



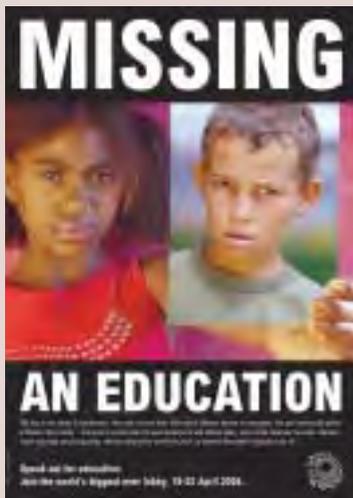
The Big Book: Missing an Education

Global Action Week

April 2004

The Big Book

is a celebration of the events
of Global Action Week 2004



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The Big Book highlights the activities of 117 countries that took part in Action Week. It also honours the incredible commitment and hard work that NGOs, unions, and individual teachers, activists and children have dedicated to the Global Campaign for Education, and shows how their commitment has made a real impact on government policies and attitudes.

Most important, the collective stories in this book reveal how children's voices are instrumental to creating positive change. Throughout Action Week 2004, children made their message loud and clear: they can no longer wait for leaders of their respective nations to fulfill every child's right to go to school.

The GCE and its supporters believe that education is a basic human right fundamental to individual dignity and freedom. For more than 100 million children and 860 million illiterate adults, that right is denied every day.

The GCE's primary mission is to mobilize public pressure on governments and the international community to fulfil their obligation to provide free, quality education for all people. The GCE campaigns for the additional resources and policy changes needed to implement the goals that world leaders set in 2000 for achieving universal basic education (Education for All) by the year 2015. Today the world is far from reaching this target.

Since the GCE's first Global Action Week in 2000, the number of countries and the range of groups taking part have steadily increased. Action Week now benefits from

the endorsement of UN agencies such as the ILO, UNICEF, and in particular, UNESCO, which encourages Ministries of Education around the world to take an active part in Global Action Week.

With its wide range of support, Action Week, however, really belongs to the thousands of civil society organisations and schools, small and large, who strive to make Education for All a reality. On limited budgets, without the services of public relations firms, advertising agencies or event organisers, and often without the services of any paid staff, teachers' unions and NGOs have mobilised millions of everyday people to unite for a single, important cause: to put EFA firmly on the political agenda both nationally and internationally. It is their dedication for which we are most grateful.

Kailash

Kailash Satyarthi
Chair of the Global Campaign for Education

To all Global Action Week 2004 participants around the world: Congratulations on a resoundingly successful Action Week!

Your voice, your actions and your commitment to ensuring that all children, without exception, can fulfil their right to an education is extremely important. Without your efforts, poverty will continue to plague the lives of millions of people today – and the lives of future generations. Without your firm commitment, the Millennium Development Goals will remain yet another set of promises unfulfilled.

From the US to the UK, from Togo to Tajikistan, from Pakistan to Peru, you have joined together to tell governments and decision makers that universal education is an issue vital to all of us. Each and every one of you is making a difference in the world, and I commend you for your dedication.

When I was Development Minister of the Netherlands, I launched an Education for All campaign. When I explained to a young audience that by 2015, all girls and boys will go to school, a little 10-year-old girl asked me, "But why do you want to wait until 2015?"

I am normally one of those politicians who always has an answer, but this time I could not find the words to respond. Indeed children cannot wait.

The growing success of the Global Campaign for Education in the four years since it started has been remarkable. There will be thousands of children who will now get a good quality education because of the policy changes announced and new resources pledged in Action Week alone.

For those children who desperately need the world to meet the Millennium Development Goals, the continued success and growth of your coalition is one of the best hopes they have got. I urge you to stay with us and make the GCE alliance even stronger and more effective, until the world no longer needs a Global Action Week.

