

# The Global Campaign for Education (GCE)

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The world is full of urgent and emotive causes. Whether it's the floods in Pakistan or the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan, we are never far from heart-wrenching images that are beamed around the world via ever more instant forms of communication.

All these crises are desperately pressing for the people affected; they make compelling and moving newspaper copy for journalists and editors and need immediate attention. The human response to donate time and money, demonstrated by millions of ordinary people across the globe, is a continued source of encouragement and inspiration to those of us working towards a better world.

However, away from the demands of the 'urgent', there are the ongoing needs of the 'important'. For the billions of parents around the world, there is nothing more important than the education of their children.

Education shapes the next generation of people on our planet and is the cornerstone of fair and sustainable societies. History shows us that where children have access to universal free schooling, communities and nation states flourish and economies boom. In countries in the West, movements developed out of the industrialisation era to demand better rights for workers, and better education for children. No country has ever achieved continuous and rapid economic growth without at least 40% of the population being able to read and write. Rich countries in the West and more recently tiger economies in the East have benefited immeasurably from these changes. This begs the vital question: Why, in 2010, are there still over 72 million children who are denied the chance to access a basic education?

It is certainly not due to a lack of resources. The Global Campaign for Education's (GCE) 1GOAL campaign has calculated that an annual donor contribution of \$16 billion would enable universal education provision. This equates to 0.2% of the money used for the collective bailout of the banking system. Similarly, reducing global annual military expenditure by just 1.5% would free up the necessary funds. This means that the barrier to the dream of Education for All (EFA) is a lack of political will – this is an inexcusable state of affairs.

If the politicians can't see the benefits of getting every child into school, their citizens can. For this year's World Cup in South Africa, GCE set up a campaign called 1GOAL, backed by FIFA, and its aim is to increase the number of children in school. Over 15 million people from over 190 countries around the world have signed up to demand action from world leaders on this pressing issue. Over 200 stars from the football world, including Pelé, Zinedine Zidane, Paulo Maldini and Patrick Viera have thrown their weight behind the campaign, while Shakira, Kevin Spacey, Matt Damon and Jessica Alba have provided even more stardust to this global movement.

## 1GOAL

1GOAL is a campaign seizing the power of football to ensure that education for all is a lasting impact of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. 1GOAL brings together footballers, fans, charities, corporations and individuals to lobby and achieve its ambitious aim of education for all.

In 2000, 164 world governments came together to create the Education for All goals; 189 governments also created the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Two of the eight goals involved ending poverty through education:

- to ensure that all boys and girls complete primary schooling by 2015;
- to ensure that girls have the opportunity for education at all levels by 2015.

They promised to make sure there was enough money and that the policies were in place to make it a reality. Since then many countries have abolished school fees, spending has increased by \$4 billion and an extra 40 million children are now going to school.

Yet progress has not been fast enough. With business 'as usual', over 50 million children will still be without an education in 2015.

1GOAL is an initiative of the football strand of the Class of 2015 and is run by the Global Campaign for Education to mobilise support to hold world leaders to their promises on education.

*'We support the footballers and their fans in calling on all world leaders to do their part to ensure every child can go to school. We need to see action at the World Cup and beyond. By acting now, together we can ensure education for all.'* (President Jacob Zuma, South Africa Host, 2010 FIFA World Cup)

The campaign has captured unprecedented support and political will across the world. 1GOAL is supported by the football world and its governing body, FIFA. 1GOAL supporters and ambassadors include a multitude of global football stars, celebrities and world leaders, all working to achieve the shared vision of education for all.

People across the world have spoken and there is a real case for world leaders to answer. The economic argument for delivering universal education is also a strong one. The child of an illiterate mother is 50% more likely to die before the age of five and twice as likely to suffer malnutrition as a child born to a mother who completed primary school. Educated mothers are also 50% more likely to immunise their children than uneducated mothers. The potential long-term impact on healthcare provision is clear – particularly when you consider that an educated girl in Africa is three times less likely to contract HIV than an uneducated one. Prevention is far better than cure. Placing children in the classroom dramatically reduces the burden on the clinic.

Economic conditions will improve for educated children too, making a compelling argument in these financially chastened times. It is estimated that developing countries may together be losing out on as much as \$70 billion every year by not providing their children with a good quality education. Moreover, an adult who has completed primary education is likely to earn 50% more than an adult who has not been to school, while a single year of primary education increases potential earnings by 5–15% in boys and even more in girls. The cause and effect of failing to invest in children is all too clear to see. Despite this, many governments in the developing world still suffer from myopia when it comes to prioritising investment in education.

So how can the Commonwealth's Education Ministers help to address this challenge? GCE's 1GOAL campaign has set out a clear ten-point plan to deliver universal education. The most important element is increasing the provision of aid to basic education to \$16 billion per year. In addition to this increased financing, certain Commonwealth countries should change their policies of using education to underwrite their national university system and should prioritise funding the core costs of education, rather than spending as much as two-thirds of their education aid budgets on consultants and technical support.

Developing countries across the Commonwealth also need to play their part, ensuring that 20% of their total budget is spent on education. Six countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are there already. Countries such as Botswana and Swaziland have exceeded the

target and are reaping the benefits with improved educational infrastructure and declining numbers of children out of school. However, challenges still remain and a major issue right across the developing world lies in ensuring girls are able to fully participate in the education process. In Bangladesh, small grants have been made available to girls for textbooks, uniforms and other school equipment, thereby reducing the educational gender gap. Since 2000, global aid to education has doubled, and the gender gap in school access has fallen by 4% – a clear indication that where there's been action there's been progress.

So where next? The economic downturn resulting from the financial crisis looms large over education efforts. Already some African countries are experiencing shrinking education budgets, with an anticipated reduction of \$4.6 billion across the continent anticipated for 2010. Many developed countries will be looking at reducing aid budgets to education – if they haven't already done so. It is vital that world leaders avoid rash, short-term savings and adopt a long-term view. Ensuring sustained and equitable economic growth in developing countries will lead to a decreased reliance on aid in the future. In order to realise this future, education must be placed at the very heart of development programmes worldwide. Anything less will condemn another generation of poor children to poverty, illness and hunger.

**KAILASH SATYARTHI**, president of the Global Campaign for Education and chair of 1GOAL, is a human rights activist from India who has been at the forefront of the global movement to end child slavery and exploitative child labour since 1981. As a grassroots activist, he has led the rescue of over 67,000 child slaves and developed a successful model for their education and rehabilitation. As a worldwide campaigner, he has been the architect of the single largest civil society network for the most exploited children, the Global March Against Child Labor, active in over 140 countries. He has also played an important role in linking the fight against child labour with the efforts for achieving Education for All.