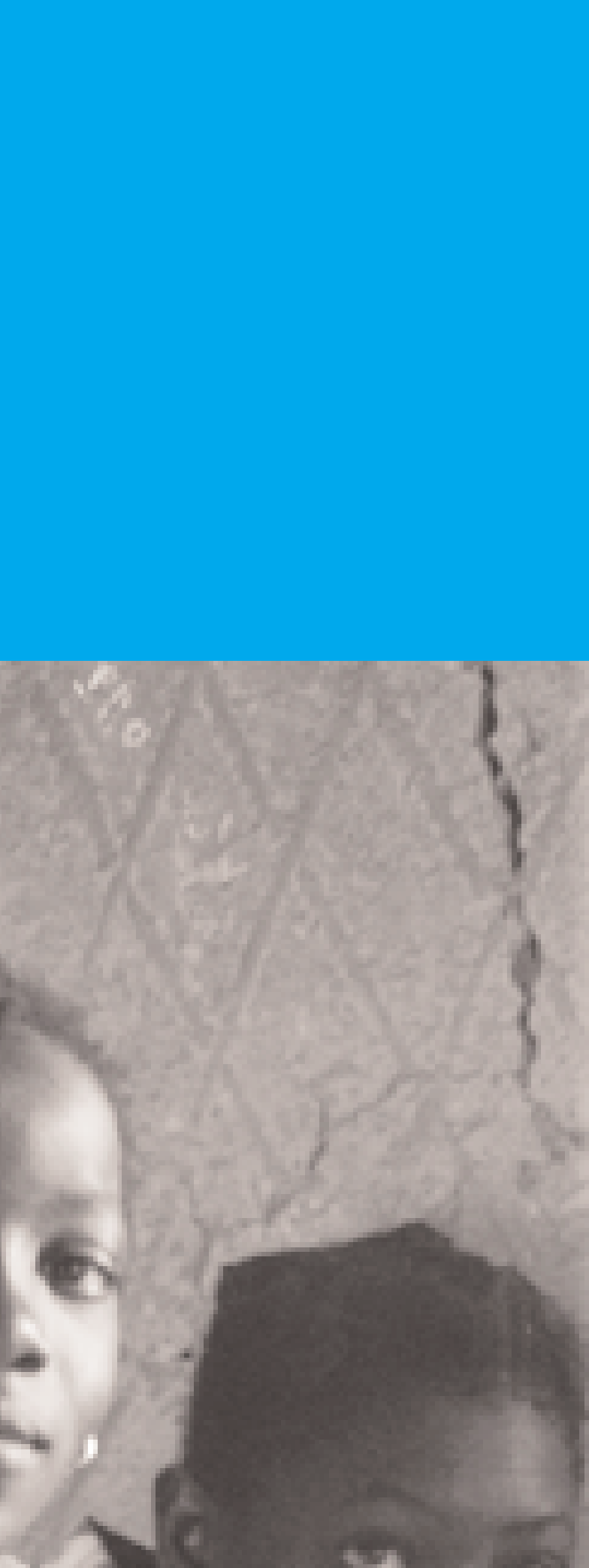


6

THE RIGHT THING TO DO







Girls' education is a dream investment for any Head of Government prepared to look beyond the immediate and usual solutions to the problems of development. Far from depriving other social development sectors, financing girls' education adds value to their work. It eases the strain on the health-care system by reducing both child and maternal mortality, by keeping children healthier and by reducing the incidence of HIV/AIDS. It increases women's skills and productivity, thereby reducing poverty and strengthening the economy in the long term. The intimate connection between girls' education and other areas of development means, for example, that a single expenditure on supplying safe water and sanitation to a school has a double benefit: improving community health and hygiene and attracting more girls to school.

The cost is surmountable. Estimates of the additional cost of achieving the Millennium Development Goal for education – universal primary education completion by 2015 – range between \$9.1 billion and \$38 billion per year.⁸⁶ Associated with the \$38 billion estimated by the World Bank, most of which would be borne by developing countries themselves, is a \$5 billion to \$7 billion funding gap that would need to be filled by external aid.⁸⁷ Between now and 2015 it might mean an additional aid bill of around \$60 billion. This is a considerable sum, but it is substantially less than the cost of large-scale military operations for which, it seems, money can always be found.

