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******PRESS RELEASE******

**GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATION BREAKS WORLD RECORD FOR
WORLD'S BIGGEST EVER LESSON**

7.5 million children, adults, teachers joined politicians in over 100 countries to learn about the importance of everyone having the chance for a quality education

More than 7.5 million children, adults, teachers and campaigners took part in the Global Campaign for Education's "World's Biggest Lesson". The world record for the largest simultaneous lesson in history has been broken already – and the numbers are still coming in. The World's Biggest Lesson focused on providing a quality basic education to everyone especially the 72 million children and 774 million adults who are currently missing out. All over the world Politicians and Ministers went back to school, were taught the lesson by children before being asked what they planned to do to make sure everyone gets a quality education.

The Global Campaign for Education is still collecting verification forms from around the world, but an early count shows that the World Record has been broken. The total attempting the record is at least seven and a half million people. The country with the highest recorded count is Bangladesh, with 2.5 million people taking part in over 25,000 different locations across the country. Millions also took part in lesson in Vietnam and in an impressive campaigning effort a million took part in the lesson in the Palestinian Territories.

Celebrities, Heads of States, and Officials took part in the lesson across the world, with the highest profile being Colombian singer and Grammy award winner, Shakira. She sought international attention as Honourary Chair of Global Action Week, both on a media call with UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown and World Bank President Robert Zoellick, and as she lobbied Congress with students in Washington.

"I find it so inspiring that there are so many young people who care so deeply about the rights of all children to go to school that they would bring about this global movement," said Shakira.

Amongst the impressive list of others to take part in the World's Biggest Lesson were Papua New Guinea's Head of State Paulias Matane, Afghanistan's Vice-President Ahmad Zia Masood, Cambodia's King, Mozambique's Vice Minister for Education, the Netherlands Minister of Development Co-operation, Bert Koenders and Turkmenistan's Deputy Minister of Education, Ms Gulshat Mamedova

"The most promising reason to believe that the world will achieve its goals of Education for All by 2015 has been the emergence of strong civil society movement and this mobilization of millions of children, women and men during the Global Action Weeks each year," noted Kailash Satyarthi, GCE President. *"We will not fall silent until we have ensured quality education for all."*

"One in four women in the world are illiterate. It's not right, and it's not just. The Global Campaign for Education has been demanding an end to this injustice since 2000," noted Muleya Mwananyanda, GCE Action Week Coordinator. *"By having legislators and government leaders join in the World's Biggest Lesson, we are challenging them to share with us what they are doing to ensure others get educated, and have the opportunities to be sitting where they're sitting now."*

The World's Biggest Lesson was the highlight of the Global Campaign for Education's (GCE)'s Action Week which is taking place 21st – 27th April. Every year civil society across the world takes part in this

week that pressurizes all governments to keep their promises and meet the Education for All goals, which were signed up to by 164 governments in Dakar in April 2000. With the phenomenal success of the World's Biggest Lesson, 2008 is having the biggest Action Week since the beginning of the Global Campaign for Education in 1999.

Highlights of the 'World's Biggest Lesson' from around the world included:

Afghanistan - The World's Biggest Lesson was held in the capital Kabul and 15 provinces. In Kabul the lesson was delivered by eight year old Tamina Jorat, to high level politicians including Vice President Ahmad Zia Masuood.

Argentina - At the National Congress of Young Students met, with National Senators, a group of young people between 16 and 19 years from schools in the City of Buenos Aires and the province of Buenos Aires. They gave the lesson to Senator Inés Osuna of Entre Rios Blanca, and Fernando Daniel Filums of the City Buenos Aires.

Albania - Schools throughout Albania took part in the World's Biggest Lesson. Following the Lesson, in Tirana, there was a football match between children and Members of Parliament.

Armenia – Many important decision makers took part in the World's Biggest Lesson.

Austria - More than 2,000 children in Austria took part in the World's Biggest Lesson.

Bangladesh - The number of people who've been counted so far is two and a half million, and numbers are still coming in. The lesson was held in more than 25,000 centres around Bangladesh with people from all walks of life taking part alongside leaders, local elites and public functionaries who vowed fresh commitments towards establishing everyone's right to quality basic education and creating an enabling learning environment.

Bulgaria - Campaigners were in tears at the sheer magnificence and powerful messages that children gave to the Mayor of Sofia during the World's Biggest Lesson.

Burkina Faso – Officials took part in the World's Biggest Lesson on the 23rd April, whilst similar lessons took place in all regions of the country.

