

Africa: Education

Last updated: May 2008

About education in Africa

Key facts¹

- 33 million children out of the 72 million children world wide, who do not go to school, live in Sub-Saharan Africa. 18 million of these children, who ought to be in school, are girls.
- In Sub-Saharan Africa, only two thirds of children who begin primary school reach the final grade.
- In Sub-Saharan Africa there are only 89 girls for every 100 boys enrolled in primary school - lower than any other region.
- In 1999 alone, over 1 million children in sub-Saharan Africa lost their teachers to AIDS.
- To reach the goal of sending every child to primary school, Africa needs an extra 1.6 million teachers and must recruit 4 million between now and 2015.
- In 2004, the same number of girls (1.3 million) were enrolled in universities and colleges in the whole continent of Africa (697 million people), as in the UK (60 million people).

Progress made

- Abolishing primary school user fees in Malawi, Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya has helped more than 1 million extra children to enrol in primary school, in each country.
- Overall numbers of children in primary school in sub-Saharan Africa increased by 64% between 1990 and 2004.
- In Zambia, primary school completion rates for girls have risen from 58% in 2002 to 74% in 2005.
- Between 1996 and 2004, Uganda recruited an additional 70,000 teachers, built 50,000 classrooms, supplied 20 million new textbooks and introduced new policies to improve efficiency, promote gender equity, tackle HIV and fight corruption.

Working to improve access to good quality education in Africa

Giving children the opportunity to go to school and learn, and improving education systems in developing countries, are critical for development. For this reason, the UK has committed to spend £8.5 billion on education in developing countries over the next ten years, including £150 million to the [Education for All Fast Track Initiative](#) (FTI) over three years.

In order to meet the UK target of £1 billion a year on education by 2010/11, £500 million will be spent in Africa. This additional funding will be used not only to improve access for the many children out of school in Africa, but also to improve the quality of education for those children in school, with a particular emphasis on improving opportunities for girls' participation in education.

In Africa much of DFID's support at country level is provided directly to the governments we work with so that they can provide education services for their citizens. Examples can be seen below. We are supporting the development of 10 year education plans in countries, such as Ghana, Ethiopia and Mozambique. This should encourage Development Partners to provide long-term, predictable funding and

¹ The majority of these facts are taken from the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008 (UNESCO)

is intended to break the cycle of under-investment in education. Most of the countries in which DFID supports education have succeeded in getting endorsement from the Fast Track Initiative (or are in the process of getting this), and have been engaged in developing ten year education sector plans, in response to the **Abuja Commitment to Action** (May 2006).

The UK has made specific commitments to education in Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Niger, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe

Pan Africa and regional action on higher education

At the Pan African level DFID is currently supporting a number of initiatives. The Commission for Africa (2004) called for African Governments and Development Partners to renew and revitalise higher education, within the framework of a holistic approach to education sector development.

In December 2007, DFID signed a £3.5 million agreement to support networking between Pan-African, regional and national higher education institutions. Under the aegis of the Association of African Universities, based in Accra, this **Mobilisation for Regional Capacity Initiative** will strengthen partnerships that contribute to education policy dialogue across Africa, including harnessing higher education's role in helping national governments to reach the Millennium Development Goals. This initiative will also ensure that universities and key regional organisations feed into the implementation of the African Union's Second Decade for Education in Africa.

Who are we working with ?

DFID works with African Governments, other Development Partners (for example the Dutch in Malawi and the French in Niger) the African Union, NEPAD, the EFA Fast Track Initiative, the EU, UNICEF, UNESCO, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa, the World Bank, the African Development Bank and numerous civil society and non-governmental organizations in Africa, as well regional institutions such as the African Association of Universities, cited above.

At the Anglo-French Summit (March 2008) the UK and France each agreed to help support 8 million children in School by the time of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa. The UK and France called on other Development Partners to help finance the remaining children out of school in order to ensure that African Governments are back on track to reach Universal Primary Education in Africa by 2015.

Country examples:

Ghana: DFID is providing £105 million over the next ten years to help the Government provide free, good quality basic primary education for all Ghanaian children. DFID's earlier support contributed to improving primary and girls' enrolment figures, which have risen from 79.5% in 1999 to 92.1% in 2005.

Rwanda: In 2006, DFID launched a £10 million sector budget support programme and a £3 million capacity development programme, after contributing £14.5 million to education sector development (2002-2006). Net primary enrolment increased from 73.3% to 92% during this period, and gender parity has been reached in primary and secondary education.

For more information about DFID's work on education in Africa please see individual Country Factsheets at www.dfid.gov.uk. If you are a journalist and wish to know more about DFID and its work to reduce poverty in Africa please call DFID press office: 0207023 0600.