The practical barriers are also surmountable. There is practically no problem in education that does not have a solution already tried and tested elsewhere. The benefits attached to girls' education are unarguable, and the strategies and specific measures that can make a difference are well known. They have been applied in projects and programmes all over the world (*see Annex A: A solution to almost every problem, page 83*).

Beatrice Progidai/2003

Years of experience have resulted in a more sophisticated understanding of exactly what kind of girls' education initiative works and what kind does not. Evaluations in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, have shown that a gender approach cannot simply be grafted on to an existing education programme. Wherever this has been tried, the existing programme has proved impervious to change. Girls' education projects have to be designed as such from the start and have to be backed by commitments from both government and programme planners.

Girls' education programmes must have three clear goals: reducing the total number of girls out of school; improving the quality of education for girls and boys alike; and ensuring progress in learning achievement for all children. Weaving together interventions that

address access with those that address quality helps fulfil the need to find excluded and at-risk children, especially girls, get them into school and ensure that they stay, learn and achieve in a safe and productive environment. Such interventions help ensure that education systems deliver results efficiently for all children.⁸⁸

The case of Afghanistan shows what is possible when the international community is seriously committed to tackling a crisis. It dramatizes what can be done when multiple factors – children's hunger to learn, parents' dreams for their children, a national government's readiness to lead and the international community's willingness to help – come together. Starved of education throughout decades of conflict, particularly during the Taliban era, the hunger of Afghan families for their children's chance to

The challenge of development is the challenge of education for all, and the challenge of achieving education for all is the challenge of education for girls.



go to school was overwhelming. UNICEF's role in equipping them with educational materials in emergency conditions was the largest such operation ever undertaken by the organization (see *Panel on Afghanistan, page 73*).

A new paradigm for education

Throughout this report, the interdependence between girls' education and development outcomes has been analysed and discussed. To get and keep girls in school, integrated strategies are required at all levels – family, community, local and national government. For too long, girls' lack of education has been seen as a private matter, an issue to be dealt with by individual families. But the evidence presented in this report demonstrates that the challenge of education for every girl

is a challenge to development in all its sectors:

To the minister of education – for sure; but also...

To the minister of finance, who must allocate a sufficient share of the budget to primary education and make schools affordable by abolishing fees and providing poor families with an adequate wage.

To the minister of health, who must provide adequate health services, water and sanitation.

To the minister of labour, who is bound to establish standards of protection for working children so they are not exploited and denied education.

PANEL 11

Afghanistan: Coming back

"I can't possibly explain how I felt. I had left Afghanistan two years after the Taliban had been in power and I returned when their regime ended. I just can't explain the feeling," says Najiba Forough*, with tears in her eyes. She is now back as headmistress of Nahisa Barbad School.

Under the Taliban, the education of girls was banned, though many parents and teachers ran secret classes for them at home. Tears return to the headmistress' eyes as she recalls the incident which finally convinced her she had to leave her native land. Her school had been converted by the Taliban into a communications centre. Covered in a *burka*, she would walk the perimeter of what used to be her school every day.

One day a woman in a *burka* greeted her. Unable to identify the voice, Mrs. Forough asked the woman to remove her *burka* so that she could see her face, and immediately recognized a former student. After chatting for a few minutes they parted, but before the student left the school grounds, a Taliban member approached her and started to beat her. The headmistress raced over and tried to cover her student with her body, explaining that it was at her request that the *burka* had been removed. Soon after, she moved to Pakistan and took a job teaching Afghan refugees.

"Education is the foundation of every society," she adds. "If you close the doors of the school, you fill the cells of the prison."

The post-war experience of Afghanistan, following the removal of the Taliban by a UN-approved military operation, suggests that the best way to provide the foundations for a successful, prosperous and peaceful future is to reopen the doors of the school.

The Back to School campaign in Afghanistan in 2002 showed what is possible when the international community is seriously committed to tackling a crisis. Starved of education throughout the years of conflict, but particularly under the Taliban, the hunger of Afghan children for the chance to go to school was overwhelming. The part UNICEF was able to play in equipping them with educational materials under emer-

To the minister of justice, who is bound to make schools safe.

