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## **United States Must Support Global Fund for Education**

“And that's why the third commitment I'll make is working to erase the global primary education gap by 2015. Every child, every boy and every girl should have the ability to go to school. To ensure that our nation does its part to meet this goal, we need to establish a \$2 billion global education fund, and I look forward to signing the Bipartisan Education for All Act that was first introduced by Hillary Clinton, a true champion for children, not just here in the United States but all around the world.”

— Barack Obama, September 2008 at the Clinton Global Initiative

**April 2010** – Worldwide, more than 72 million children, mostly girls, lack basic education in what is perhaps the greatest single barrier to economic, social, and political development. Education is a societal building block, a basic human right, and a significant factor in the development of children, communities, and countries. The next generation of leaders and professionals — the doctors, entrepreneurs, teachers, lawyers, mayors, presidents, and prime ministers — must have a basic education if they are to meet their true potential.

Later this month, in hundreds of cities across the U.S. champions of domestic education, along with everyday citizens, will be teaching the importance of a global commitment to Education for All during the Global Week of Action on Education (April 19-23).

Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY) — one of the strongest Congressional champions of Education for All — will introduce the Education for All Act. The act will call on the United States to increase funding to expand access and improve basic education, and support a new multilateral mechanism — a Global Fund for Education — that would attract funding from many nations to meet these goals.

### **Why is education so important?**

Opening classroom doors to all children, especially girls, will help break the intergenerational chains of poverty because education is intrinsically linked to all development goals, such as supporting gender empowerment, improving child and maternal health, reducing hunger, fighting the spread of HIV and diseases of poverty, spurring economic growth, and building peace.

### ***Education empowers women and girls***

- Benefits of girls' education include not only reducing the impact of HIV/AIDS, but reducing poverty, improving the health of women and their children, delaying marriage, reducing female genital cutting, and increasing self-confidence and decision-making power.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Education Contributes to Improving Child Survival and Maternal Health<sup>2</sup>***

- A child born to an educated mother is more than twice as likely to survive to the age of five as a child born to an uneducated mother.
- Educated mothers are 50 percent more likely to immunize their children than mothers with no schooling.
- Women with six or more years of education are more likely to seek prenatal care, assisted childbirth, and postnatal care.

### ***Education Helps Reduce Hunger<sup>3</sup>***

- Expanding education for girls is one of the most powerful ways to fight hunger.<sup>4</sup> Gains in women's education made the most significant difference in reducing malnutrition, outperforming a simple increase in the availability of food. A 63-country study by the International Food Policy Research Institute found that more productive farming as a result of female education accounted for 43 percent of the decline in malnutrition achieved between 1970 and 1995.
- Crop yields in Kenya could increase up to 22 percent if women farmers had the same education and inputs (such as fertilizer, credit, investment) as men farmers.<sup>5</sup>

### ***Education Contributes to the Fight against HIV/AIDS***

- Educated people are healthier people. HIV/AIDS infection rates are halved among young people who finish primary school. If every girl and boy received a complete primary education, at least 7 million new cases of HIV could be prevented in a decade.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> UNFPA. Women and HIV/AIDS: Confronting the Crisis. Available at: <http://www.unfpa.org/hiv/women/report/chapter5.html>.

<sup>2</sup> "The Economic and Human Development Costs of Missing the Millennium Development Goal on Gender Equity." World Bank Discussion Paper 29710. D. Abu-Ghaida and S. Klasen. (Washington: World Bank, 2004)

<sup>3</sup> "Explaining Child Malnutrition in Developing Countries." International Food Policy Research Institute Research Report No.111. L. Smith and L. Haddad. (Washington DC: International Food Policy Research Institute).

<sup>4</sup> "Hunger Report 2005." Bread for the World. <http://www.bread.org/learn/hunger-reports/hunger-report-2005-executivesummary.html>.

<sup>5</sup> UNFPA, UN Population Fund, State of World Population 2005: The Promise of Equality. UNFPA, New York, 2005, p. 47

<sup>6</sup> "Learning to Survive: How education for all would save millions of young people from HIV/AIDS." Global Campaign for Education. (London: GCE, 2004).

- The ability of girls to avoid HIV infection is so strongly associated with attendance at school that education is known as a “social vaccine” against the virus.

