

FACT FILE: EDUCATION

Despite its importance there are many countries of the world where education, which is a right for all, is available only to small numbers of the population.

The vast majority of countries of the world where less than 70% of primary school age children are enrolled in primary education are in Africa.

Why are there very low levels of educational participation across Africa?

- ❖ financial considerations;
- ❖ low levels of government spending and investment in education;
- ❖ insufficient education systems;
- ❖ the levels of violence and sexual abuse present in schools which discourage parents from allowing their children to attend school.
- ❖ conflict.

Levels of education vary from country to country.

The Facts

- ❖ The importance of education in development
- ❖ Increasing the number of children enrolled in primary school education
- ❖ The issue of secondary education
- ❖ Drop out or completion rates? Which is the best way of measuring success?
- ❖ What can an Aid Agency do?

Education “unlocks potential, broadens world views and shapes the future” and effects all groups in society.

Education is

- ❖ one of the most powerful tools for slowing down and reversing the spread of HIV
- ❖ a key tool for reducing the vulnerability of women by contributing to
 - poverty reduction,
 - gender equality
 - awareness of human rights.

The importance of education in development

Education:

- ❖ nurtures children,
- ❖ strengthens families
- ❖ empowers communities,
- ❖ therefore impacting on both individuals and whole nations.

Some people would go as far to say that education is development.

Education:

- ❖ Creates choices and opportunities for people
- ❖ gives people a stronger voice in society
- ❖ enables them to tackle the problems of poverty and disease
- ❖ Creates a dynamic workforce
- ❖ Creates well-informed citizens who are able to compete and cooperate globally

..... which equals national economic and social prosperity!

Increasing the number of children enrolled in primary school education

The importance of education to the development of countries in Africa (and countries around the world) is now widely recognised.

There have been many efforts especially over the last two decades by governments, non-governmental organisations and other humanitarian organisations to improve education.

This has included:

- ❖ providing educational resources,
- ❖ increasing access to education,
- ❖ recruiting and training more teachers
- ❖ and much, much more!

So what has the world done to help?

Despite the fact that growth in the sub-Saharan is very slow, some would argue that the fact that there is growth at all in primary enrolment is a positive sign.

However, many have argued that progress in primary enrolment rates is actually hiding other gaps that may prove to be more important in assessing whether all children are receiving an education.

But increased primary enrolment rates do not guarantee that students who are enrolled will actually complete their primary education.

Drop out or completion rates? Which is the best way of measuring success?

Many will drop out of school before they have acquired recognised levels of literacy.

Therefore high enrolment rates may, in fact, be accompanied by low completion rates.

It has been suggested that the core indicator of education systems' performance are completion rates.

By looking at primary completion rates, a different story about education can be seen.

Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest primary school completion rates of any region in the world.

Many primary completion rates have actually stagnated or declined in the period where enrolment was increasing.

In some countries less than half of the children who started grade 1 stayed on to grade 5.

Why is there such a great drop out rate:

- ❖ the enormous impact of HIV and AIDS killed by the disease
- ❖ the increase in school age children
- ❖ the lack of resources to accommodate the extra children
- ❖ a rise in schooling costs paid by families – not only school fees but text books and uniforms

Impact of HIV/AIDS? Think of all the teachers that it has killed!

The issue of secondary education

Primary education provides the essential building blocks for economic growth and social stability and therefore achieving primary education targets has to be a priority for countries in Africa.

However, the economic and social growth of these countries also requires a dramatic increase in the number of secondary and higher education graduates.

Access to secondary education is very low.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, less than one third of this age group are enrolled in secondary schools.

One of the reasons for this is financial constraints.

In many countries, secondary education is characterized by:
low enrolment,
high drop out
low completion rates especially among the poor.

Therefore a large proportion of young people from poor families will not participate in even lower secondary education.



What Can an Aid Agency do?

Organisations such as Plan UK put sponsors money to good use.

With help from local teachers and communities we have been able to promote the following:

- Activities, which advocate the Rights of the Child. These schemes train pupils to both persuade their peers to go to school, and promote personal hygiene and public sanitation.
- Graduation awards are now given to rural boys and girls who graduate.
- French dictionaries are now distributed to all 7th grade students.
- Teachers are recruited, trained and paid fairly.
- Training centres have been established for those who have dropped out of school.
- Rural schools are provided with textbooks and other supplies.