To the minister of planning, who must enable local communities and parents to oversee the services they need for their children to survive and thrive.

Seven steps forward

The 65 million girls out of school globally will never commandeer the world's attention in the same way as a war. They will not be rescued by tanks rolling through the desert. Screaming headlines about their plight will not boost media ratings or the circulation of daily newspapers. Their lost potential will not show up in front page photos to prick the conscience of the comfortable.

But their plight is an emergency nonetheless. Governments, aid agencies and international institutions must take practical steps to rescue them with as much urgency as if all 65 million were stranded in the mountains above a war zone, with TV cameras rolling.

Together, leaders from all levels of society must:

1. Include girls' education as an essential component of development efforts

Core human rights principles must inform economic development and poverty-reduction programmes, and the rights of girls must be explicitly protected. If governments, international financial institutions, and bilateral and multilateral aid organizations applied social justice principles to development programmes,

agency conditions represents one of its proudest achievements and the largest such operation ever undertaken by the organization.

At the end of 2001, the Interim Administration, with the support of UNICEF, undertook to do all it could to help rebuild the country's education system, focusing first on enabling 1.5 million children to start school at the end of March 2002.

Learning materials for 700,000 children were procured in the region and the rest had to be flown in from the main UNICEF warehouse in Denmark. A new packing operation was created from scratch just over the border in Pakistan, and 180 local staff were employed to work in two shifts. In less than two months this operation produced 50,000 education kits at the rate of two boxes per minute, while smaller packing opera-

tions in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan produced over 10,000 kits, 400 recreational kits and 600 school tents. Around 7,000 tons of educational supplies were distributed around the country not only by education officers but also by health workers who were part of the national immunization network.

Another goal of the campaign was to build the capacity of the Ministry of

To the children and young people of Afghanistan I would like to say... Your parents, your teachers, your government and many others around the world have worked hard to offer you a fresh start in school. That is our responsibility as adults. Now it is your turn: Make the most of it. Listen to your teachers, learn everything you can, ask questions and keep your minds open to ideas. And never let anyone take school away from you. It is your right — and that goes for both boys and girls. (C. Bellamy, Back to School launch, 23 March 2002)

the outcome would be better for all of society – especially its most marginalized members.

(See Box 6: Budgets and human rights.)

- Public services have to be protected when economic crisis hits or national policy changes so that girls' rights to education, health, food and security are not infringed.
- Equal opportunity is not enough. We must focus on 'equality of outcome', ensuring that all children, girls and boys alike, obtain the same high-quality education.
- The right of children and their families to participate in the decisions that affect their lives must be respected. Their opinions must be taken into account in public matters affecting them, such as budget allocations

for education and related development decisions. Girls must have equal opportunities and be equally prepared for the kind of meaningful participation that is vital to democratic governance.

2. Create a national ethos for girls' education

A national ethos of 'no girl out of school' must be created, so that communities are as scandalized and concerned about the girls kept at home and out of school as they are about the boys and girls more visibly exploited at work. Creating this ethos requires a widespread civic-education campaign, explaining the benefits of girls' education to the family and to society. Every sector of society must be brought on board, from politicians to parents, from the private sector to the mass media. Governments should be held accountable for getting and

Education. In all, 600 people who were established as focal points to assist in data collection and distribution processes participated in regional workshops that provided them with technical and financial support.

On 23 March 2002 around 3,000 schools across Afghanistan opened their doors to millions of boys and girls. Ninety-three per cent of the supplies had been delivered to the schools on time. By September 2002, many more children in the south of the country – along with refugees returning from Pakistan, Iran and other surrounding countries, and internally displaced children leaving camps and returning home – went back to school, making a total of three million children enrolled in the course of the year, double the original estimate. Around 30 per cent of these were girls. In many areas this represented a major advance, since even before the Taliban only 5 per cent of primary-age girls were enrolled in school.