### ***Education Helps Fight Poverty & Spur Economic Growth***

- Education is a prerequisite for short and long-term economic growth: No country has achieved continuous and rapid economic growth without at least 40 percent of adults being able to read and write.<sup>7</sup>
- A person’s earnings increase by 10 percent for each year of schooling they receive, translating to a 1 percent annual increase in GDP if good quality education is offered to the entire population.<sup>8</sup>

### ***Education Provides a Foundation for Peace Building***

- Education nourishes peace. Across society, every year of schooling decreases a male’s chance of engaging in violent conflict by 20 percent.<sup>9</sup>

### **What is Education for All?**

Education for All (EFA) is a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children. EFA was launched at the World Conference on Education for All in 1990. Education for All is also goal #2 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) — eight internationally agreed-upon goals that serve as the blueprint for cutting extreme poverty in half. Of the 72 million primary-aged children not in school, 54 percent are girls, and more than half the countries in sub-Saharan Africa, South and West Asia, and the Arab States have not reached gender parity at the primary level. Tens of millions more children drop out of school before grade five because schools are overcrowded, unsafe, poorly equipped, poorly managed and have inadequately trained teachers.

### **What is the Education for All Act?**

The Education for All Act of 2010 (EFA) will be introduced in April by Rep. Lowey. The bill seeks to ensure the U.S. provides the resources and leadership to ensure a successful international effort to provide all children with a quality basic education by 2015. The EFA Act lays out U.S. policy that includes working with other countries, international organizations, and civil society to assist developing countries and strengthen their educational systems, assist NGOs and multilateral organizations, and promote education as the foundation for community development.

It calls for assistance to expand access to school; improve education quality; reach marginalized

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<sup>7</sup> “Millions Miss Out.” Global Campaign for Education.

<http://www.campaignforeducation.org/en/why-education-forall/millionsmissout>

<sup>8</sup> “Education on the Brink: Will the IMF’s new lease on life ease or block progress towards education goals?” Global Campaign for Education. 2009.

[http://www.campaignforeducation.org/docs/reports/IMF%20paper2\\_low%20res.pdf](http://www.campaignforeducation.org/docs/reports/IMF%20paper2_low%20res.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Save the Children. September 2009. <http://www.savethechildren.org/newsroom/2009/rtf-threeyears.html>

and vulnerable children, including those affected by conflict and humanitarian crises; build country capacity and country ownership; support communities of learning; and give priority to countries with the greatest need. It also mandates a new U.S. Education for All strategy to be overseen by an Education for All Coordinator.

Perhaps most importantly, the bill calls on the U.S. to support a new Global Fund for Education — an independent, multi-donor education initiative to increase and improve the impact of international aid for education. It should be based on the following principles:

- transparency with respect to financing, key policy decisions, and impact
- coordination among governments, private sector, and civil society
- mutual accountability between donors and recipients for achieving measurable results in access and quality
- alignment with host country priorities
- predictable, long-term funding disbursed in a timely manner

#### **What is the Global Campaign for Education and Global Action Week?**

The Global Campaign for Education (GCE), founded in 1999, brings together major nongovernmental organizations and teachers' unions in more than 100 countries. RESULTS is a member of the U.S. Chapter of the Global Campaign for Education, which is a broad-based coalition of more than 30 non-governmental and religious organizations, teachers unions, foundations and child advocates to promote the cause of universal basic education. Each year the Global Campaign for Education holds a Global Action Week to raise awareness about the need for universal basic education and the necessary actions of both rich and poor countries to achieve this objective.

#### **Comments in support of Education for All**

“Education is the essential foundation for health, economic development, gender equality, and long-term security.”

— Rep. Nita Lowey (D-NY)

“Education is a fundamental human right, yet it still remains a goal that is difficult to achieve. Difficult, but not impossible. The report shows promising results on some fronts, in that the gender gap in primary education has narrowed, and some of the world's poorest countries have made progress. However, the hard truth is that this progress is not fast enough. If current trends continue, there will be 50 million out of school by 2015. Let us all work together with great urgency to meet the target we set ourselves for 2015.”

— UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon on the occasion of the launch of the GMR 2010

“Education is the foundation of economic opportunity and should lie at the heart of America's foreign assistance efforts. More than 100 million children in the developing world are not in

school. Another 150 million drop out before they finish grade school. By failing these children, we sow the seeds of lost generations.”

— then-Senator Hillary Clinton, 2007

“While rich countries nurture their economic recovery, many poor countries face the imminent prospect of education reversals. We cannot afford to create a lost generation of children deprived of their chance for an education that might lift them out of poverty.”

— UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova