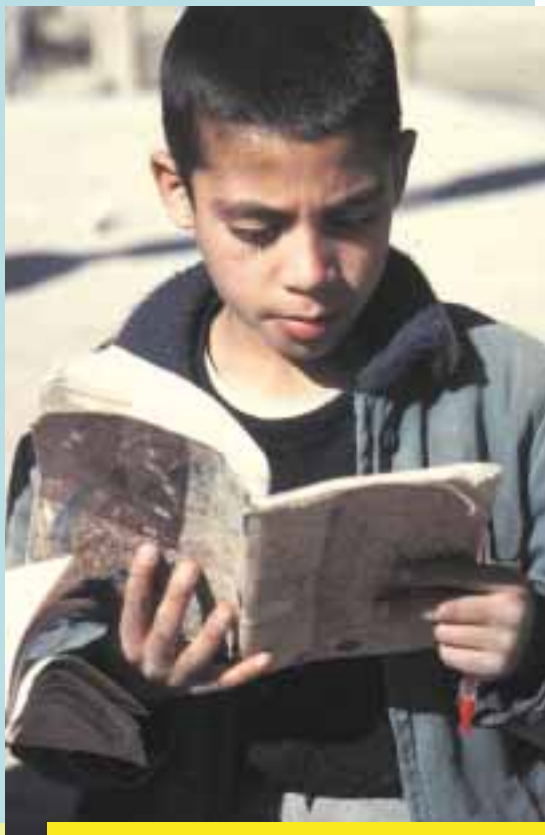


UNESCO and Education



Our mission

- Promote education as a **fundamental right**
- Improve the **quality** of education
- Stimulate **experimentation, innovation** and **policy dialogue**



6 *Education for all is important for three reasons. First, education is a right. Second, education enhances individual freedom. Third, education yields important development benefits.*

John Daniel
UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Education

Defending

→ Enjoying the right to education

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights says that all children, youth and adults have the right to education. Yet millions of people never get a chance to learn. Denying their right to education wastes human potential and blocks social, economic and cultural development.

→ Opening the mind

UNESCO believes that education offers an answer to many of the world's problems. Where the right to education is guaranteed, people have a greater chance to enjoy other rights. Knowledge opens the mind to the world, to other cultures, languages and ways of thinking. It empowers people, gives them a voice and unlocks their full potential.

→ Investing in people

Education is an effective way to fight poverty and to build well-functioning democracies and peaceful societies. It is a sound investment that helps nations and communities to develop economically and socially. Every year of schooling increases earnings for both men and women by an average of ten per cent. History shows that no country ever developed without investing in the education of its people.

Starting a chain effect

A literate environment makes all the difference.
A person born in a literate family

- has a better chance to **survive infancy** and acquire the **foundation for learning**
- is more likely to **go to school** and get the **parental support** to stay there
- tends to **marry later** and have **fewer and healthier children**
- is more likely to find **qualified jobs**
- is more likely to **participate** in democratic life
- is more interested in caring for the **environment**



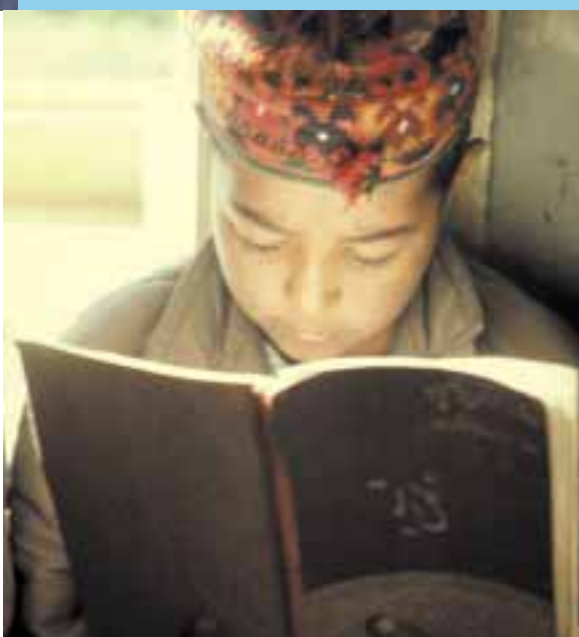
education

Building on the **good** news

More and more children, youth and adults have a chance to learn. Today 3.3 billion adults can read and write, three times as many as forty years ago.

