewed and new activities launched. The Philippines launched a new EFA initiative for poor families, Kenya’s Education Minister promised to instruct schools not to send away children without uniforms and Cameroon’s Education Minister pledged to send all girls to school. The United Kingdom announced a \$21 million contribution to the Fast-Track funding initiative and India’s new government promised to double spending on education to 6 per cent of GDP.

Nor did the campaign end there. On the eve of the G8 Summit, NetAid, a non-profit organization that raises

awareness about extreme poverty, told the group of eight that Education for All must be made a reality. “So far, wealthy countries haven’t nearly lived up to their end of the bargain,” said David Morrison, NetAid President.

More about EFA Week on
www.unesco.org/education/efaweek2004,
www.campaignforeducation.org and www.netaid.org

Spotlight on adolescents

A fall-out of the Education for All thrust is the increasing number of children entering secondary schooling. Enrolment at this level has been steadily rising in recent years. The average net enrolment at the secondary level in 2000/2001 grew by 19 per cent in twenty poor countries. But what do young people learn in school today and how useful is it for their job prospects or further studies?

The International Conference on Education on the theme “Quality Education for all Young People: Challenges, Trends and Priorities”, due to meet in Geneva from 8 to 11 September, will attempt to answer these questions. Well over 100 Education Ministers are expected to attend.

“Today’s secondary education is based on a model invented by Western society 150 years ago,” says Cecilia Braslavsky, Director of the International Bureau of Education, the conference organizer.

“It’s neither appropriate nor fundable in today’s world.” Adolescents naturally want learning to develop their talents, live better, enter life and take part in development. “But”, adds Braslavsky, “young people’s time is taken up with learning numerous disciplines that lead to a fragmentation of knowledge with little time for learning to learn, to do, to be and to live in peace”.

The teacher has a pivotal role to play in meeting the highly diverse education needs of adolescents. The conference is expected to discuss how to assist teachers to fulfil their role as facilitators of learning rather than mere dispensers of information. The Conference will adopt a Message to the World and Proposals for Action.

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World tour

→ A study by the World Economic Forum’s Global Governance Initiative released in April concluded in its first annual report that governments, international organizations, businesses and civil society are engaging in only about one-third of the effort necessary to realize the Millennium Development Goals.

→ A national EFA consultation in Luanda, Angola (21-24 April), adopted twenty-six recommendations to reach the EFA goals. It was attended by 350 participants: government officials, parliamentarians, consultants, civil society, and NGOs.

→ UNESCO Santiago officially launched the EFA Regional Monitoring Report 2003 at a press conference on 19 April in Santiago, Chile.

→ The Third Annual Meeting of the Central Asia Education Forum took place on 12 May in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. It brought together government officials, donor agencies, NGOs and academia around the theme of gender equality in education and launched the *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/04* on gender in the region.

→ Ten countries in Southeast Asia signed the ‘Bangkok Declaration’ on education at a Ministerial Forum (26 May), endorsing a commitment to improve the access to and quality of education through child-friendly learning environments. The forum was organized by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), UNESCO and UNICEF.

→ Education Ministers at the Arab Regional Conference on Education for All: Arab Vision for the Future (1-3 June, Cairo, Egypt) adopted the Cairo Declaration, stressing their commitment to quality education and the creation of centres of excellence. The ministers highlighted, inter alia, the role of teacher training, curriculum development, evaluation and early childhood development.

Contradictory laws jeopardize children's rights



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Shouldn't you be in school?

Children's right to education is being seriously undermined in dozens of countries by contradictory laws that allow them to work, marry, or be criminally responsible at an age when they are legally bound to be in school.

This is the conclusion of a report *At What Age ... are Children Employed, Married and Taken to Court* published by UNESCO's International Bureau of Education (IBE) and the Right to Education Project, a human rights research initiative.

"In the same country," says Angela Melchiorre, children's rights expert and author of the report, "it is not rare to find that children are legally obliged to be in school until 14 or 15 years old but a different law allows them to work at an earlier age or to be married at the age of 12 or to be criminally responsible from the age of seven."

The report found that there is no compulsory education in at least twenty-

five countries, of which ten are in sub-Saharan Africa, six in East Asia and the Pacific, four in the Arab States, three in South and West Asia, and two in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Only 45 of 158 nations surveyed have equalized the school-leaving age and the minimum age for employment. In 36 countries, children can be employed full-time while they are still obliged to be in full-time education. At the other end of the scale, children in another 21 countries must wait at least a year, and sometimes three, after completing compulsory education, before they can legally work.

"The goals of universal education and elimination of child labour are therefore inextricably linked," stresses the report.

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Academics Across Borders

UNESCO is preparing an Academics Across Borders (AAB) initiative to promote international cooperation in higher education.

The initiative will be based on the principles of solidarity, sharing and volunteerism and will include the following activities: a basket of open courseware for groups of countries; a volunteer team of high profile professionals and academics that can assist universities in strengthening their research and teaching programmes; and a rapid response team for post-crisis countries to help them respond to their higher education needs in order to accelerate stabilization.

