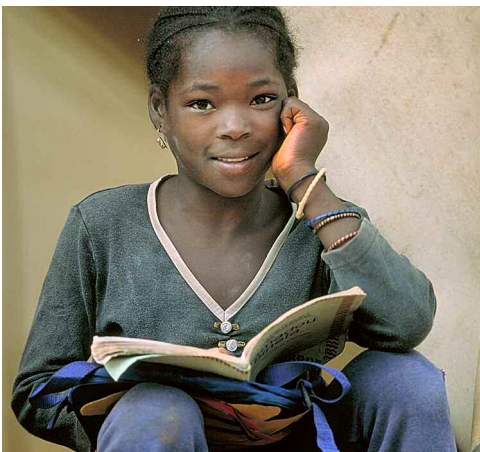


Millennium Development Goals

Benefits to Children



IN 2000, 189 UN MEMBER COUNTRIES, including the United States, pledged to achieve eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, in order to achieve “a more prosperous and just world.” In September of 2005, members will gather at an important World Summit to review progress toward the MDGs. • **What do these goals have to do with children?** All of them would save children’s lives and improve their well-being. • Let’s explore Goal #2 which seeks to guarantee all girls and boys complete eight years of schooling, some common myths, and what the United States can do to help.



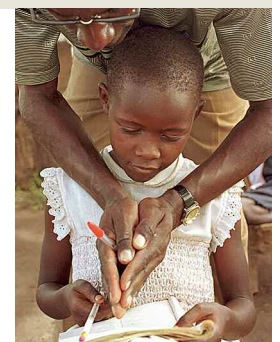
Goal #2: ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION *Guarantee that all girls and boys complete eight years of schooling*

- > Some 103 million children of primary-school age worldwide are not enrolled in school. Of those that do enroll, the highest proportions drop out in the earliest grades.¹
- > Girls make up more than half of all children not in primary school; in the developing world, one girl in every four never makes it past fifth grade.²
- > Children born to uneducated mothers are nearly twice as likely to die before age 5 as those born to mothers who completed primary school.³

Myth #1: All girls around the world go to school.

Reality: Despite progress in educating girls, 58 million girls worldwide are still not in school – and many girls who start school soon drop out. One out of four girls in developing countries never completes primary school. This is a personal tragedy for them, but it also has devastating consequences for their communities. Countries that fail to educate girls can

expect higher rates of child and maternal deaths, increased incidence of AIDS, and more poverty and instability. Girls’ education is a proven and powerful investment in the well-being of future and present generations of children.

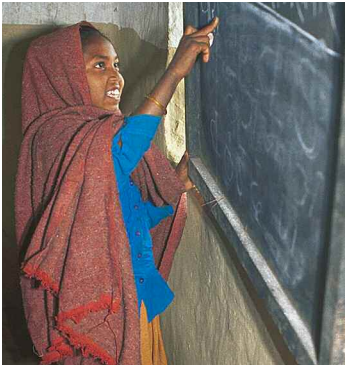


Myth #2: The problems of keeping girls in school are too hard to solve.

Reality: We know what works. No matter what the economic or cultural challenges, there’s a strategy to get girls into school and help them stay there. Where school fees are an obstacle, communities are launching scholarship programs and endowments. Where nearby government schools are not available, communities and non-governmental organizations are setting up schools nearby that offer flexible schedules and curriculum tailored to community priorities. Where conflict and emergency situations uproot children from their homes,

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

- Goal #1:** Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal #2:** Achieve universal primary education
- Goal #3:** Promote gender equality and empower women
- Goal #4:** Reduce child mortality
- Goal #5:** Improve maternal health
- Goal #6:** Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Goal #7:** Ensure environmental sustainability
- Goal #8:** Develop a global partnership for development



communities and non-governmental organizations are establishing makeshift schools to provide safety and a sense of normalcy.

Myth #3: A nation's wealth determines its success in educating girls.