Thank you,

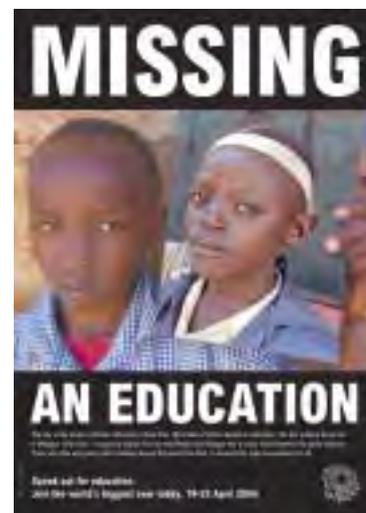
Eveline Herfkens

United Nations Secretary-General's Executive
Coordinator of the Millennium Development Campaign



“Millions of parents, teachers and children around the world are calling on their governments to provide free, good quality, basic education for all the world's children. They are part of the Global Campaign for Education; we add our voice to their call.”

Nelson Mandela and Graça Machel,
April 2002



2003

Over 2 million people in 70 countries took part in the record-breaking "Girls' Education: The Biggest Lesson". Events held around the world were highlighted by the attendance of local and national celebrities and government officials. At UN headquarters in New York, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Mrs Annan, and singer Angelique Kidjo teamed up to teach "The Biggest Lesson", and in the Gambia, it was the VIPs' turn to sit and listen as the daughter of a peanut-seller mounted the podium to teach the lesson. Such scenes were repeated around the world as vast numbers of children used their own voices to call attention to Education for All. Girls' education was "ringing in the hearts and minds of millions of people", said Hailu Sime, a participant from Ethiopia.

2004

This year, children spoke out directly to politicians in face-to-face meetings, parliamentary debates and letters as part of the "World's Biggest Ever Lobby". More than 2 million people took part and 14 heads of state and dozens of ministers joined in. In some countries, children were able to take over the national legislature or parliament for the day, engaging lawmakers in hard-hitting discussions about what government must do to ensure that no one misses out on quality education. Related activities took place in state capitals, village halls and even in individual schools as thousands of parliamentarians, including two-thirds of all MPs in the UK, went "Back to School for a Day".

Children in the South backed their demands with concrete evidence, presenting politicians with 'Missing Out Maps' – diagrams pinpointing who in their community can't go to school and why. Hundreds of thousands of people around the world sent letters, cards and email messages to their countries' presidents or prime ministers, asking them to "do more to make sure every child can go to school and get a quality education". Civil society groups used creative methods to get their message to politicians, including plays, operas, human chains, symbolic balloting, and art shows.

2005

GCE members are already gearing up to make 2005 the biggest Action Week yet. The international community has committed to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) to halve world poverty and tackle related problems such as AIDS, illiteracy and hunger by 2015. Giving all children an education is central to these Goals, and the first of all the MDG targets is to end the gap between boys and girls in primary and secondary schools by 2005. However, this target will be missed, and the window of opportunity to achieve universal primary education by 2015 is slowly closing. The GCE is part of an international movement of people and organizations committed to making the MDGs a reality and ending poverty for good. In 2005 this movement will mobilise millions to demand more aid, deeper debt relief and fair trade, while also pressing poor countries to invest more in education and health. Action Week 2005 will highlight the need for urgent action and dramatic funding increases to achieve the MDG education targets, without which the other MDGs cannot be met.

If you are interested in learning more about Action Week 2005, 26–30 April, please email actionweek@campaignforeducation.org

Africa & Middle East

Action Week 2004 in Africa was a resounding success thanks to the participation of high-profile decision makers in a range of countries, including the Presidents and Prime Ministers of Djibouti, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Niger and Zambia, as well as the Vice Presidents of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Lesotho and the Ministers of Education in Benin, Burundi, the Congo, Egypt, Kenya, Sudan and Zimbabwe.

A vast number of children were involved in national lobbies, and in many countries, youth representatives took over parliament to petition their leaders, using Missing Out Maps and letters from their peers addressing issues such as ending school fees, tackling HIV/AIDS, stopping child labour and underage marriage, and spending oil revenue on education.

Media coverage combined with public pressure resulted in a number of government officials promising to do more to help children go to school. The Minister of Education in Kenya, for example, agreed to write to schools to ensure that they admit children who cannot afford uniforms. In one Nigerian state, a Child's Rights Bill was passed as a result of the Action Week while in Sudan the Ministry of Education vowed to eliminate school fees. ■

This page: Children in Nigeria



Credit: AAI Nigeria

Angola

Action Week 2004 coincided with the closing session of the National Public Consultation on Education for All (EFA) in Luanda. With over a thousand attendees, the event helped highlight Action Week activities, which garnered a great deal of media attention, culminating in national TV coverage.

