



**THE CAMPAIGN TO MAKE
POVERTY HISTORY
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EDUCATION FOR ALL

Education is one of the most powerful investments we can make

Education attacks poverty at its roots, and strengthens individuals, families and communities. In addition to equipping a child with the knowledge and skills needed for a productive life, a basic education offers even deeper and wider returns for health and economic growth. The internationally agreed upon goal is to achieve universal primary education by 2015. That means 77 million more children worldwide would have free access to primary education.

A growing number of countries are making real progress by investing in education.

- Primary school enrollment in sub-Saharan Africa jumped by 20 million children from 2000 to 2004.
- In 2005, Ghana abolished user fees across the country, and primary school enrollments rose by 14%.
- Tanzania has used its savings from debt relief in 2000 to increase education spending and eliminate school fees. Almost overnight, an estimated 1.6 million children enrolled in school. By 2003, 3.1 million additional children were attending school. Similar results have played out in Mozambique, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Rwanda and Ethiopia.

Education is also a key tool to strengthen young democracies

Cross-national studies have found strong correlations between mass literacy and the presence of democratic political systems, as well as between the expansion of primary education and the degree of political development. An educated citizenry that is capable of making informed decisions, voicing opinions, and holding elected officials responsible is essential for democracy to survive and flourish. Education also fosters wider community cohesion and stability, giving people more control over their lives and hope for the future. A free public education, where children can learn about civic engagement, democracy and equality, provides an alternative to other forms of organized schooling.

An Investment in basic education is an investment in women and girls

The challenges to expanding access to education are vast, particularly for girls. Many children are kept from school due to costs associated with schooling or the loss of their contribution to family income. Impoverished countries also lack the funds to train and retain qualified teachers, provide text books and teaching materials, and build an adequate number of schools. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has further weakened education systems, wiping out a generation of educators and forcing children, particularly girls, to stay home and care for sick family members. However, increasing access to education for girls can reap considerable rewards:

- Children of mothers who receive 5 years of primary education are 40% more likely to live beyond age 5.
- Educated mothers are 50% more likely to have their children immunized.
- In low income countries, a young woman's average earnings increase between 10% and 20% with each additional year of education.

Education for All - Fast-track Initiative (FTI)

In 2002, donors and developing countries established the Education for All - Fast-track Initiative (FTI), a global partnership to ensure accelerated progress towards the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015. All low-income countries that demonstrate serious commitment to achieve universal primary completion are eligible for support from FTI.

Ask your Member of Congress to cosponsor the Education for All Act (S. 1259 / H.R. 2092) – cosponsored by Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY), Senator Gordon Smith (R-OR), Congresswoman Nita Lowey (D-NY) and Congressman Spencer Bachus (R-AL) – which makes universal basic education a priority of U.S. foreign policy.