

**GIVING EVERYONE THE OPPORTUNITY OF EDUCATION**

**TAKE ACTION**

To achieve the Millennium Development Goal of education for all, both donors and developing country governments need to take action to provide opportunities for the most disadvantaged children, such as girls and children with disabilities. On 30 January 2012, RESULTS International Australia will release a report on the performance of Australia's international aid agency AusAID, the World Bank and Asian Development Bank in promoting access to education for girls and children with disabilities, noting that each organisation needs to do more to provide genuine equal access to education. To accompany the release of the report, we will write to Parliamentarians emphasising these points:

1. Achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of universal basic education (based on the goals for [Education For All](#) – EFA) requires action to ensure disadvantaged children, especially girls and children with disabilities, can access suitable education.
2. The assessment by RESULTS of AusAID, World Bank and Asian Development Bank projects indicates that **ALL THREE** organisations need to take increased action to ensure girls and children with disabilities have equal opportunities to participate in education.
3. The Australian Government can increase its contribution for equal access to education by: ensuring AusAID sets and monitors the achievement of equity targets in Australian-funded education projects; using its influence on the boards of the World Bank and Asian Development Bank to ensure these institutions also set and meet equity targets in education; and use its position as a leading contributor to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) to ensure the GPE also leads in promoting equity in national education plans.
4. Ask your MP to write to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, calling on Australia to use its leadership role in education funding to also take the lead in promoting equity in access to education.

*“Australia regards education as one of the best investments we can make at home and overseas...That is why we have made education the flagship of our aid program.” Kevin Rudd, Minister for Foreign Affairs, October 2011.*

**The Importance of Education**

Education is an effective tool for reducing poverty and generating economic growth and facilitating economic inclusion for individuals. Evidence from many countries indicates that an adult literacy rate of at least 40% is required for a country to ever achieve sustained economic growth. For individuals, an additional year of schooling raises a person's income by 10% on average!

Even more importantly, education is a basic human right that enables people to take charge of their own destiny and make informed decisions about their lives. Education has positive health impacts, including in preventing HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases and reducing child mortality.

In the last 10 years, many countries have substantially increased school enrolments, through making education a higher funding priority and abolishing primary school fees. Despite this progress, **67 million children around the world still remain out of school**. Although access to primary education in developing countries is improving; disadvantaged groups, specifically girls, women and the disabled, experience substantial obstacles to education.

## **RESULTS Education Research**

RESULTS International Australia has just released its second education research report, *Education for All: Or Just Those Easier to Reach?* The report examines the extent to which AusAID, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) consider issues of gender and disability in the design, development and monitoring of education programs in Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines. These three countries receive the largest country programs in Australia's aid, and have varying participation in and standards of education. Both Indonesia and the Philippines have more than 90% of school age children enrolled in school, but experience relatively high drop-out rates. In Papua-New Guinea, only 58% of enrolled students complete primary school.

## **RESULTS Findings and Recommendations**

While all three agencies consider gender and disability in their development strategies and policies, **they must ensure greater coherence between policy development and 'on-the-ground' implementation, through the following actions.**

- **Setting and monitoring of targets:** Policies developed at head office must be implemented and monitored at a country level
- **Resourcing:** Gender and disability must be effectively budgeted, resourced and given greater priority within country education programs
- **Scaled up interventions:** With gender and disability factors impeding EFA and MDG attainment in these countries, interventions must be scaled up rapidly
- **Australian Leadership:** Australia is set to become one of the largest bilateral donors to education globally and education is seen as the flagship component of the aid budget. Australia should therefore be a leader on equity issues (relating to gender and disability) by influencing strategies within AusAID and multilaterally through the World Bank, the ADB and [the Global Partnership for Education](#) (GPE).
- **Gender specific outcomes:** Both AusAID and the Asian Development Bank have made advances in updating their policies on gender and disability and in 'on-the-ground' implementation. Both seem more successful in Indonesia and this may also be reflective of the cultural and legislative environment in this country. However, better data disaggregation, monitoring and evaluation of gender targets needs to be undertaken to ensure continued progress. The World Bank on the other hand is lagging greatly with minimal implementation.

- **Disability Specific outcomes:** All three organisations have updated and refined their disability strategies, incorporating approaches such as universal design and making funding commitments. However, AusAID, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank are all lagging in policy implementation.

### Australia's Leadership Role

The Government has committed to increase aid spent on education to 25% by 2015, making education the 'flagship' of the aid program and Australia one of the largest bilateral donors to education in the world. It is therefore important to ensure increased investment in education is used effectively through making equity targets a component of all AusAID-supported education projects. In addition,, Australia also pledged \$270 million over four years GPE making us their fourth largest donor. Combined, these commitments place Australia in a very strong position to encourage other donors to increase their investment in basic education. For example, in 2010 the [World Bank committed](#) to provide an additional \$US 750 million for education over 5 years, **but actually reduced its funding for basic education by two thirds in 2011!** Australia can use its role on the World Bank Board to ensure the Bank meets this commitment.

### What else can you do?

#### Visit your MP:

Make an appointment with your MP and or Senator to discuss RESULTS report and seek their action on your report.

#### Get your view into the media:

Watch out for any media items on the release of RESULTS Education For All report and respond with letters to the editor, website comments etc (please let us know if you are successful!)

#### Share:

Share the RESULTS Education For All report (uploaded to RESULTS [website](#) and [Facebook wall](#) after 30 January)

**For further information contact RESULTS International Australia [results@results.org.au](mailto:results@results.org.au)**