Burkina Faso

As a result of Action Week, the Minister of Education has agreed to meet with the national civil society education coalition to implement an EFA plan, thanks to strong lobbying by over a thousand children denied the right to go to school. The children went to the Place de la Nation to lobby 31 government representatives. On behalf of the children present, a visually-impaired child made a speech in three Burkina Faso languages, Mossi, Duyla and French, asking the MPs to enforce Education for All.

Burundi

Ministry of Education officials and decision makers from international organisations were touched by school children's portrayal of their peers missing an education. The children described the situation for many young people who must work in the fields instead of attending school. Typical was the story of one Mutwa child who, for the sake of wages worth a mere US\$1.50 per month, has to herd goats instead of getting an education.

Workshops and an awareness-raising campaign helped mobilize education authorities to address the growing number of children missing education. In school, children had the opportunity to express their feelings about their excluded peers by making Missing Out Maps. About 15,000 students sent a message to the President expressing their concern about children not in school.

Benin

More than 600 children came to the National Assembly to defend their right to education. They were received by politicians, in the presence of the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education. One of the spokespersons, an 8-year-old girl, said, "We call on each and every one of you in the National Assembly to ensure that no Beninese child of school age is left at home, in the street, in the workshops or in the factories."

At the same time, thousands of children marched in rural areas, converging on their town halls to meet their local representatives with banners proclaiming, "We, the children of Ouidah, say NO! to the exclusion of our brothers and sisters." The next day a number of politicians returned to school to exchange ideas about education with children, whose main concern was teacher strikes which were hindering their education. These strikes, they contended, lead parents to believe that school is useless and that children, especially girls, should stay at home to work. They asked the politicians to do all they could to prevent strikes.



Cameroon

A group of 550 children met at the national monument in Yaoundé, carrying placards asking, "What are you doing for Education?" MPs promised to realize the EFA plan of action and, in particular, to address the problem of street children. More than a thousand messages were sent to the President Paul Biya, and follow up activities were planned to ensure their response.

Many representatives and authorities returned to school in Ngoumou, Bafia, Buea, Bamenda, Kumbo and Yaoundé, where they were presented with Missing Out Maps and messages to take back to the President.

The week helped raise a range of issues, among them, the poor quality of infrastructure in many regions and the disparity between what is promised and what is actually being done to help children go to school. For example, although primary education is free, many schools insist on fees, including one school where over 40 pupils were recently forced to leave because they could not cover the tuition. Thanks to Action Week, however, government officials are now realising the magnitude of the problem as children present their Missing Out Maps. In Bafia, for example, Missing Out Maps showed that a third of all children in one village are not in school.

Photos Left: Children's messages are handed over to MP Delphine Nanga to bring to President of Cameroon Paul Biya. Below: A girl asks questions to the dignitaries present. *Credit: CEF*



Comores

Politicians went back to school in the five regions of the country where the tax on education is the highest. They discussed the state of education in the country with school children who had been busy preparing questions.

Congo

The Minister of Primary and Secondary Education appeared on television to confirm the government's commitment to EFA by 2015. About 1,500 children met decision makers from the government, civil society and UN bodies during the World's Biggest Ever Lobby in the House of Parliament. Four messages were read by the President of the Children's Parliament, the Minister for Primary and Secondary Education, the President of GCE coalition CARESCO and the President of the National Assembly. As a result of these messages, deputies and political figures committed to get more involved in educational issues in the country.

Photos Top and below left: Participants at the national lobby in the Congo. *Credit: CARESCO / FAPE*



Democratic Republic of Congo

After being questioned in the World's Biggest Ever Lobby, attended by 750 children, the President of Parliament Olivier Kamitatu vowed that the campaign would not simply be another slogan, but a pact between politicians and children. MPs and other government officials, including Minister of Health Yagi Sitolo and the Ministers of Primary and University Education, Ndom Obwel and Ngoy Kasongo, opened their eyes to the DRC's education crisis. Some went to visit dilapidated schools during Action Week and were presented with Missing Out Maps. The DRC's Vice President, Zah'idi Ngoma, launched events at a centre for street children, where over one thousand people attended.