The number of children in school continues to grow. Some 10 million more children have been going to school every year since 1990, nearly double the previous decade's growth. Today 680 million children are enrolled in primary schools around the world. Early childhood care and education is also advancing.

Experience shows that strong political will can turn the dream of *Education for All* into reality.

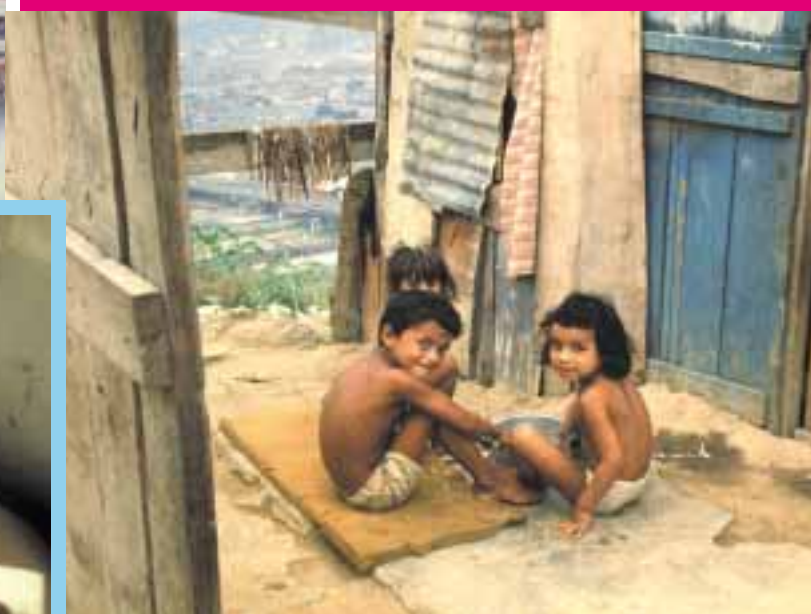


Facing the **bad** news

Despite the progress, education remains in crisis in many countries. Today more than 100 million children, over half of them girls, never get a chance to see the inside of a classroom. Getting a place in school is not always enough. In South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, less than three out of four pupils reach the end of primary school. Ill-adapted and obsolete curricula, scant resources, overcrowded classroom and untrained teachers result in poor quality.

The education crisis is passed from generation to generation. Today's unschooled children are tomorrow's illiterate adults. Some 862 million adults, two-thirds of them women, cannot read and write. This means that one woman in four is illiterate.

Children and adults in poor, rural and remote communities, ethnic minorities and people affected by conflict and natural disasters are the worst off.



Defining strategy

UNESCO is the United Nations' specialized agency for education. Since its creation in 1945, it has worked to improve education worldwide through technical advice, standard setting, innovative projects, capacity-building and networking. Its close links with education ministries and other partners in 188 countries put it in a key position to press for action.

UNESCO's three strategic objectives are to:

- Promote education as a fundamental right
- Improve the quality of education
- Stimulate experimentation, innovation and policy dialogue

Poverty eradication and the use of **information and communication technologies** are themes that cut across all of UNESCO's programmes. Poverty is growing, affects entire societies and blocks progress in education, while information technologies are shaping new patterns of growth and wealth creation and are opening up alternative ways to bring education to the unreached.



Working in different ways

UNESCO has defined five main functions for carrying out its mission:

- **Laboratory of ideas:** Identifies emerging problems, seeks strategies to solve them, creates space for dialogue, and tests innovative solutions.
- **Standard-setting:** Develops new standards in such key areas as technical and vocational education and the recognition of higher education qualifications.
- **Capacity-building:** Expands the capacities of governments, experts, civil society and communities through advisory services, training materials and workshops, international conferences and information sharing.
- **Clearinghouse:** Gathers and shares information on what's going on in education, especially best practices and innovations. UNESCO's education portal is part of this effort.
- **International catalyst:** Stimulates international cooperation in education and ensures that multilateral and bilateral programmes reflect UNESCO goals and priorities.



and goals

Setting targets – Education for All

At the World Education Forum held in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2000, the international community entrusted UNESCO with coordinating the *Education for All* movement and with maintaining the collective momentum of all those involved in education.

The six goals of *Education for All* (EFA) have become UNESCO's overriding priority in education. UNESCO ensures that education is high on international agendas, and that human and financial resources are mobilized to help governments meet their EFA commitments. It facilitates the development of partnerships and monitors progress, in particular by publishing an annual global monitoring report that tracks the achievements of countries and the international community towards education for all.

The six goals of *Education for All*

1. Expand early childhood care and education
2. Ensure free and compulsory primary education of good quality by 2015
3. Promote learning and life skills programmes for young people and adults
4. Expand adult literacy by 50 per cent by 2015
5. Eliminate gender disparities in access to education in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieve gender equality by 2015
6. Enhance educational quality



Working at all

UNESCO believes in lifelong learning. It works at all levels of

Starting young

Learning begins at birth. Early childhood programmes result in more agile minds, better school attendance, lower repetition and drop-out rates, and stronger academic skills. Quality early childhood experience can be provided both at home and at care centres.

UNESCO leads the international policy drive for early childhood care and education.

It publishes policy briefs and case studies for policy-makers, creates forums for policy dialogue on parent education and family support, and develops guidelines for early childhood service providers in the field.

Catering for children and youth

Primary schools are at the heart of education systems and the priority for most countries is to provide six years of free and compulsory schooling. But more and more countries are now stretching compulsory education from six to nine or even twelve years of schooling, to cover junior secondary and even full secondary education.

UNESCO actively supports the drive for quality universal primary education. It works to improve countries' capacities in educational planning and management through technical assistance and training.

UNESCO also leads the discussion on how to reform conventional secondary education and technical and vocational training, so that young people will grow into responsible and tolerant citizens and be prepared for higher education studies or the world of work. For example, packages are being developed to help train technical and vocational students in such skills as running a small business and entrepreneurship, as well as help with career guidance and counselling.

UNESCO has also devised a framework that suggests ways to improve science, technology and mathematics education in line with the latest thinking on such concerns as gender inclusion and the environment.



Levels

education to reach every age group, from early childhood to adulthood.

Reaching the unreached

Street and working children, children with disabilities, ethnic minorities and people affected by conflicts and natural disasters are often left on the margins of formal education. UNESCO is working with governments to make formal schools more welcoming for such excluded groups. It is also developing ways to reach these children and adults through non-formal education, often working with non-governmental organizations and other development agencies. UNESCO's action also includes awareness-raising campaigns.

Forging links between alternative centres for excluded children and schools in the formal sector is a key issue for UNESCO. In Burundi, for example, a new project has shown that children can successfully move from informal centres to primary school and in some cases even secondary school.

UNESCO also supports learning initiatives for marginalized youth. Projects promote such practical skills as food processing or recycling, or alternative forms of education, including night and street schools. The common starting point is the young people's knowledge and desire for change.

Remembering the adults left behind

The world's 862 million illiterate adults are a neglected group that often comes last on countries' lists of education priorities. However, literacy and empowerment of parents and communities matter just as much as children's schooling. When parents are illiterate, it is harder for children to find meaning in school.

UNESCO works to place literacy high on the international agenda. It is leading the 2003-2012 United Nations Literacy Decade, proclaimed by the UN General Assembly, which aims to reduce the absolute number of illiterate people, create dynamic literate environments and improve the quality of life of those who take part in functional literacy programmes.

Research is under way on new policies for literacy training and non-formal education and improving links with formal education, and UNESCO is devising new procedures to collect, process and analyse data on non-formal activities.

Building bridges at the top – higher education

UNESCO is the only UN body with a mandate to support national capacity-building in higher education and it plays a leading role in the worldwide reflection on higher education reform.

It builds international and regional networks to assist with a range of issues in higher education: academic mobility, international exchanges of excellence, research on education systems and knowledge production, curriculum innovation, leadership roles for women educators, teacher development, and the defence of quality in higher education qualifications.

Education systems must adapt to the emergence of knowledge societies and the new social, cultural and economic challenges of an increasingly globalized world. UNESCO provides a platform for dialogue on how to renew education systems and how best to harness new information and communication technologies. It also seeks to identify changes generated by knowledge societies that affect quality and accreditation in higher education, such as market-driven degree-granting and academic courses available on the Internet.



Creating a good learning environment

In the past decade, quality has taken a back seat in the drive for more access to education. More children go to school but what they learn is not always useful, and repetition and drop-out rates are high.

UNESCO is now stepping up its focus on quality in education, stressing the need for diversified content and methods that foster the acquisition of values, attitudes and skills needed to face the challenges of contemporary society, sustainable development, and globalization.