The challenge for the education campaign during 2003 has been to main-

tain and expand this provision at a time when the attention – and thus the funding – of the international community is elsewhere. The quality of education has become paramount, since if children drift away from school now it will be very difficult to get them back once the school system has been rebuilt. With this in mind the Ministry of Education asked UNICEF to run teacher-training workshops in the winter leading up to the 2003 school year; 19,500 primary-school teachers benefited from an eight-day training course focusing on student-centred classrooms, lesson planning and landmine awareness.

Though the problems are still immense, the achievements in Afghanistan over the last two years have been remarkable. For the first time, education was made the top priority in a post-conflict emergency, and in a society which for too long had been used to seeing only men on the street, the sight of children on their way to school with bags over their shoulders was in itself a promise of a better future.

In Afghanistan the hunger for education is almost palpable, and so is its people's faith in its power to mend a broken nation. Teacher Soraya Habibi spent 19 years teaching before she was banned from working by the Taliban. She carried on teaching covertly inside homes but is overjoyed now to be back in front of a class doing what she does best. "I am happy to be able to make my contribution to the future of this country, the future of these children. Remember, I spent the last five years doing nothing – now I just want to teach and teach."

In this country, at least for the moment, children genuinely realize the value of their teachers. A poem by a student on a bulletin board in Abdul Ghafoor Nadeem School, Kabul, reads: "Teachers are the light in our life. If teachers don't exist, society will be destroyed."

*Some names in this panel have been changed.

keeping girls in school. To this end:

- The number of out-of-school girls must be routinely and publicly reported – and considered a matter of national concern as urgent as rising unemployment rates.
- Countries should consider introducing an education tax or commodities surcharge to be used exclusively to get girls or boys into school until gender parity is achieved.
- Governments should do an inventory of successful projects in their countries, bring these to national scale, and audit their effectiveness in having girls complete a basic education.

3. Allow no school fees of any kind

School is not an optional add-on, to be funded if and when the economy improves – it is a human right. When education systems work on this principle they will go the extra mile to guarantee schooling to the most marginalized and disadvantaged, the majority of whom are most always girls. Primary school must be free, universal and compulsory, and parents must have a choice in the kind of education their children receive. All school fees and charges for primary school must be immediately abolished. When parents have to pay for their children's schooling, Education For All becomes impossible and girls lose out even more than boys. Education must be embraced as the right of every child.

4. Think both outside and inside the 'education box'

Education in general – and girls' education in particular – must be completely integrated into each country's poverty reduction strategy or other relevant national plans for poverty reduction. Programmes that work must be scaled up.

Girls' schooling can and should be promoted by actions such as:

- Anti-discrimination laws and policies that protect girls and women

- HIV/AIDS prevention programmes that focus on girls and women
- Early childhood programmes that treat boys and girls equally and address the issue of gender roles and relations
- Investment in water and sanitation for homes and schools
- Efforts to reduce violence in communities and protect children from exploitation and abuse, with special attention to the situation of girls.

At the same time, investment in education should be based on the abundant evidence of the positive results in schools when there are:

- Increased opportunities for girls' participation, including in sports, cultural activities, civic affairs and school government
- Incentive packages and financial assistance for families who send and keep their girls in school, and actively contribute to improving their performance
- Teachers trained in child rights and gender-sensitive classroom techniques
- Teachers receiving a regular, living wage
- Parents empowered in the management and support of schools; involving them in parent-teacher associations; and giving them assistance to create a better learning environment in the home and to project a positive expectation of their children's achievement.

5. Establish schools as centres of community development

Schools and less-formal learning spaces should become more than places for lessons and skill-building; they should become centres of community participation and development. UNICEF's experience in conflict and emergency situations has shown education's power to transform tragedy and chaos into healing and hope, as it restores structure to young lives, rehabilitates

BUDGETS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

A human rights approach to development calls for the progressive realization of all rights. States must mobilize the maximum available resources and establish long-term financing plans for the fulfilment of their citizens' human rights.

A reanalysis of the budget-making process is necessary. At present, the macroeconomic framework is fixed first, together with targets for growth or stabilization. When it comes to government spending, rights-fulfilling programmes often do not have first claim on the available resources, instead they get what's left after allocations are made for debt repayment, defense and growth related sectors. Governments may have committed themselves to the Millennium Development Goals or to the 'World Fit for Children' targets, but often resources allocated for their fulfilment fall well short of what's needed. To prevent this, adequate funding of rights-fulfilling programmes must become a leading, rather than residual, consideration in budget making.

