

Research Report

GA 3

Measures to Further Increase the Effective Implementation of the Second Millennium Development Goal (MDG)

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Forum	GA3
Issue:	Measures to further increase the effective implementation of the second Millennium Development Goal (MDG)
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Introduction

The Second Millennium Development Goal is to ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. This goal is one of the eight Millennium Development Goals. These targets were adopted in the form of the United Nations Millennium Declaration in September 2000 during the Millennium Summit in New York. The goals were set out to enhance global partnership in reducing extreme poverty. Primary education is a very important step towards reducing extreme poverty in the long term, as education gives people the means to support themselves and reduce poverty in their country. As the 2015 deadline is approaching rapidly, it is time to ensure that education is universally received.

Definition of Key Terms

Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals are eight goals: “end poverty and hunger, universal education, gender equality, child health, maternal health, combat HIV/ AIDS, environmental sustainability and global partnership.” These goals strive to reduce extreme poverty through global partnership by 2015.

Universal education

Universal education means that it will be possible for every child in the world, girls and boys alike, to complete a course of primary education.

Enrolment rate

The percentage of school-age children receiving education.



General Overview

In 2000, when the UN Millennium Declaration was adopted, enrolment rates in primary education in developing countries was 83 percent. In 2008 enrolment rates had risen to 89 percent, however the current pace of progress is not sufficient enough to enable universal education by 2015, so as circumstances are now, the second Millennium Development Goal is not going to be met. In September 2010 there were still about 69 million school-age children not in school.

The areas in which the issue is most persistent are sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia. Almost half of the children not in school live in sub-Saharan Africa (31 million of them) and more than a quarter live in South-East Asia (18 million of them). The drop-out rate in sub-Saharan Africa is also very high; over 30 percent of children attending primary school drop out before reaching the final grade.

The problem has a variety of causes. One of the main issues is poverty. In developing countries there are often not enough resources to provide education for every child. Teachers, study materials and school buildings are lacking. According to a UN estimate, it would be necessary to double the number of teachers in sub-Saharan Africa in order to meet the second Millennium Development Goal. But the lack of resources limiting educational prospects is not only a problem within the government of a country. Poverty amongst the population of a country is a big problem when trying to increase enrollment rates. School fees often make it impossible for families on minimum wages to send their children to school. Child labor is also an issue. Children who have to work or have to take care of siblings and the household mostly do not have the time nor energy to go to school.

Another important issue is gender inequality. Here poverty is a contributing factor, as in families with few resources, the boys are more likely to be educated because the family sees that as a higher priority. Girls often have to stay at home to work in and round the house and care for younger siblings. Discrimination in schools and (sexual) violence against girls both on the way to school as well as inside schools often goes unreported but causes many girls to drop out of school. Early marriage and pregnancy also restrict a girls' education in many cultures. There are still many girls forced into marriage at a young age worldwide.

Another factor contributing to children not getting primary education is conflict. According to UNICEF, 42 percent of the children not enrolled in primary school live in poor countries affected by conflict.

Major Parties Involved

The United Nations Children's Fund UNICEF

The United Nations Children's Fund is there to care for children worldwide. UNICEF was created in December 1946 to help feed and protect children suffering from famine and disease after the Second World War. UNICEF is currently working in 190 countries to protect children from malnourishment, diseases including HIV/AIDS and to ensure education for boys and girls alike.

UNESCO



The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization was founded in 1946 to ‘create the conditions for dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, based upon respect for commonly shared values.’ (UNESCO) The idea to together begin an organization to restore education after the Second World War was however already proposed during the war, in 1942. UNESCO is currently coordinating the Education For All movement.

EFA

The Education For All movement is a worldwide commitment to achieve universal basic education. Governments as well as civil society are working to achieve Education For All. The UNESCO coordinates this movement. The movement took off in 1990 during The World Conference on Education in Jomtien, Thailand.

Timeline of Key Events

- 1990** The World Conference on Education For All is held in Jomtien, Thailand, during which 155 countries and 150 organizations dedicated themselves to “universalize primary education and massively reduce illiteracy by the end of the decade”. Here, the World Declaration on Education For All and The Framework For Action To Meet Basic Learning Needs were adopted, and the Education For All movement took off, a movement led by UNESCO, which encompasses efforts from governments, NGO’s, civil society and media to provide education for all.
- 2000** The World Education Forum was held in Dakar, Senegal. The participants acknowledged that many countries were far from reaching the goals set in The World Declaration on Education For All, and reaffirmed, in the Dakar Framework for Action their commitment to achieve universal education by 2015.
- 2000** The Millennium Summit is held in New York where, after a decade of United Nations conferences, the United Nations Millennium Declaration is adopted. It was the largest gathering of world leaders in recorded history.
- 2002** The start of the United Nations Millennium Campaign. This campaign is organized by the UN to inspire people from all over the world to support the Millennium Development Goals.
- 2008** Government, foundations, businesses and civil society commit to reducing poverty by 2015, an estimated 16 billion dollars are generated to reduce poverty at the High-Level Event on the MDGs.
- 2010** At the 2010 Summit on the Millennium Development Goals the Global Action Plan -- Keeping the Promise: United to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals— is adopted and many more initiatives against poverty are announced.



Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

The UN has already implemented various effective measures to make universal education a reality. In Burundi, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Malawi, Nepal and Tanzania school fees were abolished to make it possible for children with few resources to complete primary education. This proved very effective; in Tanzania, enrolment rates doubled between 1999 and 2008, so that 99.6 percent of the school aged children were receiving primary education. In Ethiopia, enrolment rates increased by 95 percent between 1999 and 2008.

Providing resources to increase the number of teachers and the amount of classrooms and study material is also an effective measure. In Ghana, for example, volunteers and retirees are trained to teach in schools.

Making schools more easily accessible has been effective, despite geographical or language boundaries. In Mongolia, one hundred mobile schools (so called tent-schools) are providing education to children in rural areas across the country who otherwise would have had no access to primary education. In Bolivia a bilingual education program was set up in the three most widely-spread indigenous languages.

In Ethiopia the UN is working to encourage families to send their daughters to school instead of forcing them into marriage at a young age. The program is called 'Berhane Hewan' and rewards the girls with a ewe as an incentive if she completes the program.

The World Food Program provides school meals as an incentive for parents to send their children to school, as well as protecting them from malnourishment.

Possible Solutions

Many steps have already been taken to achieve universal education, however, the Millennium Development Goal of making primary education possible for every girl and every boy is not likely to be met at this rate of progress. Therefore action must be taken now.

First of all, it is very important to invest in education. An increase in enrollment rate means there must be enough classrooms, teachers and study materials. Training new teachers, building schools and providing study materials is crucial to achieve universal primary education. To do this financial resources must be provided, by governments, the UN and civil society. Also, children from poor families should also be able to complete primary education. This could be done by abolishing school fees and providing incentives (such as school meals). Child laborers must be a special point of focus, as these children often work to help provide their family's income and therefore cannot stop working without financial help. Furthermore, investments should be made in the infrastructure of a country, especially around schools, so that each child can travel safely to school.

Secondly, gender equality is a key aspect in achieving universal education. Girls should feel safe at school. Raising awareness amongst girls of their rights and capacities is an important step. Charges of (sexual) violence should be handled more effectively, for example by appointing a confidential at the school. Awareness should also be raised amongst girls that sexual abuse and violence should not be tolerated and can be reported. The global community should also be made aware of the importance of the education of girls and that women have the same rights as men.



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