Current Events

Millennium Development Goals link to <http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/MDG/home.do>

One of the most important initiatives to put development in the centre stage of International concern is the Millennium Development Goals. If you check out nothing else - make sure you look into this!

There are 8 Goals and 18 targets.

Goal number 2: to achieve universal education, so that children everywhere will be able to complete a full course of primary education.

Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

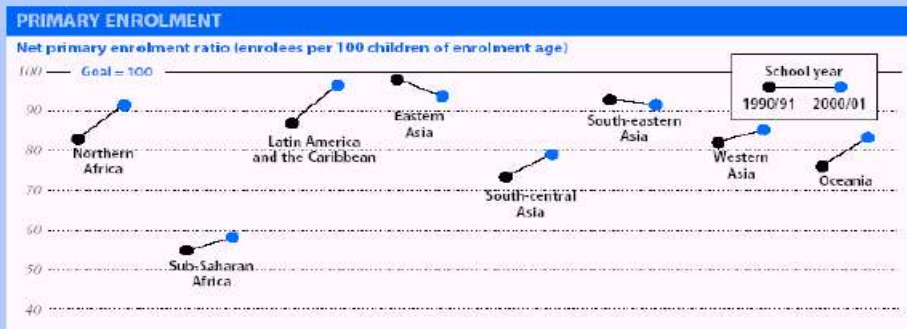
Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and to all levels of education no later than 2015.

Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest percentage of children enrolled in primary education of any region in the world. But the table shows that enrolment rates have risen.

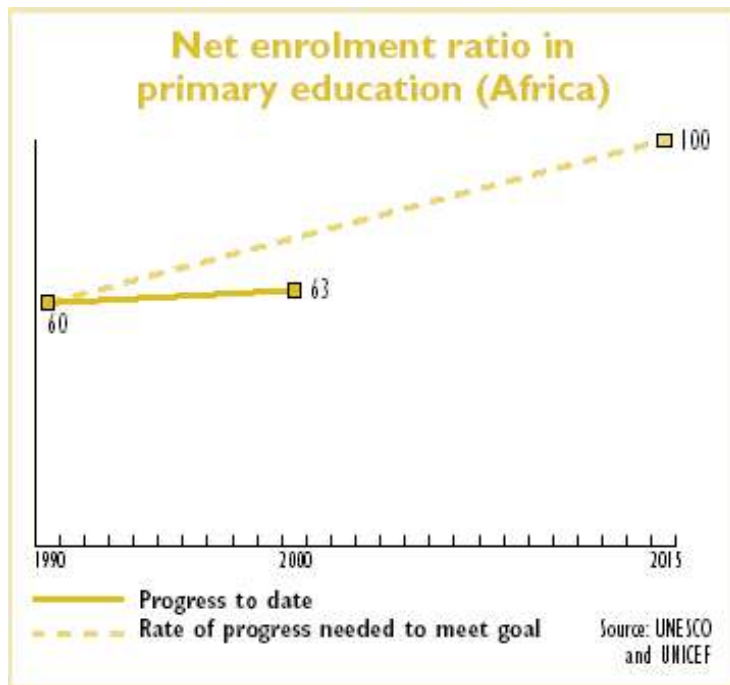
MDG2 – tables

GOAL 2: ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

THE TARGET: Ensure that all boys and girls complete primary school by 2015. **THE CHALLENGE:** An estimated 114 million children of primary age in the world are not enrolled in school, depriving one in every five children of access to even the most basic education. **PROGRESS/REVERSAL:** Sub-Saharan Africa, south-central Asia and western Asia need to greatly accelerate their progress if the goal is to be met.