This push has three main components:

Monitoring achievement

It is essential to know what students learn, and under what conditions, in order to assess whether schools are useful and effective, so UNESCO is developing new indicators to measure learning. More than 70 countries are taking part in its project for monitoring learning achievement.

Enhancing curricula and textbooks

UNESCO helps governments to adapt curricula and textbooks to meet the evolving learning needs of people and to reorient basic educational policies to include issues such as human rights, peace, democracy and understanding among cultures.

It focuses on education in increasingly multilingual contexts and provides guidance on the use of local and other languages. It also assists in the development of national curriculum policies to ensure that primary schools have textbooks and learning methods and materials of good quality.

Improving the school environment

Quality learning can take place only when children and youth feel welcome in school and are in good health. UNESCO plays a strong role as the UN focal point for physical education and sport, and as part of the UN's push to *focus resources on effective school health (FRESH)*.

It is also developing new approaches in non-violent conflict resolution in the classroom. For example, a new publication offers teachers, parents and students fourteen practical solutions in conflict management.



Tackling crisis

Going for gender equality

Girls and women are systematically disadvantaged by gender discrimination. Yet the gains they are making in educational achievement are having an impact on families and societies. UNESCO's efforts to combat gender discrimination in education are centred on the *United Nations Girls' Education Initiative* (UNGEI).

This initiative's objectives include eliminating gender disparities in access to primary and secondary education by 2005 and attaining gender equality by 2015. UNESCO promotes UNGEI through its extensive network of partners, especially at the ministerial level, and has published a working document, *Basic Education for Gender Equality – Strategic Framework*, which serves as a guideline for government policies on the education of girls and women.

Its efforts include reviewing national *Education for All* action plans from a gender perspective, providing in-country training on gender responsiveness and reinforcing national capacities to improve the data available on gender issues.

Micro-credit schemes to empower rural women and the production of gender-sensitive post-literacy materials are also part of UNESCO's action. Particular focus is placed on the guidance and counselling of girls in Africa, where UNESCO has developed learning materials and trained female teachers and social workers.

Combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic

The alarming spread of HIV/AIDS calls for energetic preventive education and a proactive caring response from the education system. The pandemic threatens to wipe out much of the progress made in boosting literacy and general education levels. Up to 10 per cent of teachers may be lost in the coming years in the worst-hit countries in Africa.

UNESCO's strategy for HIV/AIDS preventive education focuses on:

→ **Advocacy** at all levels – targeting institutions, ministries, agencies and the media

→ **Tailoring the message** to different audiences

→ **Changing risk behaviour** through effective communication

→ **Caring** for the infected and affected and combating complacency and discrimination

→ **Coping with the institutional impact** of HIV/AIDS

UNESCO has preventive HIV/AIDS education projects in all regions of the world, ranging from training of teachers and social workers to the publication of booklets, videos, posters and technical manuals. UNESCO has also established a clearing house on curriculum-oriented issues related to HIV/AIDS and is coordinating an on-line *Global HIV/AIDS Impact on Education Clearinghouse*.

Dealing with teacher shortage

The world is on the brink of a crisis in education because of the acute and growing shortage of teachers. Currently, there are 60 million teachers in the world, but another 15-35 million are needed to meet the *Education for All* goals by 2015.

Yet millions of teachers are deserting the profession because of poor salaries, status and working conditions, which are showing little or no signs of improvement.

UNESCO advises countries how better to use secondary and higher education resources to train teachers to good standards. It promotes the use of international standards on teachers' rights and responsibilities, and is developing much-needed international comparative indicators to help decision-makers find ways to reverse the massive flight of teachers from the profession.

Among current initiatives, UNESCO is linking international experts and developing guidelines to help countries significantly expand teacher training by using appropriate open and distance learning methods.

UNESCO's International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa has developed teacher education programmes that use distance education. A Teacher Education Network has been established, linking teacher education institutions to the latest curriculum development work as well as to electronic libraries. UNESCO's office in Bangkok runs an Internet gateway on the use of information and communication technologies to enhance teaching skills.

Working in partnership

UNESCO is grappling with major tasks in education but it does not do so alone. Most activities are carried out in cooperation with partners and success largely depends on the quality of these partnerships. UNESCO's partners include:

Governments and National Commissions in 188 Member States, which share in the planning, execution and evaluation of UNESCO's programme.

