

Missing out on an education

DAY OFF? STARTER ACTIVITY

Divide students into three groups, and give them all a piece of sugar paper. Students should write (or draw) answers to the following question:

'What would I do if I was not at school today?'

Feedback: Students will probably give positive responses, e.g. I'd be playing computer games, seeing my friends.....

Students should then turn the paper over and write:

'What would I be doing today if I had never been to school?'

'What would I be doing in ten years time?'

Ask them to draw a quick picture of where they think they'd be now, and in ten years if they had never been to school. They should write a few words to summarise their thoughts.

Feedback: Reflecting the serious implications of having no education. What do the students dream of doing in ten years time? Do they think that they could achieve these dreams without having an education?

Extension: Ask students to look at the website:

www.savethechildren.org.uk/makepovertyhistory

They might want to order white wristbands to show their support.

WHY DO CHILDREN MISS OUT ON AN EDUCATION?

Ask pupils to read out the case studies attached. All of these examples come from children who Save the Children have worked with overseas. You may want to get pupils to research the countries that are mentioned in the case studies using the internet. HYPERLINK <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk>

www.savethechildren.org.uk has basic information about the countries.

In pairs, ask students to think about why children miss out on an education, in the **UK** and in **the developing world**. They could write answers in a table, or sketch two children, pointing out the different reasons why they might not be in school.

On the board: brainstorm different answers.

The root cause of missing out on an education is likely to be poverty.

What can we do to ensure that more children are able to get an education?

Using the enclosed briefing paper as an information source, explain to the class about the Millennium Development Goals and the Make Poverty History campaign. Explain that policies made by international organisations and rich countries can make it more difficult for poor countries to spend money on education. Discuss what the British government can do to make things easier for less economically developed countries.

Why is 2005 such an important year for Britain?

Why do girls miss out more often?

WHO DESERVES AN EDUCATION?

ACTIVITY: Refer to the worksheet and ask pupils to choose one child in the family to go to school. They should give reasons for their choice and also reasons why the choice was difficult. The aim of this exercise is to get the pupils thinking about gender roles, assumptions and priorities and to understand the difficult decisions that have to be made.

Feedback: You might also ask whether it is better to educate one family member for 6 years, or to give each child one year's education.

Did more pupils choose girls or boys?

Put some of the following statistics up on the board:

- In rural Pakistan, three times as many boys finish primary school as girls.
- In Niger, Tanzania and Chad, only 5% of girls are enrolled in secondary school.
- Less than half of girls aged 15-19 in South Asia completed even one year of primary school.

Ask pupils to think of answers to the following question:

'Why are girls more likely to miss out on an education?'

Feedback: The main reasons why girls miss out on an education are a combination of poverty and discrimination.

WHY IS EDUCATION IMPORTANT?

Getting an education doesn't just teach you to read and write. It gives you confidence and awareness of the world outside your own family.

Girls who have had an education are less likely to become HIV positive, because they are more likely to be assertive and aware of the risks. They will be more able to support themselves and their family and their children are less likely to die in infancy.

ACTIVITY: Ask pupils to look again at some of the statements from the children in our case studies. What do they feel are the benefits of getting an education? Do students feel the same about their own education?

HOMEWORK

Using what you have learnt over the last couple of lessons, write an article to your local newspaper explaining why it is important for girls to get an education, **OR** design a leaflet to let people in your school know about the issues.

CAMPAIGNING

Students might want to develop their own campaign to raise awareness amongst other pupils in the school. Ask them to think about what they can achieve and the different ways in which you can campaign for change.

Get in touch with Jane Gregory, if you are planning a campaign: j.gregory@savethechildren.org.uk

WORKSHEET

Imagine that you are the head of a poor family in rural Tanzania. You can only afford to send one of your children to school. What would you do?

Your children:

Three daughters: Amina (15), Zahura (9), Mati (5)
Three sons: Juma (14), Jabir (11), Omar (7)

Who would you choose?

Why did you make your choice? You may want to consider other options or factors that might influence your choice. Did you find the choice difficult? Why?

Background information

	Tanzania	UK
Population:	37 million	59 million
Life expectancy:	43.5 years	78 years

Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in the world, although there are signs that things are getting better. Economic reforms have come at the expense of social welfare. They have hit poor people hard.

Primary school enrolment is less than 60 per cent, and secondary school just 7 per cent. Illiteracy is rising. Infant and child death rates are high, with most deaths caused by easily preventable diseases. HIV/AIDS is a main cause of death among 15- to 19-year-olds. Food shortages are a big issue in many areas, though Tanzania produces enough food to feed itself.

Save the Children works with local communities and government to improve education, health care and social welfare; boost food security; and improve the lives of disabled children, street children and other vulnerable, marginalised groups.