Photo Children at a centre for the rehabilitation of street children. *Credit: CME*



Djibouti

Djibouti's President, Isma'ï Omar Guelleh, received a delegation of 23 children who brought him a message thanking him for his support of Education for All. The Chief of State told them that he had "set up educational reform and training as the priority of priorities".

"We must become mobilised to succeed, for the benefit of future generations; as the renovation of the Djibouti school is the only way of allowing our country to stand up to the challenge of modernity and of social and humanitarian development," he told the audience. A group of children later visited the National Assembly, where they spoke of the thousands of children missing an education in Djibouti. When politicians went back to school throughout the week, teams of teachers and students focussed their attention on girl children and those who are most at risk from being excluded from education.

Egypt

The Minister of Education, Dr Hussein Kamel Bahaa' el Din, met four child representatives in a national event in Cairo. Meanwhile, 65 schools throughout the country took part in activities, holding theatre and music events and writing competitions, and invited parents and local representatives to talk about EFA.

“What is the government going to do about access to schools and other public buildings for disabled people?”

Kebba, who is disabled, questions members of the National Assembly in the Gambia

Ethiopia

Following an energetic Action Week coordinated by civil society organizations, the Ethiopian government has promised to increase spending on education and to link formal and non-formal education so that more children can complete school. Meanwhile, in dozens of villages, parents and other community members have also pledged to do more to send their children to school.

The local GCE coalition was absorbed in mobilising public opinion behind EFA and was engaged in promotional activities, from distributing flyers, stickers, booklets, brochures, posters and T-shirts to organising a march to the parliament, panel discussions and “Back to School” events for politicians. During the kick-off press conference at the Ministry of Education, child activists and coalition members had the opportunity to voice their side of the story, detailing why education is important for the development of Ethiopia. The following day, children marched to parliament to hand over messages written by their peers nationwide to the Council of People’s Representatives. The Head of the Capacity Building Affairs Committee and about 11 committee members were present to answer questions raised by the children. The event, along with the rest of the week’s activities, garnered a good deal of media coverage. A number of politicians culminated their busy “school week” by returning to classrooms to learn about problems students face, such as inadequate school facilities, violence against girls, and insurmountable distances between schools and children’s homes.

Photo A girl who is missing out on education. Credit: AAI Ethiopia



Gambia

Members of the National Assembly met in person with 100 children representing those missing out due to disability, poverty, war and other obstacles. Fatoumata, a 14-year-old girl who is disabled, asked, “What is the government going to do about sexual harassment in schools?” Kebba, who is also disabled, asked “What is the government going to do about access to schools and other public buildings for disabled people?”

Hon Halifa Sallah, the minority leader in the National Assembly, observed “that access to educational facilities without the capability of training teachers to handle special education needs, would constitute mere window dressing”. He therefore promised that the National Assembly would endeavour to improve the situation.

On another issue, Ousman, a refugee child, claimed that his mother depends on him for income as he struggles daily to earn money by driving donkey carts. The tears in his eyes moved the MPs to promise to conduct a special investigation into the conditions of refugee children nationwide.

When an additional 600 children met later to listen to songs and watch plays, Hon Halifa Sallah captivated the house with a speech, promising to tackle issues that prevent children from attending school with better policies and more resources.

In schools throughout the country, 6,300 children made Missing Out Maps and wrote letters to the President Yahya Jammeh. Members from the National Assembly went to schools to discuss issues further. Many made pledges and promised to meet the children’s demands. Hon Edrissa Samba Sallah said, “All children have [the] right to shelter, food, health and education... Lack of education is one of the key causes of poverty.”

After hearing the story of Isatou, a grade-8 student whose parents withdrew her from school to force her into marriage, a woman promised that women in the community would do everything in their power to send their children, including their daughters, to school.