As governments struggle to reconfigure budgets, certain realities must be considered:

Rights are interdependent. All rights are equally important and the neglect of one right can annul or hamper the fulfilment of others. Development in health, education, nutrition and water, for example, is mutually reinforcing and also supports growth. This synergy justifies working towards the fulfilment of all rights.

Non-retrogression is another basic aspect of the human rights-based approach. No individual should suffer a decline in the fulfilment of his/her rights as a result of any deliberate public action. Many macroeco-

nomie reforms, including changes in trade and taxation, are implemented despite their negative impact on some people, usually the poor. These reforms in themselves may not be contrary to human rights principles, but violate these principles by damaging the ability of certain households to continue meeting children's basic needs. Safety nets are integral to such policy changes.

The human rights approach also calls for **equal outcomes**, going beyond equal access or equal opportunities for all. A disabled child, for instance, often needs more resources than an able-bodied child to equally benefit from schooling. Article 23 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child requires "State Parties [to] recognize the right of the disabled child to special care..."

Lastly, **participation** is fundamental to this approach. Democratic participation is essential in safeguarding freedoms and civil liberties – and in ensuring that the state allocates the maximum resources available for the progressive realization of its citizens' rights. Participation at the grass-roots level ensures that no one is discriminated against or denied the benefits due to them. Grass-roots programming should be participatory, transparent and accountable, to help promote the best outcomes for all.

their spirit, and offers understanding to children facing futures that are, at best, uncertain.

Similarly, the HIV/AIDS pandemic brings home the lessons of education's role in an emergency. Schools have proven to be the most efficient and cost-effective means of protecting children and young people from HIV infection. This fact alone presents a strong case for schools as the centre of efforts to combat the spread of the disease and mitigate its impact.

Just as schools must become flexible enough to meet the needs of all children, whether they are girls traditionally excluded from education or children living on the streets, they must also address the growing number of children orphaned and made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS. It is education that can best empower children and young people – particularly orphans and girls most vulnerable to the disease – with the knowledge they need to protect themselves and their communities, and help them acquire the knowledge and skills needed to build a better future. And it is education that can unravel the discrimination and ignorance that perpetuate the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Thus, education should become the centre of work around HIV/AIDS and other threats to the survival of children and young people.

6. Integrate strategies

Integrated strategies are required to confront the multifaceted barriers to girls' education. This should occur at three levels: investments, policies and institutions; service delivery; and in conceptual frameworks, namely those of the economic and human rights approaches.

a. Investment, policy and institutional initiatives.

It is not enough to allocate financial resources for certain goals without addressing policies that might hinder their effectiveness. Building more schools will have limited impact if user fees and other barriers continue to prevent enrolment. In the same way, available resources are most productive when the policy and institutional environment encourages their use. Decentralization, for example, as well as legal

reforms, partnerships and participation all improve resource effectiveness.

b. Service delivery. Effective coordination of services in education, health, nutrition, water and sanitation – especially in the delivery of such services – can improve programme effectiveness. At the community level, for example, a school committee can be the focal point for immunization, nutrition and sanitation interventions as well as for those services more directly related to education.

c. Conceptual frameworks. Generally, economic frameworks are used to prepare investment, policy or institutional tools. When these tools are based entirely on economic principles they prove ineffective in delivering programme objectives to the poorest and most marginalized individuals. However, when the economic approach is informed by human rights principles, programmes for poverty reduction, social development and disparity reduction become far more effective.

7. Increase international funding for education

All industrialized countries should direct 10 per cent of official aid to basic education, with programmes that benefit girls as their priority. They can achieve this by making good on their commitment made at the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico to move swiftly towards giving at least 0.7 per cent of gross national product in aid, and at least 0.15 per cent to the least developed countries.

Extend the Fast-Track Initiative to cover more countries and guarantee swift funding for their needs. All countries that have qualified for fast-track help in their pursuit of Education For All must urgently receive the financial assistance they have been promised by donor governments. The Initiative should be expanded to include all governments that demonstrate a serious commitment to the goal of universal primary education.