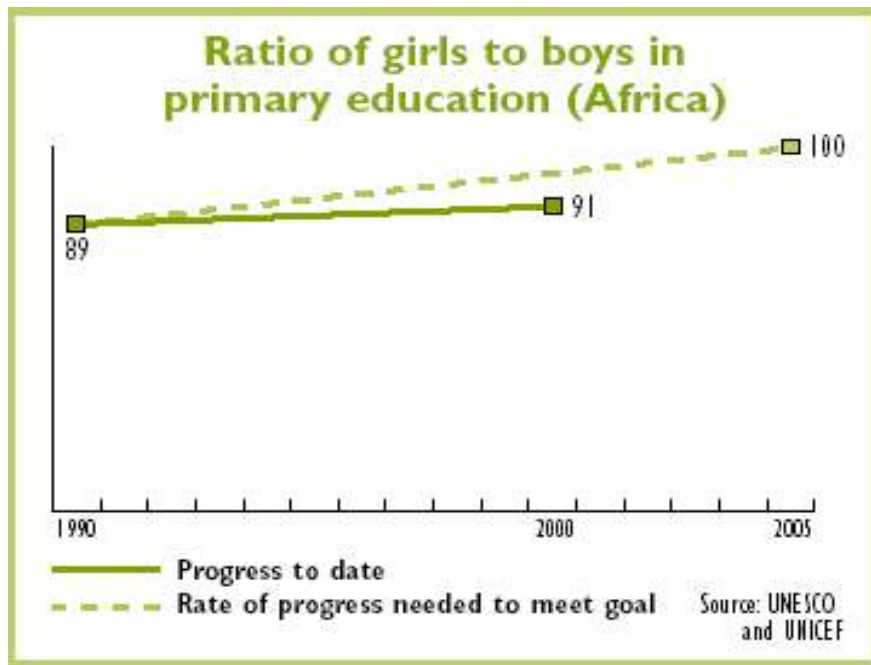


The diagram below shows the sub-Saharan African actual rate of growth and the rate of growth that is needed if the region was to achieve universal primary education by 2015. At the current rate of growth it will be 2100 before Africa achieves universal primary education.



The 3rd Millennium Development Goal

The third Millennium Development Goal is to promote gender equality and empower women. The target of this goal is to eliminate the gender disparity in primary and secondary education. The table below shows the ratio of girls to boys in secondary education between 1990 and 2000.



Whilst the rate of progress needed to meet the goal has not been met, there has been some progress in this area.

Case Studies

The current situation facing girls in Togo

While equal numbers of girls as boys start primary school, each subsequent year girls face more and more barriers to their attendance.

Only 49% of girls finish primary school as opposed to 64% of boys, and only 7% of girls complete a secondary education [compared to 24% of boys].

As a result, the literacy rate for women in Togo is just 38%, almost half of that for men.

Gender and education

Women have an enormous impact on the well-being of their families and societies.

What factors lead to gender inequality in Africa?

- ❖ discriminatory social norms,
- ❖ legal institutions
- ❖ incentives continue to make gender equalities.
- ❖ too many girls still face economic, social and political barriers to them receiving an

education

Why is educating women and giving them equal rights so important?

- ❖ literacy is the fundamental skill to empowering women
- ❖ gives all equal rights
- ❖ increases their productivity
- ❖ promotes gender equality which removes constraints on women's decision making

Why do girls drop out?

Gender drop out

Why are girls more likely to drop out of school and to receive less education than boys?

- ❖ Discrimination
- ❖ early marriage and pregnancy
- ❖ school safety
- ❖ girls are expected to help in the home

In some countries, for example, Botswana, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Swaziland, the number of girls was equal to or in fact higher than the number of boys enrolled in primary education.

But there are those countries where the number of girls is up to a third below boys in primary education.

The greatest disparities between girls' and boys' access to education appear in areas that have the lowest primary completion rates and lowest average incomes.

Sayon's Story

At Plan Guinea we have been doing our best to address the issue of education at the community level, and have recently begun to host discussions with families to stress the importance of education.

With help from communities, we address the root causes of the low rate of attendance by building and equipping schools.

We do this for all children in the communities in which we work, not just for sponsored children. In order to give you a real picture of the situation, please read the testimony of Sayon Mansare, a sponsored child:

“My name is Sayon and I am one of three children. Before introducing my family, I would like to introduce you to my friends Emile and Michel. We are classmates, but frankly they mean more than that to me, as I will explain. My father told me that I was born in 1989 – if he is right then I am 13 years old. He says my elder brother is 22 and my sister is 17. My brother dropped out of school when he was 12, and is currently a mason. My sister does not go to school.

“My mother and father believe they are both about 39. My father is a farmer, who also does palm-wine tapping to get a daily income. This income is about US\$2 during the dry season, and US\$4 during the rains.