Ghana

A girl who is not in school addressed the national lobby in Accra attended by 300 children, politicians and the general public. She asked them, “Why can’t I go to school?” Four political parties were invited to interact with students and tell them about what they were planning to do to help children go to school. Earlier in the week, 2,000 children took part in a march and rally in Bolgatanga to lobby the government and policy makers to ensure that education is really free. The Chairperson of the Parliamentary Select Committee, traditional leaders, ministry officials, and union and NGO leaders attended the rally. Three children gave a speech, including a street child, a disabled child, and an in-school child, Valentina Oklu, who said, “We fervently plead for the integration of our out-of-school brothers and sisters into the school systems, so that together we can all prepare for a better tomorrow where equity and equality will be the hallmark.”

Similar lobbying activities took place in all ten regions of Ghana with an estimated 2,000 participants. Action Week 2004 helped raise awareness in the national media, and inspired 3,000 children to write letters of solidarity to the Bolgatanga Regional Minister on behalf of the Vice President. Action Week also served as a unique opportunity for disadvantaged children to articulate their needs and realise that others are concerned about their plight.

Photo Some of the 2,000 children marching in the Biggest Ever Lobby. Credit: AAI Ghana



Guinea

The First Lady, Mrs Henriette Conte, Prime Minister, Mr François Louncény Fall, and ministers and politicians, met 1,350 children in the national legislature. Children, both in and out of school, presented Missing Out Maps and held debates, posing questions to their local leaders, the education authorities and the government administration. Five out of the country's eight regions participated in the campaign, and the GCE coalition put in place a national plan to prepare for the next Action Week. Most important were the children's testimonies and the capacity of young people to speak out about their excluded peers' concerns regarding education.

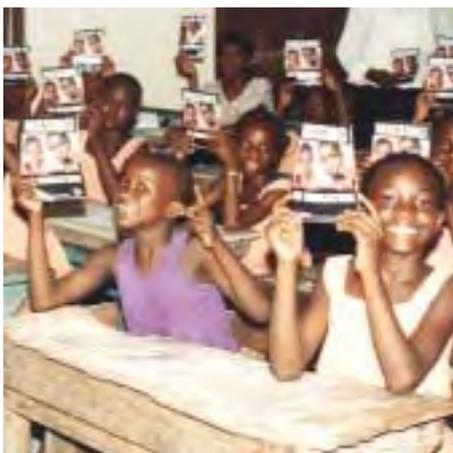
Photos Top: St Joseph's School in Conakry, where children lobbied. Below: Children perform plays about why their peers are missing out on education. *Credit: ACEEF*



Ivory Coast

The official launch took place before the authorities in Grand Bassam. The deputy from Botro region, Mr Allah Konan Raoul, specified that it was, in part, because of a lack of education that rebels took up arms against the nation. The GCE coalition visited more than 35 schools and orphanages. There were pledges made by many as a consequence of the children's stories. For example, a representative of children who are excluded from the education system spoke about his friends' desire to learn how to read, write, do sums and count money and as a result, a group has decided to build a remedial school for excluded children.

Photos Top: In-school and out-of-school children together in the play ground. Below: The class was enthusiastic about EFA. *Credit: DCI*



Kenya

Actions during the World's Biggest Ever Lobby prompted the Minister of Education to pledge new steps to reach children who are still out of school despite the abolition of fees last year. He promised to send a letter to all schools telling teachers that children without uniforms should be allowed into school. He also agreed to send his officials into the countryside to hold meetings with communities, NGOs and teachers on how to raise the quality of teaching and learning. Highlights of the week included a dialogue among MPs, development partners and civil society, principally to drum up political support, but also to cement politicians more fully in supporting EFA.

The week resulted in planning for a meeting to bring together educators of adult literacy, and the creation of a 200-member child parliament after children demanded to be involved in the consultation process on education. The children discussed issues such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and child labour in addition to access to education.

About 150 of these children joined a session bringing together students and out-of-school children, adult learners and policy makers in a child parliament. This intergenerational dialogue resulted in a communiqué to the President Mwai Kibaki. Other lobbies involving over a thousand children took place in other regions of Kenya. In Mombassa, a radio station held a phone-in in which children held a lively debate about education with politicians.

Photos Top right: A girl recites a poem on discrimination and the effects of FGM on girls' education. Below right: Children marching against FGM, early marriages, and child labour, three major barriers to access to and completion of primary education. *Credit: Elimu Yetu*

“In some families, parents force children to do family matters such as babysitting, cow herding and working at a very young age... education is the tree of life so let's reap its sweet fruits.”