An unfinished piece of 20th century business

Unless the world focuses its attention on the 2005 target date for girls' education, the Millennium Development Goals for 2015 are going to slide by, unrealized. Unless the international community acts now, another generation of girls will be lost to ignorance, abuse, exploitation and HIV/AIDS – and, in a future that is nearer than we would think, we will later lose millions of their young children to unnecessary deaths, avoidable malnutrition and disease and squandered human potential.

Girls' education is an arena in which we do not have to wait for science; we know very well what is needed and what works. The Millennium Development Goals are under threat; investing in girls' education will put us on track to meet them. Development is faltering; girls' education will give it new momentum. Millions of children are affected by HIV/AIDS; gender-sensitive schools can become havens of care and comfort. The rights of children around the world are abused daily and systematically; ensuring the rights of girls to an education is the bridge to safety and protection for all children.

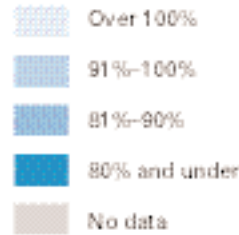
We cannot walk any deeper into the 21st century with this piece of 20th century business still unfinished.

Millennium Development Goals

Two goals – achieve universal primary education and promote gender equality and empower women – are critical to ensuring environmental sustainability. Schools with safe water and separate latrines improve girls' attendance and the quality of life for communities.

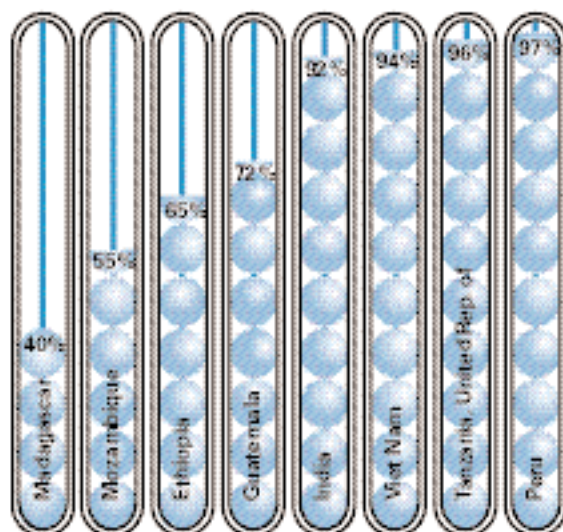
Secondary education for girls

Females as percentage of males in secondary schools
1995-2000



Primary school achievement

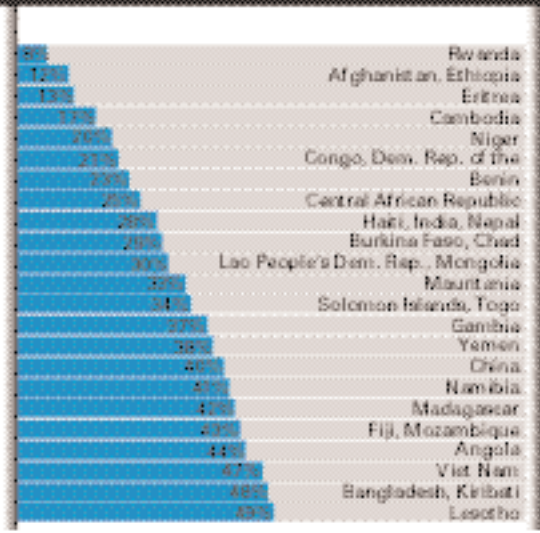
Percentage of children entering primary school who reach grade 5
Survey data 1995-2001
Selected countries



ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

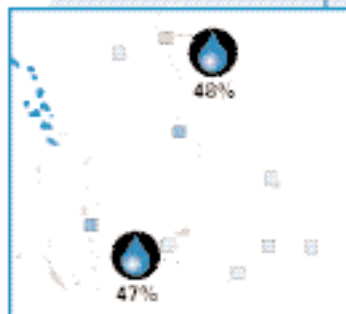
Improved drinking water

Countries where under 50% of population uses improved drinking water sources 2000



Sanitation

Countries where under 50% of population uses adequate sanitation facilities 2000



This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.