The United Nations family within which UNESCO collaborates in such inter-agency initiatives as UNAIDS, the Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies, the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative and the United Nations Literacy Decade.

Civil society organizations which bring innovations, knowledge and ideas from the grassroots. The *Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education for All* (CCNGO/EFA) and the *UNESCO/NGO Collective Consultation on Higher Education* have become effective mechanisms for dialogue, reflection and joint action.

Schools, a good example of which is the *Associated Schools Project Network* (ASPnet), comprising more than 7,000 schools in 171 countries. It promotes peace and tolerance, and tackles such difficult issues as racism and slavery in non-confrontational ways. ASPnet celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2003.

Academic institutions, especially through the *UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs* programme, which promotes cooperation and the transfer of knowledge among institutions of higher learning around the world. Started in 1992, this programme currently has projects in more than 500 institutions in 113 countries.

UNESCO also facilitates interaction and support with many other actors:

- It leads the two **global coordination mechanisms** in the *Education for All* movement. These are the *Working Group on EFA* and the *High-Level Group on EFA*.
- It supports cooperation on the EFA agenda between the **nine high-population countries** (Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan) which represent more than half of the world's population and 70 per cent of its illiterate.

- It coordinates regular regional meetings of the world's **education ministers**, where they discuss challenges and develop new action plans.
- It encourages **parliamentarians** to become increasingly involved in education, for example through the forums being set up in Africa and Latin America.
- It encourages the formation of **journalist networks** to promote the media coverage of education issues.

Making a difference

A few examples of UNESCO's

Afghanistan

UNESCO is working with the ministers of education and higher education and other development partners to rebuild Afghanistan's devastated education system. It provides basic supplies and equipment to improve the quality of education and enable schools to carry out daily management tasks. It is also working with the High Commission on Education for Afghanistan that is developing the country's new education policy.



Brazil

UNESCO is involved with almost all partners working in education in Brazil, implementing, assisting and evaluating education programmes funded by more than \$100 million from the Brazilian government and international development banks. They include technical support for a successful school scholarship programme for poor parents, distance education courses for teachers, expansion of secondary education and modernization of higher education programmes.



Reaching out

UNESCO's Education Sector in the world

Headquarters in Paris

The Education Sector based at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris comprises 190 people and is headed by Assistant Director-General for Education, John Daniel. It has an Executive Office and five Divisions:

- Division of Basic Education
- Division of Secondary, Technical and Vocational Education
- Division of Higher Education
- Division of Educational Policies and Strategies
- Division for the Promotion of Quality Education

It also runs a Documentation and Information Service.



ence
action

Madagascar

UNESCO leads a United Nations joint initiative to improve education opportunities in Madagascar. After assessing needs and formulating strategies, UNESCO now coordinates the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of a new *Education for All* programme. This includes reinforcing institutional capacities, developing management information systems for better planning, monitoring and evaluation, curriculum reform, teacher training and the development of low-cost alternative delivery systems.



Field offices

UNESCO has 56 field offices, including four regional bureaux for education in Dakar, Bangkok, Beirut and Santiago. Most offices have an education officer and maintain close relations with governments, development partners and civil society. They work to advance UNESCO's goals, assist in designing and implementing programmes and activities and in raising extra-budgetary funds.

Institutes and Centres

Six UNESCO institutes and two centres are specialized in education:

- The *International Bureau of Education* (IBE) in Geneva, Switzerland, focuses on curriculum policy, contents and methods.
- The *International Institute for Educational Planning* (IIEP) in Paris, France, is specialized in the reform and reconstruction of education systems, and is training education officials in policy planning and management.
- The *UNESCO Institute for Education* (UIE) in Hamburg, Germany, deals with adult and continuing education.
- The *UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education* (IITE) in Moscow, the Russian Federation, specializes in the application of information and communication technologies in education.
- The *International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean* (IESALC) in Caracas, Venezuela, focuses on the reform of higher education in this region.
- The *International Institute for Capacity-Building in Africa* (IICBA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, works in education capacity-building in Africa with a particular focus on teachers.
- The *European Centre for Higher Education* (CEPES) in Bucharest, Romania, promotes cooperation in higher education in Europe.
- The *UNESCO International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training* (UNEVOC) in Bonn, Germany, is dedicated to developing and improving technical and vocational education and training.

The Education Sector also works closely with the *UNESCO Institute for Statistics* (UIS) in Montreal, Canada.



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