A child in Lesotho



Lesotho

Education debates involving 1,700 children from 34 schools centred on the slogan, "This house believes that Free Primary Education has brought more good than harm to Lesotho schools", and provoked some eloquent responses from a number of students. An additional debate, involving 44 children from schools in Maseru, was held in parliament concerning the issue of "Who is missing out on education?" The politicians committed themselves to looking at all the initiatives critically and pledged their support for the future.

The Chief Inspector at the Ministry of Education and Training promised that all 6,000 children's messages would be analysed, so that the Ministry can make positive changes for the future. The Deputy PM and the Deputy Principal Secretary were also present at the event when children handed over their messages asking the Lesotho Government to "Please do more to give every child the chance to go to school."

The messages specifically highlighted the many issues that hinder children's access to education, including poverty, teenage pregnancy, and HIV/AIDS. Many politicians and other respected members went "back to school" to meet with children face to face and receive messages that they had written. One child wrote, "In some families, parents force children to do family matters such as babysitting, cow herding and working at a very young age... education is the tree of life so let's reap its sweet fruits."

The Deputy PM said that GCE Action Week should be a reminder of the importance of every child receiving an education and that there should be constant action taken throughout the year in order to work towards a more positive future. He said it was important to consider the importance of education, and to make sure that both individuals and communities strive for an all-inclusive form of education that is culturally appropriate, and one that examines issues such as environmental awareness, HIV/AIDS and poverty.

Lebanon

About 22,000 children out of school in Lebanon marched from the UN House in Beirut to Parliament. Together, they were received by the Education Committee, representatives of the President Emile Lahoud, the PM Rafik Hariri and the President of the Parliament.

Claiming that they no longer wanted to see their peers out of education, or working on the streets, children begged the government to work hard to ensure their peers can return to school. This was both during the lobby and as politicians returned to schools.

Photo Lebanese children march to parliament in Beirut.
Credit: UNESCO



Liberia

There was large-scale participation in Liberia's Action Week 2004, which captured the attention of the National Transitional Government of Liberia. Activities included debates, parades, quiz competitions, football and basketball games, but it was the Biggest Ever Lobby event which drew the most publicity.

Madagascar

The Prime Minister Jacques Sylla and other decision makers attended a ceremony in Belanitra, which was marked by singing and dancing following the presentation of Missing Out Maps and speeches by various Parliamentary Ministers. About 230 students from the Collège d'Antanetibe Antehirdea prepared Missing Out Maps, and visited 98 families in the field, finding that out of 176 children, 48 were not in school. The children then quizzed their representatives for 45 minutes during Action Week. As many as 21 Councillors participated, including the Councillor responsible for education for the whole district.

Photo Below: Schools in the Belanitra area perform a ballet in the Biggest Ever Lobby. *Credit: CAA*



Mali

When President Amadou Toumany Touré learned about the events taking place in Mali during the World's Biggest Ever Lobby he insisted that he wanted to visit a school in person to meet with some of the children who were participating. President Touré visited Sabalibougou Primary School and received messages from out-of-school children in attendance at the event. In Bamako, four organisations working with out-of-school children mobilised over 500 young people, of which 400 descended on the National Assembly to deliver their messages to Members of Parliament.

The following day, there were two televised debates by CSOs and ministry officials on EFA and on the issue of out-of-school children. In Gao, schools worked on Missing Out Maps, and a march, of 500 students and excluded children, together was received by political and community leaders and officials. During this meeting the Vice President of the Children's Parliament presented the Governor of the Region with the children's requests for a good quality education for all.

Malawi

As orphans presented their cases on radio and TV phone-ins and presentations, listeners phoned in to sponsor and support them through school. Meanwhile, 3,500 children presented Missing Out Maps to their traditional leaders and requested compulsory education, stronger legislation to prevent child and domestic labour, and stiffer punishment for abuse against girls. In response, the traditional leaders pledged to mobilize communities to ensure that children return to school. In a country where there is only 30 percent completion rate, some leaders were seen as role models on how they were able to rally their communities to ensure that children go back to school.