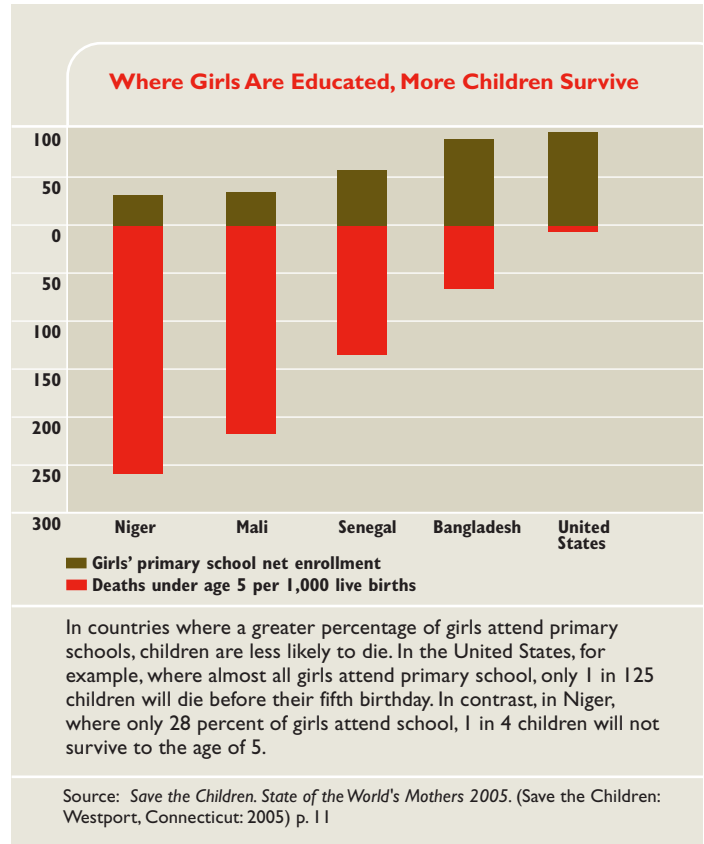
Reality: Where there is political will, there is a way.

Some of the world's poorest nations are showing greater rates of progress in girls' education than wealthier ones. With strong global financial commitments, they could do even better. According to the *State of the World's Mothers 2005*, published by Save the Children, Kenya with a per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of only \$1,020 is doing an admirable job in educating its girls, while Saudi Arabia is underperforming in girls' education despite a GDP more than 12 times higher. In Kenya, 71 percent of grade school girls are enrolled in school, while in Saudi Arabia, that number is only 57 percent.⁴

Myth #4: The U.S. government is doing all it can.

Reality: Without increased global financial commitments, including U.S. support, many poor countries will fail to achieve this MDG. U.S. funding for basic education in poor nations has risen only slightly in recent years. The Bush administration's July 2005 pledge of greater foreign assistance for girls' education in Africa could help more girls realize their dreams. But U.S. support does not equal the need. The Asian Tiger

success story is proof that education is the best investment a country can make in its future: South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Indonesia in the 1950s resembled sub-Saharan Africa today in their economies, literacy, health care and fertility rates. Today, 94 percent of their populations can read and write. Education – particularly for girls – played a huge role in this turnaround.⁵



¹ UNESCO, EFA – *The Quality Imperative, Global Monitoring Report 2005*. (Paris: 2004); Save the Children. *State of the World's Mothers 2005*. (Westport, Connecticut: 2005) p. 5

² UNESCO, EFA – *The Quality Imperative, Global Monitoring Report 2005*. (Paris: 2004); UN Millennium Project, Task Force on Gender Education and Equality. *Toward Universal Primary Education: Investments, Incentives, and Institutions*. (Earthscan: London/Sterling, VA: 2005)

³ Bicego, G. and O. Ahmad, *Infant and Child Mortality, Demographic and Health Surveys Comparative Studies No. 20*. (Macro International Inc.: Calverton, Maryland: 1996)

⁴ Save the Children. *State of the World's Mothers 2005*. (Westport, Connecticut: 2005) p. 10

⁵ Save the Children. *State of the World's Mothers 2005*. (Westport, Connecticut: 2005) p. 14

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SAVE THE CHILDREN is the leading independent organization creating lasting change for children in need in the United States and around the world. Save the Children USA is a member of the International Save the Children Alliance, a global network of 27 independent Save the Children organizations working to ensure the well-being and protection of children in more than 110 countries.



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