



SEND ALL MY FRIENDS TO SCHOOL

Background notes and learning opportunities

Introduction

In 2000 there were an estimated 114 million children missing out on school around the world. That year over 180 countries signed up to Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2 and agreed to:

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

The early focus of MDG2 was on enrolment. A lot of early progress was made when several countries stopped charging school fees and many children went to school for the first time. For example, Tanzania increased school enrolment by 99.6% within ten years. But more recently progress towards education for all has stalled. There are currently 57 million children out of school and it is likely that at least 48 million children will still be out of school in 2015.



Borsha, aged nine lives in Bangladesh. She is blind but goes to school because her teachers are trained to support blind children. Photo: Georgina Cranston/Sightsavers.

Of the 57 million children currently out of school, it is estimated that 24 million are children with disabilities. There are significant barriers facing children with disabilities as they attempt to access education. They frequently require additional resources and support that are not covered by meagre education budgets. There is a global shortage of trained teachers, let alone qualified special needs teachers. Parents face prohibitive costs in supporting their disabled children through school. Finally, children with disabilities face prejudice and discrimination from within the wider society. In a poor country these barriers must often appear formidable if not insurmountable.

Many governments and donors have previously focused their energies on enrolment and bridging the gender gap in education. These are important targets in themselves, but they have skirted over the needs of the millions of children with disabilities missing out on school. These needs have only recently been explicitly recognised and prioritised by governments and donors alike. For example, the original Millennium Development Goal 2 makes no specific reference to disability.

As we fast approach the target date of 2015 it is clear that the global community needs to make extra efforts to ensure that every child receives a quality primary education. The number of children out of school hasn't been significantly reduced for a number of years and progress towards education for all is slowing. Disadvantage is compounded; many children with disabilities are also girls, who are poor, who speak a minority language, who live in a conflict area and so on.

A great many of the children missing out on school have disabilities. Their potential is being wasted and their right to education is being denied. It's time to send all our friends to school and ensure no child is left behind.

Classroom resources

To sign up for 'Send All My Friends to School' visit www.sendmyfriend.org.

Participating schools receive a free resource pack and DVD. The resources contain case studies and a guide to how young people can take action by creating buddy characters and sending them to their MPs.

An outline of the campaign and a step by step plan for learning and taking action is at <http://www.sendmyfriend.org/take-action/>.

The 'Send All My Friends to School' campaign video can be viewed at <http://vimeo.com/84134392>. The film outlines the background to the campaign and illustrates how young people can take action by creating 'ideal' teachers.

The Guardian Teacher Network has a guide on how to teach political campaigning at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2013/apr/08/political-campaigning-teaching-resources?CMP=new_53&CMP. The guide provides support for young people to successfully engage the press and their MPs.

There's a guide to involving your MP and a press pack at <http://www.sendmyfriend.org/take-action/speak-up/>.

In February 2014 the Young Ambassadors for Education visited Uganda with Sightsavers to explore the barriers to education faced by visually impaired children. Watch the film of their trip at <http://vimeo.com/89398998>.

The Guardian published a feature examining education for visually impaired children in Uganda in greater depth: <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/mar/18/global-education-campaign-uganda-children-visually-impaired>



Students at the Village School created buddy characters
Photo: Camille Shah/GCE UK

Curriculum making

Education for all is an increasingly complex and fast moving topic. The persistence of so many children missing out on school despite the long standing target of universal provision means the topic is particularly suitable for critical thinking and open-ended questions. Debate is raging within policy circles about priorities for after 2015, when the Millennium Development Goals expire.

For example, the role of the private sector in providing education in poor countries in the place of the state is highly controversial and has far reaching consequences. Another broader debate is around the importance placed on primary education in MDG2 and the degree to which larger budgets in the future should be allocated to secondary education and adult literacy. Young people's voices and opinions are vital in these debates.

Teachers are encouraged to keep abreast of the latest news when designing and updating resources.

<http://www.campaignforeducation.org/en/>

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/efareport/>

<http://www.sendmyfriend.org/news/campaign-updates/>

<http://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/?s=education>

<http://www.odi.org.uk/search/site/education>

<http://post2015.org//?s=education>

<https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/>

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters> (then search for 'poverty matters blog education')

Drafting 'buddy' messages and writing to MPs fits the 'persuasive writing' element of English Language. Drafting a press release or a blog is 'writing for an audience'. Learning about education in a particular country such as Uganda fits the Geography curriculum, and problem solving using education data fits the Maths curriculum. Teachers of Design and Technology may wish to teach designing and constructing 'buddies' and buddy chains.

There are persuasive writing resources at

<http://www.sendmyfriend.org/resource/persuasive-writing-ks3/>

There are role play resources that promote critical thinking and discussion at

<http://www.sendmyfriend.org/resource/kabiji-primary-problems-and-solutions-11-16/>

There are logos and graphics so teachers can produce their own resources at

<http://www.sendmyfriend.org/resource/logos-and-graphics/>

Please share any new resources you develop by emailing education@oxfam.org.uk

Terms of use

Copyright © Oxfam GB/GCE UK

You may use these photographs and associated information for the educational purposes at your educational institution. With each use, you must credit the photographer named for that image and Oxfam. You may not use images and associated information for commercial purposes or outside your educational institution. All information associated with these images relates to the date and time that project work took place.