Case studies – children and their education

Veronica, from Brazil (she is 18 years old)

Verônica has been a domestic worker since she was 12 years old. She lives with her parents and six siblings in a deprived neighbourhood of Recife, the capital of Pernambuco state in north-eastern Brazil.

“I started school when I was seven, and now I’m in the first year of high school. I like going to school, but when I had to decide whether to work or go back to school I chose working because my family needed the money. But I felt very sad about it.

It’s not like we don’t have enough to eat, but we go through difficulties. Things are going well now because I’m working, but if I stop we’ll have problems. Sometimes we don’t have food – that’s the worst. When we have money problems there are a lot of arguments, usually between my mother and father, and there comes a point when nobody has any patience with anyone else in the house.”

Zuhura, from Tanzania, (she is 16 years old)

Zuhura lives in Nanguruwe, a village in the southern district of Mtwara. Although she has successfully completed her primary education, Zuhura is unable to go to secondary school because her family cannot afford the fees.

“Sometimes parents can’t send their children to school because they can’t pay the contributions. Others don’t think that education is important because they haven’t been to school themselves. Instead, they want to get their children married when they’re young, especially girls. It’s more difficult for girls to get an education. There are many more boys in school than girls..

If I pass my primary school exams but can’t pay for my school fees, I’ll think that something bad has been done to me. It’s not fair that one child can go to school and another child can’t because they haven’t got money. Both of them should go.”

Adama, from Mali (she is about 11 years old)

Adama lives in the village of Debere near Douentza in northern Mali. She attends the village community school.

“I’m in grade five at school. I go to school because I can get knowledge. With that knowledge, I can help my friends and relatives who never went to school, so that they can understand things better. For example, when there are elections, they bring voting cards here, and I can help my relatives find their cards and know their names. And if I get taught well and I know many things, I think I can lead them later. If I’m well educated, I’ll know plenty of things, and I can help people with whatever they’re told to do.”

Amina, from Tanzania (she is about 16 years old)

Amina lives in Nanguruwe, a village in the southern district of Mtwara. Although she has successfully completed her primary education, Amina is unable to go to secondary school because her family cannot afford the fees.

“I finished primary school in September 2001. I liked school a lot. If you’re educated you can easily get a job, and it’s easier for you make decisions and think of solutions to problems. If you’re educated you can make plans to raise more money. I’d go into business, and maybe run a restaurant. I’d also like to be a farmer, but use more advanced technology, like modern farming systems to get better harvests and more money.”

Selaman from Tanzania (He is about 17)

Selaman lives in Nanguruwe, a village in the southern district of Mtwara. Although he has successfully completed his primary education, Selaman is unable to go to secondary school because his family cannot afford the fees.

"I like school because when you're educated you can get a job easier than someone who isn't educated. I think education is the only way to have a better life. For example, you can go somewhere and see a sign for something that's dangerous. If you're educated, you'll know that it's dangerous because you can read. But if you're not educated you can just walk into the danger."

Ali from Mali (he is about 13 years old)

Ali lives in the village of Debere near Douentza in northern Mali. He attends a community school, which is run and partly financed by villagers. The district of Douentza is one of the poorest in Mali, and before the community school opened in 1997, Debere had no school at all.

"Sometimes we have lessons about health and how to stay healthy. When I go back home, I explain them to my family. I've explained to them about illnesses, and I've noticed that there've been some changes, because now every day our compound is swept and cleaned. I like school, because when I come to school I learn how to write, and I also learn how to speak French. I think that's important, because then I can teach my parents

Fadumo, from Ethiopia (she is 13 years old)

The Somali Region is sparsely populated, and over 85 per cent of its inhabitants are rural farmers. They migrate in the dry season when food and water become scarce, scattering over huge areas to find resources to support themselves and their animals.

"For some girls it's very difficult to go to school. A girl child is very different from the boys. There's also the problem that parents have to work hard and they want their children to help them at home, especially girls. So it's more difficult for girls to go to school. I think it's important for girls to go to school so they learn to read and write. Then they can communicate with others and they can support their families."

Lan, from Vietnam, (She is about 17 years old)

Their family cannot afford to send them both to secondary school, and have decided to prioritise their son's education (in Dao tradition, girls become part of their husband's family when they marry and therefore often move away).

Lan: "I'm crying because I'm so sad that I can't go to school anymore. My parents can't afford to buy me the clothes and books I'd need. So instead I stay at home and work, doing things like feeding the chickens, collecting firewood and farming. It's very hard work and I don't want to do it, but I have to because my parents need my help.

Chiu Sang Lau, 39, Lan's father: *"I can't afford to send Lan to school as well. At home she can wear anything, but she'd need nice clothes to go to school. My family is poor, and I'm afraid that if she goes she'll have to drop out again. I prioritise my son's education, because when my daughter grows up she'll move away to live with another family.*

All of the case studies above are taken from children who Save the Children have worked with overseas.