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The Story of the Future

EDUCATION TARGET WILL BE MISSED, WARNS SAVE THE CHILDREN

Save the Children Australia warns that at least 30 million children, most living in conflict affected countries, are still likely to be out of school by 2015, the target year for the Millenium Development Goals.

The Story of the Future, an animated report from Save the Children published today indicated that the current trend of providing education for more than 4 million children a year is not enough to reach the 2015 education target the world set itself in 2000. Although the total number of out-of-school children is declining, those who are still out of school are proving ever harder to reach.

More than half of the 77 million children still out of school live in conflict-affected fragile states. However, despite the vulnerability of the children living in these countries, only 23 percent of the global basic education aid goes to these conflict and post-conflict areas.

"For nearly 60 years, since the Universal Declaration on Human Rights in 1948, world leaders have made promises to all children that they have the right to go to school and receive education. But without doing more their promises will be broken. At least 30 million children will still be out of school in 2015 - most of them in poor, conflict-affected countries," says Margaret Douglas, CEO of Save the Children Australia.

"Two weeks ago, the G8 said they would target assistance to 'low income countries and fragile states furthest away from the 2015 target' of education for all. Today, we hope that world leaders might be reminded of all the children around the world whose lives have been disrupted by conflict and act now to rewrite their future through education. For this generation of children growing up without school, making a new promise in 2015 will simply be too late."

The animated report *The Story of the Future* shows which major donors are seriously failing to close the funding gap needed to provide universal education, including US, Japan, Austria and Italy. Australia ranks 10th among the 22 donor countries for committing their fair share of aid for education and for supporting education in countries affected by conflict.

More education aid from rich countries - a fraction of what is spent on education in developed countries - would make an enormous difference to children's lives. The report shows, however, that instead of increasing to meet the challenge, commitments and disbursements have dropped since 2004 with countries that need aid the most not getting their fair share.

"Universal primary education will not be reached in any predictable future. In recent years, the money that has been provided by international donors has been used to solve the relatively easy education problems - in middle-income countries or low income countries not affected by conflict", says Ms. Douglas.

Education is children's chance for a better future. It can empower children to rebuild their societies. Education can protect children during a conflict, help communities heal afterwards, and build peace and prosperity.

"Giving children education today is a major contribution to achieving the other Millennium Development Goals that world leaders set themselves. It is the key to children's and societies futures, including beating poverty, providing better health and environment and stronger partnerships to make the world better for children. How can anyone play a part in the development of their own country, improving healthcare and taking an active part in building democracy if they can't read and write?", says Margaret Douglas

To view *The Story of the Future*, go to www.savethechildren.org.au

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