“We live on the peripheries of the town of Kissidougou. I used to go to school in Fermessadou Pombou and walked 7km to attend it each day. Once I reached the 5th grade, I decided to stop going to school. Although my father is one of the few people round here who earns a daily income (nearly all others are farmers who only get paid at the end of the harvest) he turned a deaf ear to all my school needs. He is a notorious drunkard who goes out early in the morning not returning until late at night. Despite my reaching the 5th grade, he refused to buy me even a single exercise book, let alone a pen. In fact, in all my school days he never bought me one book that I needed. At school I was often hungry, had no shoes to wear, and was frequently asked to leave when I could not produce the yearly fee of US\$1. Therefore, I decided to quit.

“I spent months idling around until Emile and Michel met me one evening. They started convincing me to return to the classroom. They had been persuaded by the “Aider Les Enfants Non-Scolarisés” one of Plan's Child-to-Child programmes which helps children who are not enrolled in school. Their teacher taught them techniques about how to pass on the importance of education to their peers who have never been to school, as well as those who have dropped out. Fortunately, they succeeded in convincing me.

“Once I decided to return, I was confronted with the problem of my lack of a uniform, exercise book, pen and shoes. Emile and Michel gave me their old uniforms, textbooks and pens, and sold wood to buy me a pair of shoes. That meant so much to me that I pledged my contribution would be to do well in class. Thanks to them, I came 13th out of the 70 pupils in my class in the end of year exams. Today Emile, Michel and I walk the 1km distance to school, share bread, beans or doughnuts for lunch, and do almost everything together. I assure you that I am determined to pursue schooling as long as I can. Even if I have to work as a labourer to afford the costs.”

Statistics

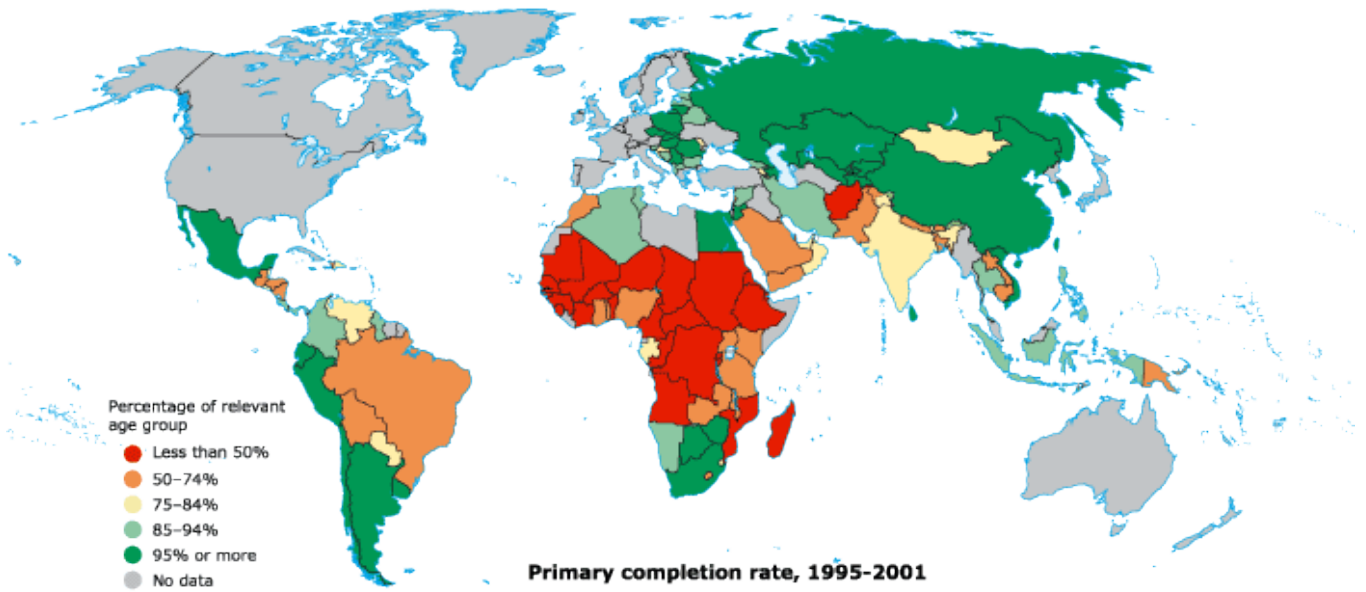
(all statistics are for sub-Saharan Africa)