Burundi - Despite the unrest in the south of Burundi where the national World's Biggest Lesson had been prepared, the coalition Bafeshebigwe went ahead with World's Biggest Lesson in the Capital Bujumbura.

Brazil – Events across the country communicated the results of a recent consultation on quality education in Brazil to teachers, students and pupils.

Cambodia – His Majesty the King was taught the lesson by children who've been excluded from education and adult learners.

Cameroon – Officials attended the World's Biggest Lesson. Throughout the country thousands took part in the officials 'Back to School' events and workshops on quality education.

Canada – A number of primary and secondary schools in the Toronto area hosted their Members of Parliament as they went "back to school" for the World's Biggest Lesson. A huge lesson was also held at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education.

Chile - About 10,000 students and several politicians took part in the World's Biggest Lesson across the country. The lesson raised awareness on Quality Education for All and reminded the leaders of the Dakar Education for All promises. In Santiago, MP Carlos Montes and representatives from UNESCO and the National Forum for Quality Education for All attended the lesson held at María Elena School.

Colombia - Local celebrities turned up to the lesson across the country.

Denmark – Close to 200,000 school students took part in Denmark's Action Week with a special book called 'Læseraketten' that tells stories about education in poor countries. Schools used the book to get ready for the World's Biggest Lesson, which was attended by the Minister for Education.

Dominican Republic – More than 300 schools took part. They compiled reports and wrote letters to political leaders about exclusion in education that will be delivered to the National Congress.

Ecuador – A special ‘Dialogues for Education’ took place in schools throughout the country, to raise awareness about quality education for all. Education institutions also gave a present to their neighbourhood, by planting trees, painting a mural or cleaning the parks.

Ethiopia - Nine regions and two administrative councils worked together to make demands for the provision of quality education to end exclusion. In Addis Ababa ten schools took part in the World’s Biggest Lesson.

France - UNESCO and the French Coalition held the World’s Biggest Lesson at the UNESCO headquarters. Officials from UNESCO, representatives of the education unions, young people from a UNESCO’s associated school and many more were in attendance. Afterwards participants wrote messages on quality education to the UNESCO Director General and the UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon.

Gambia - The World’s Biggest Lesson was held at Fatima Senior Secondary School. The lesson was followed with a performance by a local school choir and speeches from civil society and government representatives, including the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Georgia - 70 politicians returned to their native schools. In the Capital Tbilisi, there was a press conference after the World’s Biggest Lesson. In attendance were the Deputy Minister of Education, different government departmental heads, local NGOs, representatives from UNESCO and UNICEF. They discussed the challenges to be dealt with by the education reforms that are underway.

Germany – Officials took part in the World’s Biggest Lesson outside the German Reichstag (Parliament Building) and were presented with their school report card - marking Germany’s performance on providing support to Education for All.

Ghana - A national community meeting (Durbar) was attended by officials, stakeholders, traditional leaders and politicians who were presented with a photo exhibition on the differences in infrastructure between rural and urban schools.

Guatemala – Officials, students, parents and teachers attended a photograph exhibition that displayed the lack of quality education for everyone and those who’ve been marginalised from school.

Honduras – Students marched to the Presidential House at the start of Action Week, after which politicians returned ‘Back to School’ to be taught by students, and an ‘Education Changes Life’ forum brought together stakeholders to discuss ‘Quality Education to End Exclusion’.

Hungary - The Teachers' Democratic Union organized the World's Biggest Lesson in over 500 institutions schools and hundreds of schools. Following lots of press coverage, thousands of children took part in the lesson.

India - Hundreds of former child laborers and school children participated in the World's Biggest Lesson. Children themselves imparted a lesson to the noted Bollywood personalities: actress Mahima Chaudhry, producer Tanuja Chandra, singer Jasbeer Jassi, and Amit Shyal. Members of Parliament and campaigners were given the lesson by President of Global Campaign for Education, Kailash Satyarthi.

Indonesia - In North Makulu, a wish list was created by 1,500 children that listed what constitutes a quality education in the minds of children. This was handed over to politicians including the Head of the District of Bacan, during the World’s Biggest Lesson.

Ireland – Once again schools and students across Ireland took part in the Action Week activities. A major event on ‘Quality Education to End Exclusion’ was held at the new Irish Aid, Government Communications Centre, and attended by Government Ministers, who discussed the issue of children who are excluded from school.