Radio and TV lobbying was effective at raising awareness. Many listeners reacted compassionately. When one girl spoke about the problems that she faces in gaining education, including a long walk to school and her family's fear of losing their land, the Ministry of Education offered her a place at boarding school. They promised to follow up on her basic needs and help her family with some of their challenges. Others have pledged individual donations to children to help them return to school.

While individual assistance cannot improve education as a whole, it shows that children's lobbying can have a real impact. Education Ministers faced a barrage of questions from children at the press conference, who asked what the government is aiming to do to improve the quality of infrastructure, the availability of learning and teaching materials, and to address sexual harassment towards girls and the low level of teachers' salaries. The Director of Planning in the Ministry, speaking on behalf of the Ministry of Education, said that although the government was committed to ensuring as many children as possible attended school, "This work cannot be realized by government alone. All stakeholders need to take part." Civil society representatives agreed to take the message to all of the provinces in an attempt to increase awareness of the issue.

Mauritania

"We ask you to make more effort to ensure that all children can go to school and receive a quality education." This was the central message in 3,267 letters that were collected to go to the President Maaouiya Ould Taya. The local GCE coalitions is currently awaiting a response to the package of letters which were sent with a collective statement. Because of parliamentary holidays, it has been difficult for the children to meet in the National Assembly. However, the President of the Assembly hopes that there will be room for an appropriate reaction during the next sitting of the assembly.

Morocco

Approximately 15,000 children walked to Ould Cherif School and were accompanied by Mr Abdelatif Benazzi, the former captain of the French Rugby team, and the Minister for Literacy and Non-formal Education, Ms Najima Rhozali. The out-of-school children led the march, shouting, "We want to go to school!" Other children held banners proclaiming, "We all have a right to education, let them in."

Photo Girls and boys walk to school in Oujda. *Credit: UNESCO*



Mozambique

The Prime Minister, who is also the Minister of Finance, met 60 children in Maputo City. They talked about the need to finance more schools and provide teacher training so that more children can go to school. Approximately 100 children visited the parliament where they discussed Education for All with the President of Parliament, 75 of 250 MPs and 300 additional children who form the Youth Parliament.

Activities had a great impact in the provinces, with eight in total taking part. Letters were sent to the presidents of the municipalities, alerting them to the number of children missing out on education in their area. With this information in hand, the leaders met the children and received their messages and questions. In Maputo Province, more than 100 children from schools in Matola met the President of the Matola municipality and its council members. Because of the positive response from local officials, the GCE coalition is confident that real changes will occur.

In Gaza province, there were parades in various areas. In Zambezia a mapping exercise raised awareness about those children missing out on education, and was supplemented by a brochure and video about Action Week. Some provinces held later events including Inhambane province where lobbying took place on International Children's Day. The coalition has noticed that the events have become bigger year after year, and believe that Action Week is now "part of the citizens' life".

Namibia

The Minister of Higher Education, Training and Employment Creation launched Global Action Week, dedicated to "equitable access to quality education". The initial event was in Tsumkwe, a region home to a large majority of marginalized communities. One TV talk show, "Talk of the Nation", focussed on students' perception of quality education, especially in the Khomas region; another, featuring two teachers unions and various ministries involved with education, looked at the role of teachers in providing quality education.

"We the female parliamentarians are really concerned about the state of children, especially female children. We think children have a right to education and we are committed to making this right respected in Cameroon."

Woman MP following a lively Q&A session with 125 children, Town Councillors, Mayors and local MPs in Big Mankon Bamenda, Cameroon



Nigeria

Several states are planning summits to discuss education issues following a successful Action Week in which children sat in the legislative seats of 33 out of the 36 regional assemblies, and held interactive sessions with members. Nigerian policy makers had to be on their toes as they responded to sharp observations from children. "Politicians need to spend more money on programmes for out-of-school children and less on the expensive cars they drive," said a 13-year-old girl Amira at a national lobby. There are an estimated 7 million children who are out of school in Nigeria, a cause for great concern for individuals striving to ensure quality basic education for all Nigerian children.

The most dramatic event in the week's activities was the national lobby: 50 children from different schools including disabled, nomadic, and rural schools, 50 out-of-school children and 20 parents of out-of-school children converged to address politicians. The group formed a panel and visited the National Assembly for a roundtable discussion with legislators and policy makers at the national level. The children themselves took the lead, advocating for the education rights of their counterparts who are out-of-school.