- less than 1/3 of youth attend secondary education and even less than that graduate
- between 1990 and 2000 primary school enrolment grew by 3% from 60% to 63%.
- At this rate of growth, Africa will not have universal primary education until 2100
- between 1990 and 2000 girls' primary school enrolment grew from 56% to 60%
- between 1990 and 2000 boys' primary school enrolment grew from 63% to 65%
- Primary completion rate is on average lower than 50%
- 57% of those not enrolled in primary education are girls
- Literacy in sub-Saharan Africa rose from 50.8% in 1990 to 63.2% in 2002
- Youth literacy rose from 66.8% in 1990 to 76.8 in 2002
- Nearly 2/3 of the world's illiterates are women

This is your opportunity to see Primary enrolment statistics in the form of a map of Africa!

Primary completion rates

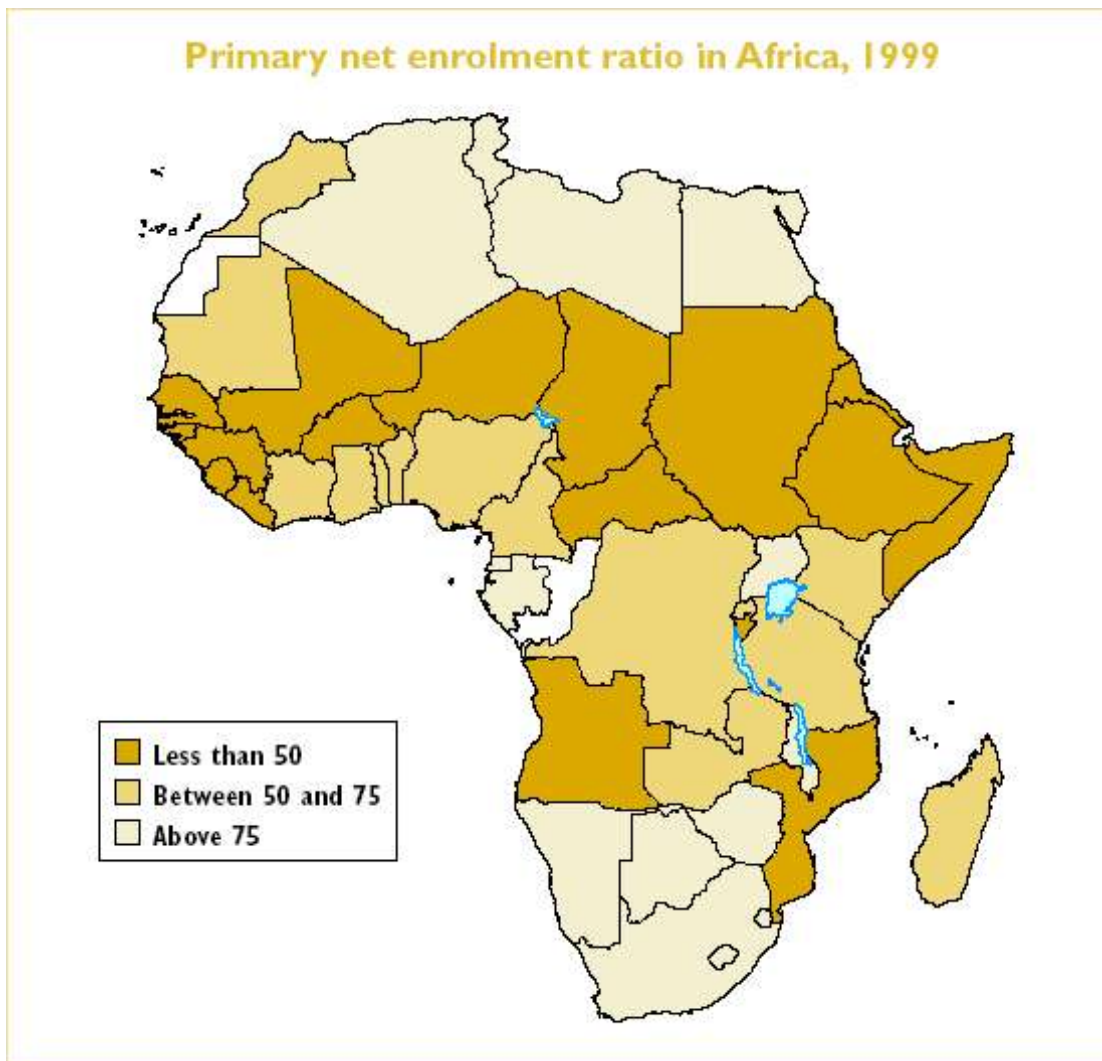
Most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have very low primary completion rates, many less than 50%