Japan – The UNESCO Assistant Secretary General for Education Nick Burnett and UNICEF's Chief of Education, Cream Wright shared a school lunch with Japanese school children before being taught the lesson. The attendance of popular celebrity, Agnes Chang from Hong Kong attracted great national media coverage for the lesson.

Jordan – The Ministry of Education, National Commission for UNESCO, Educational Directorates, Schools and NGOs took part in the official ceremony of the World's Biggest Lesson.

Kenya – The World's Biggest Lesson was given to more than 20 formal and 20 informal schools in a open air lesson in Nairobi. In a Mombasa Secondary School Councilor Teddy Mwambire of Ganze Kilifi District sat in class together with Maina Mbugua, a parliamentary aspirant in Kisaunu Constituency for the World's Biggest Lesson.

Lebanon - UNESCO Beirut cooperated with the Ministry of Education, UNESCO Associated Schools Project network and Mabarot Schools Network for the World's Biggest Lesson.

Lesotho – Politicians and community leaders went back to schools in the rural disadvantaged of the country. They witnessed the difficulties such as poor school infrastructure, over crowded classrooms, and dilapidated learning materials.

Liberia – Action Week started with a radio talk show about the World's Biggest Lesson. There was a national parade of the coalition LETCOM, students, parents, politicians and civil society activists to call for quality education. A series of talk shops and working groups were also held on the issue of providing quality education for all in Liberia.

Macedonia - More than 100 schools took part in the World's Biggest Lesson. Other activities included children meeting with high ranking politicians from Republic of Macedonia where politicians signed their support to Global Action Week and the Education for All goals.

Malawi – A number of exciting activities took place in Malawi, from public debates to designing action plans for providing Education for All in Malawi.

Mauritius – Schools met with their Municipal Councillors, MPs, community and religious leaders and rallied through the streets for education for all.

Mexico – Hundreds of schools took part in the World's Biggest Lesson. Outstanding people from the community, public figures, politicians, and representatives from the local educational sector returned to school to be part of the World's Biggest Lesson.

Mozambique – 'Major Aula' (the World's Biggest Lesson) took place in schools across the country, and for some involved was the first chance of sitting in class. The Vice-Minister for Education returned to a school with no chairs, desks, or glass in the windows, where children struggle to study, and was taught the lesson.

The Netherlands - "Een spreekbeurtenmarathon", a presentation marathon, took place in schools across the country. Politicians at national and local level and entertainers went back to school and were taught by students. Everyone present signed a petition with an emphasis on free and good quality education, which is to be presented to the Minister of Development Co-operation, Bert Koenders.

Namibia - Politicians were the taught by learners on the importance of quality education and the promises they have made on Education for All, during the World's Biggest Lesson. Leaders from the teachers' union (NANTU) and politicians sat in classrooms and were taught by learners for the World's Biggest Lesson.

Nicaragua – The World's Biggest Lesson took place in Leon, Jinotega, Esteli, Ciudad Sandino, Carazo, Boaco, Chinandega and Managua and was attended by representatives of civil society, teachers, parents, children and adolescents and delegates of the Ministry of Education.

Nigeria – Executives and Members of the House of Representatives, lead officials of the Federal Ministry of Education, Senate and top Government officials and representatives of the coalition CSACEFA went to school with journalists to take part in the World's Biggest Lesson.

Norway – Officials took part in the World's Biggest Lesson, and discussed their leadership role for the next High Level Group on Education, in Oslo in December.

Pakistan – The World's Biggest Lesson took place in 40 districts with politicians joining schools and local community groups.

Palestinian Territories – Amazingly a million took part in World’s Biggest Lesson in 20 directorates across the West Bank and Gaza, including a large diverse participation of Politicians and Ministry of Education Officials.

Papua New Guinea – Thousands of students and hundreds of adult learners took part in the World’s Biggest Lesson including the Head of State and Governor General of PNG Grand Chief Sir Paulias Matane and his wife Lady Kaludia at a rural school.

Peru – Over 300 schools in different parts of the country took part in the World’s Biggest Lesson. GCE’s school report card for Peru was presented to Ministers, Congressmen and Members of the National Council for Education in Lima.

Philippines – The World’s Biggest Lesson was given to Senator Alan Peter Cayetano, Congressman Del de Guzman and other officials across the country. At the end of the lesson E-Net (the education coalition) kite was flown high in the air in a call for quality Education for All.

