

What is Education for All?

“Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death”

Albert Einstein

In 1990, Governments of the world came together in Jomtien, Thailand to agree something momentous. They were about to commit to providing every child, youth and adult with universal education within ten years. It was a landmark commitment and though their goal wasn't reached, it proved it was definitely possible.

A decade later, in the year 2000, the international community rose once again to the challenge of illiteracy at the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal. Lessons had been learnt. This time 180 countries agreed to make Education For All (EFA) a reality by 2015 and make universal education for every human being an unstoppable force for change. Six EFA goals were agreed to: (expand to read)

1. Expand early childhood care and education
2. Provide free and compulsory primary education for all
3. Promote learning and life skills for young people and adults
4. Increase adult literacy by 50 per cent
5. Achieve gender parity by 2005, gender equality by 2015
6. Improve the quality of education

Today, the Education for All (EFA) goals are a continual pledge to *every* person on planet Earth to an equal and quality education from birth to death. No person shall be treated differently. No person shall go without. This is a global fight that affects everyone. With the United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) at the helm, Governments, teachers, aid-agencies and mothers are all involved in this monumental challenge.

The Power to Change the World

EFA has the power to change the world; to give women an equal footing with men; to give nomads, farmers, working children and the disabled the ability to rationalize the world around them, make informed decisions and act for the betterment of themselves, instead of others. Basic education is the foundation to further development in people's lives and an essential element to meeting the world's Millennium Goals (link needed) (of which Goals 2 and 3 are relevant).

Where do we now stand?

We are now just over halfway to 2015. Since the goals were released seven years ago, intense progress has been made around the globe. School enrollments are up, girls are being schooled in unprecedented numbers and public spending on education has

rocketed. Millions of people and organizations are involved. However, there is still far to go. At current rates of progress, the world will **not** meet EFA goals by 2015. There are many reasons for this and the goal now is to help you find out why.

Relevant Reading:

Global homepage for EFA

<http://www.unesco.org/education/efa>

Site includes further information, latest news and progress reports.

An Introduction to EFA

http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all/

An overview of the biggest push to universal basic education in the history of the world.

Ten things you need to know about Education for All

(http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=52210&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

Why did EFA begin? Why is it important? Everything you need to know about Education for All in ten easy points.

What are the Millennium Goals?

http://www.r4e.org/what_are_the_Millennium_Goals.html

A quick explanation of the Millennium Goals and why they are so important to reducing world poverty.

Why is EFA important?

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTEDUCATION/0,,contentMDK:20374062~menuPK:540090~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:282386,00.html>

The World Bank's take on why it supports Education for All and its impact on developing countries around the world.