Primary Enrolment Statistics

Benin, Mali, Niger and Swaziland all increased their primary enrolment by 20% and Malawi and Uganda increased enrolment by 30%

In Central African Republic, Lesotho and South Africa primary enrolment decreased by 10%



GLOSSARY

- Literacy - The percentage of people ages 15 and above who can, with understanding, both read and write a short, simple statement related to their everyday life
- Millennium Declaration - In September 2000, 147 heads of state and government and 189 nations in all declared their commitment to making the right to development a reality for everyone in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The aim of this declaration was to come up with a co-ordinated plan to tackle many problems at the same time.
- Millennium Development Goals – The Millennium Development Goals commit the international community to a vision of development that promotes human development as the key to sustaining social and economic progress in all countries. Many of the targets for the Millennium Development Goals were set out by the international conferences and summits of the 1990s. They were then compiled and known as the International Development Goals. In 2000, the General Assembly of the UN recognised the part that these goals could play in implementing the Millennium Declaration. They are now the accepted framework for measuring development.
- Net primary enrolment - The number of students enrolled in a level of education who are of official school age for that level, as a percentage of the population of official school age for that level
- Sub-Saharan Africa – those countries of Africa that are south of the Sahara and not considered part of North Africa. These are all countries of Africa excluding Western Sahara, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. For measuring development those countries of North Africa are often put in their own group or grouped with Middle Eastern countries.
- Youth literacy – the percentage of people aged between 15 and 24 who can, with understanding, both read and write a short, simple statement related to their everyday life

Research links

The World Bank is sponsoring a site about Secondary Education in Africa (SEIA), it is a bit technical, but has some useful information www.worldbank.org/af/seia

www.aed.org/Education/

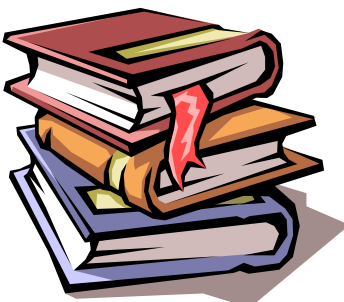
An excellent site looking at the Millennium Development Goals. Primary Education is no. 2! Gender Equality which links to Secondary Education is No. 3! www.developmentgoals.org

UNICEF and UNDP, both UN organisations, have written a report on how Africa is doing with the Millennium Development Goals. Contains useful statistics and general information. Remember, Primary Education is no.2! Secondary on no.3! www.undp.org/mdg/mdgreportinafrica.pdf

Statistics heaven! But you will need to scroll down to numbers 24-27 to find statistics on education, as it is in the Gender Equality section http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/data/index_indicators.cfm

One of the main pages of the site on the Millennium Development Goals. Describes the aspects on Education, which as you remember is MDG no. 2 and no. 3.
www.developmentgoals.org/About_the_goals.htm

The UN Statistics division has a section on MDG, where you can find information on primary education (MDG no. 2) and Gender Equality (MDG no. 3) which has indicators linked to Secondary Education http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_goals.asp



Discussion Points :EDUCATION

What are the levels of primary enrolment in Africa?

Can you see the affects of education in your life?

What would your area be like if you couldn't go to school?

Should parents be offered cash incentives to keep children at school?

Which is the best way of deciding the success of primary schools, enrolment or completion?

Should the cost of shoes and uniforms determine whether or not a child goes to school?

What can be done to make school affordable for all?

Do the figures on 'the table' concerning enrolment in primary education surprise you?

Do you think the Millennium Development Goal Target 3 is realistic?

How do you convince people that education is so important?

What is more important, education or helping out your family financially?