The AAB concept was one of the recommendations of the World Conference on Higher Education, in 1998 and the World Forum of UNESCO Chairs in November 2002.

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Global Education Digest 2004

Although children everywhere are spending more time in school than ever before, there are important differences between countries and regions. A child in Finland, New Zealand or Norway can expect to receive over seventeen years of education, almost twice as much as in Bangladesh or Myanmar and four times as much as in Niger or Burkina Faso.

The number of school years that a child is likely to spend in school is just one example of the global education indicators, recently published by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS).

The *Global Education Digest 2004* shows that children in Europe, South America and Oceania spend the most time in education – over twelve years on average including primary and secondary levels. North American children follow with just over

eleven years, while Asian children can expect to spend nine years in school. In Africa, the average is 7.6 years. The world's lowest school life expectancy – just over 2 years for 2001/2002 – is in Afghanistan.

The Digest reveals a clear link between school life expectancy and national wealth. But it also shows that a low gross domestic product (GDP) is not an obstacle to progress. For example, Djibouti and Angola have levels of per capita income similar to those of Viet Nam, Lesotho, Uzbekistan and Bolivia, but in the first two countries average duration of schooling is only 5 years, compared to 10 or more in the others.

The report also presents detailed global data on pre-primary to tertiary education, teachers and finance, and looks at progress towards international education targets and national standards for compulsory education. It is available at www.uis.unesco.org.

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Literacy prizes

UNESCO's 2004 international literacy prizes have been awarded to programmes in Mauritius, Brazil and China. The International Reading Association Literacy Award and the two King Sejong Literacy Prizes are awarded in recognition of particularly effective literacy programmes.

This year, the prizes went to candidates whose work promoted gender equality.

The International Reading Association Literacy Award goes to *L'Edikasyon pu travayer*, a non-governmental organization in Mauritius, whose adult literacy programme focuses on women, respect for the cultural context and use of mother languages.

The two King Sejong Literacy Prizes were awarded to *Alfabetização Solidária* (AlfaSol, Brazil), for launching a literacy programme aimed at 4 million illiterate adults and to the Steering Group of Literacy Education in Qinghai Province (China) for having responded to the needs of an isolated population, women and ethnic minorities.

The winners will receive their prizes on International Literacy Day, 8 September.

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A youth development index for Brazil

UNESCO Brasília has developed a Youth Development Index (YDI) to measure the living conditions of young people. The index will provide countries with an instrument to evaluate what must be done to improve youth's livelihoods. It was developed under the supervision of the Argentinian sociologist Julio Jacobo Waiselfisz, also coordinator of the UNESCO antenna in Recife (Brazil).

The index includes data on literacy, the number of students in high school and higher education and the quality of teaching, as well as mortality rates and family per capita income. It was first used in the *Youth Development Report 2003*, which monitors public policies on youth in Brazil's twenty-seven states, recently published by UNESCO Brasília.

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JULY

28 June – 2 July

Workshop for EFA Coordinators from French-speaking African Countries • Organized by UNESCO, l'Agence gouvernementale de la Francophonie, and the Conference of Ministers of Education of French-speaking Countries (CONFEMEN) • Dakar, Senegal
Contacts: Benoit Sossou and Thierry Kpehor, UNESCO Dakar
E-mails: b.sossou@unesco.org and t.kpehor@unesco.org

30 June – 7 July

Meeting of the International Consultative Group on Secondary Education Reform and Youth Affairs • Organized by UNESCO Paris, France • **Contact:** Sonia Bahri, UNESCO Paris
E-mail: s.bahri@unesco.org

7-8

1st Regional Research Seminar for Africa • Organized by UNESCO and the Ugandan Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology Kampala, Uganda • **Contact:** Maria Lindqvist, UNESCO, Paris
E-mail: m.lindqvist@unesco.org

19 and 21

First Meeting of the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) International Resource Persons Team • Organized by UNESCO Paris, France • **Contact:** Maria Malevri, UNESCO Paris
E-mail: m.malevri@unesco.org

20-21

The Working Group on Education for All • Organized by UNESCO Paris
Contact: Abhimanyu Singh, UNESCO Paris
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AUGUST

3-5

Regional Seminar on Education for Rural People in Latin America Organized by UNESCO and FAO • Santiago, Chile
Contact: Mami Umayahara, UNESCO Santiago
E-mail: efa@unesco.cl

SEPTEMBER

2-3

1st Regional Research Seminar for Latin America and the Caribbean Organized by UNESCO and the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul Porto Alegre, Brazil • **Contact:** Lamya El Amrani, UNESCO Paris
E-mail: l.el-ramrani@unesco.org

8

International Literacy Day

8-10

International Congress: The Challenge to Educate the Best Teachers Organized by UNESCO, the Latin-American Network for Teacher Education and the National Pedagogical University Francisco Morazan of Honduras • Copan, Honduras
Contacts: Magaly Robalino Campos, Anton Korner and Aida Midence, UNESCO Santiago
E-mails: mrobalino@unesco.cl; akorner@unesco.cl and amidence@upnfm.edu.hn