Portugal – Over 100 schools took part in the lesson, organized by a new education coalition in Portugal. In Lisbon, one school hosted Politicians, opinion makers and the Vice-President for the Portuguese Institute for Development Assistance for the World’s Biggest Lesson.

Rwanda - The World's Biggest Lesson was a resounding success with lessons happening at different primary schools in Nyarugenge district as well as Shingiro Sector.

Senegal - Politicians went back to school in four regions. During the World’s Biggest Lesson events children delivered their messages and testimonies for education to MPs, leaders and celebrities.

Sierra Leone – Officials went ‘Back to School’ and took part in a ‘Quality Education to End Exclusion’ symposium.

Solomon Islands - Thousands of children and adults took part in the World’s Biggest Lesson alongside politicians, educationists, teachers, family members and supporters.

Somalia - The World's Biggest Lesson took place in the Old Football Stadium in Abdal Aziz, Mogadishu. The lesson focused on how to address the education needs of internally displaced children been excluded from school following the recent Mogadishu violence.

Somaliland - Activities took place in five education institutions, where political, religious, academic leaders, PTA’s and renowned business people went back to school. In each lesson drama, poems and songs that advocated for quality education, were presented by children.

South Africa – In Cape Town learners and teachers from ten disadvantaged schools took the lesson. Whilst more than 1,000 teachers took the same lesson in Durban at the South African Democratic Teacher’ Union (SADTU)’s cultural festival. This lesson’s attendees included the President of Education International Thulas Nxesi and Blade Nzimande, General Secretary of the South African Communist Party.

Spain – The World’s Biggest Lesson took place in at least 16 city councils and authority buildings on the 24th April as the 23rd was a public holiday. Specially designed puzzles were played as part of the lesson.

Sri Lanka – School students compiled dossiers on ‘Quality Education for All’ and delivered these to the Head of State, Minister of Education and Cabinet Ministers during the World’s Biggest Lesson.

Sudan – Activities took place in Khartoum, White Nile, South and North Darfur and El Gadarif. A big exhibition was held in the UNESCO building and seminars given on quality education.

Sweden – The World’s Biggest Lesson took place at Naturvetargymnasiet at which students wrote messages in support of quality education to the local and national government.

Taiwan - Global Action Week kicked off with the introduction of a life curriculum created to address issues of quality and exclusion in schools. On Wednesday officials went back to school to attend the World's Biggest Lesson.

Turkmenistan - The World's Biggest Lesson was given and attended by the first Deputy Minister of Education Ms Gulshat mamedova and UNICEF representative Dr Waheed Hassan.

Global Campaign for Education - Breaks World Record for the World’s Biggest Lesson

Uganda – A march for education took place on Monday. The parliament has since been petitioned to discuss and pass the Education Bill that has been stalled for some time now. This bill is a repeal of the 1971 Education Act and will introduce clauses on providing free, compulsory schooling to every child in Uganda.

UK – Douglas Alexander, the Secretary of State for International Development was taught the lesson by 100 school children outside the Houses of Parliament in London.

USA - Shakira appeared beside leading young advocates for education from all across the USA on Capitol Hill on the eve of the World's Biggest Lesson to advocate for education and raise awareness for the Bipartisan Education for All Act 2007. Kenyan Peace Activist Karambu Ringera also led a lesson in Colorado.

Uruguay – Schools and politicians shared the lesson on Quality Education for All.

Venezuela – Students taught adults, teachers and politicians in Caracas. After discussing quality education they sent messages to their politicians asking for more and better schools. A huge lesson took place at the Central University of Venezuela

Vietnam – Millions took part in the World's Biggest Lesson in all 64 provinces and cities nationwide with the support of the Ministry of Education and Training and UNESCO.

Zambia – Children marched to the World's Biggest Lesson where they met the Vice President, and Minister of Education and Community Development, for the lesson by the Lusaka's Freedom Statue.

Media Notes: Please contact Alex Kent at +27 76 428 5390 or alex@campaignforeducation.org if you are interested in more information about the Global Campaign for Education and the World's Biggest Lesson 2008. Photos and interviews are available. For more information about the GCE's activities, please visit www.campaignforeducation.org

Photos are available from around the world here: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/campaignforeducation/pool/>

Global Campaign for Education (GCE)

The Global Campaign for Education, founded in 1999, brings together major nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and teachers' unions in more than 120 countries. GCE promotes access to education as a basic human right and raises public awareness to create the political will for governments and other leaders in the international community to fulfill their promises to provide at least a free, public basic education for all children.

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