8-11

International Conference on Education • Organized by the International Bureau of Education (IBE) • Geneva, Switzerland
Contact: Cecilia Braslavsky, IBE
E-mail: conference@ibe.unesco.org

OCTOBER

5

World Teachers' Day

25-28

Learning for Work, Citizenship and Sustainability • Organized by UNESCO with the Government of Germany • Bonn, Germany
Contact: Mohan Perera, UNESCO Paris
E-mail: m.perera@unesco.org

● **Agencies for International Cooperation in Technical and Vocational Education and Training: A Guide to Sources of Information** by Julia Maintz. This guide, developed by the International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (UNESCO-UNEVOC), provides an overview of sources of Official Development Assistance by twenty-two countries of the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD. It focuses particularly on technical and vocational education and training and skills management. Available online www.unevoc.unesco.org/donors



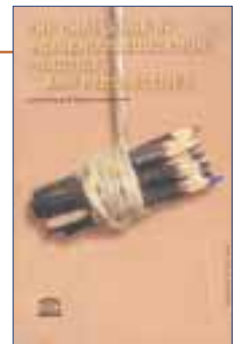
● **Developing Key Competencies in Education: Some Lessons from International and National Experience** by D. S. Rychen and A. Tiana. In the light of a growing concern about the quality of education, the economic and social returns on educational expenditure, and global challenges, what competencies are important? Which ones contribute to sustainable development, social welfare, cohesion and justice, as well as to personal well-being? This publication provides some answers. Studies in Comparative Education series by the International Bureau of Education (IBE). Price: 9.90€. Available from UNESCO Publishing: www.upo.unesco.org

● **ICT in Education Around the World: Trends, Problems and Prospects** by Willem J. Pelgrum and Nancy Law. Introducing ICT into an education system is a lengthy and complex process, requiring changes to the system itself. What do educational planners need to know about introducing computers for the first time into schools and developing the relevant technology and teaching? These are some of the questions taken up in this booklet. Price: 12.20€, Fundamentals of Educational Planning, 77, IIEP. Available from UNESCO Publishing: www.upo.unesco.org

● **Educating for a Sustainable Future: Commitments and Partnerships** contains the proceedings of a seminar organized jointly by UNESCO and the South African Ministry of Education during the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. The book considers the many facets of education for sustainable development, ranging from the need for global action, the sustainability of education itself, poverty eradication and the current context and new perspectives. Price: 19.80€. Available from UNESCO Publishing: www.upo.unesco.org

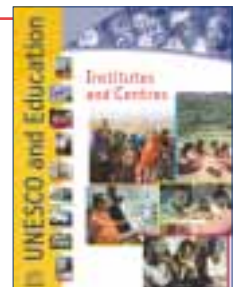
● **ESD Information Briefs.** This collection of briefs on education for sustainable development is intended to clarify and communicate key concepts and messages relating to agriculture, biodiversity, gender, health, poverty, water and others. Available online: www.unesco.org/education/esd

● **The Challenge of Indigenous Education: Practice and Perspectives** by Linda King and Sabine Schielmann. Educational materials providing accurate and fair information on indigenous peoples, their cultures and ways of life are all too rare, and history textbooks frequently depict them negatively. Programmes often fail to offer them the possibility of participating in decision-making, in the design of curricula, the selection of teachers and teaching methods, and the definition of standards. This book discusses the challenges facing the providers of education for indigenous peoples within a framework of good practice in quality indigenous education. Price: 19.80€. Available from UNESCO Publishing: www.upo.unesco.org



● **A Guide to Human Rights: Institutions, Standards, Procedures.** This publication provides information on major instruments, procedures and mechanisms to protect human rights, principal events (international conferences, decades, etc.), and institutions dealing with human rights. This updated volume has been amended and enlarged to reflect new developments in the field of human rights. It contains about 600 entries and is designed primarily for educators, students, human rights activists and mass media professionals. Price: 14.80€. Available from UNESCO Publishing: www.upo.unesco.org

● **UNESCO Institutes and Centres specialized in education – a brochure.** Today, six Institutes and two Centres specialized in education assist countries in tackling education problems of particular concern. A new colourful brochure describes their work. Located in different parts of the world, all have a different story to tell. Three Institutes have a long past; the oldest – the International Bureau of Education – dates back to 1925. Others are more recent, mainly established in the late 1990s.



● **Cultural Symbiosis in Al-Andalus.** Al-Andalus is the name Muslims gave to their rule in the Iberian peninsula. This 396-page book is about the contribution of Muslims, Christians and Jews in the Iberian Peninsula to global civilization. It is a testament, in these times of turmoil attributed by many to a clash of civilizations, to the ability of different cultures to embrace each other, to live together in harmony and mutual respect. Available from UNESCO Beirut. E-mail: beirut@unesco.org

Unless otherwise stated, all publications are available free of charge from UNESCO's Documentation and Information Service, Education Sector. E-mail: sdi@unesco.org