Tobi, just 6 years old, said, "It makes me very sad to see children of my age selling water on the street corners when I am being driven to school. Does this mean that that they are not important and does the government not care about them?" Ten-year-old Ali queried, "I do not go to school. The nearest school to my village is four kilometres away and I would have to cross a major highway. My mother cannot accompany me because she is busy tending to the younger ones. Why is there no school near my village?"

The aim of the children's questions was to seek actionable answers from politicians. Since the lobby, the Anambra State House assembly has passed the Child's Rights Bill, similar to the Child's Right Act at the federal level, which will stop the abuse of children. The coalition will continue to apply pressure and work with the government to ensure that other pledges are not forgotten.

Photos Very top: Children are eager to ask their MPs questions in "MPs back to school day". Top left: Children listen to the politicians who are back at school for the day. Top right: A politician answers children's questions. Bottom right: Sarah tells politicians how her parents can not afford to send her to school. Bottom left: Two girls attending the World's Biggest Ever Lobby at the National Assembly. Credit: ActionAid International Nigeria.





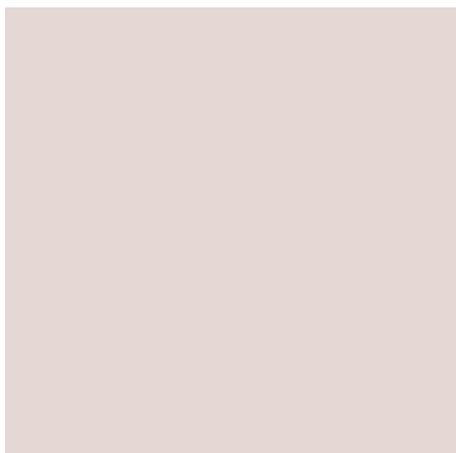
Niger

The main mission of campaign organisers was to gather exactly 1,063,731 messages for the President Mamadou Tandja, equivalent to the number of people who voted for him during the last presidential election. The organizers have surpassed their initial goal: as of 30 May 2004, 1,103,014 signatures have been collected.

The children's representatives personally handed the messages to the Prime Minister Hama Amadou, who was standing in for the President of the Republic, during a special ceremony in the presence of members of civil society, decision makers from embassies in Niger and members of the GCE.

The messages that continue to come through show that many people want the President to increase his efforts to support education. About 500 children were admitted to the chamber of the National Assembly in the presence of the Assembly's Vice President, around 20 deputies and the Minister for Education and Literacy, while 10,000 others remained outside, exerting pressure in favour of children excluded from the education system in Niger.

Photos Left: A community listens to a politician in the village. Below: Some of the one thousand children in Niger's World's Biggest Ever Lobby. *Credit: ROSEN*



“It makes me very sad to see children of my age selling water on the street corners when I am being driven to school. Does this mean that that they are not important and does the government not care about them?”

Six year old Tobi, Nigeria

Senegal

Missing Out Maps depicted various areas and in many more children lobbied their local authorities. The Biggest Ever Lobby took place in the National Assembly, with a thousand children addressing the President of the Republic Abdoulaye Wade. Children also participated via a live video link with a school in Spain.

Photo Children created Missing Out Maps of the Diosong area. *Credit: La Coalition nationale Ept du Sénégal*



Seychelles

Action Week was highlighted by the following: a talk in the National Assembly by the Honourable Ralph Agripine, a representative of the Forum of African Parliamentarians for Education; a nationally broadcast TV programme entitled, “Out-of-School Youth Opportunities and Challenges”; and a number of seminars about access to education.

South Africa

Close to 600 young people participated in a youth assembly in the Johannesburg Municipal Councillors Chambers. They were brought together to discuss a range of issues from HIV/AIDS to free, quality public education. As a consequence, a GCE-SA youth forum was formed to mobilize support for youth issues.

The children’s debate led to a roundtable discussion on missing out children, attended by civil society decision makers. The group heard how 3.3 million children in South Africa are forced to work and cannot attend school. The success of the discussions was manifested when the South African Human Rights Commission resolved to fight for a declaration for free quality

education. They also agreed to a campaign to increase the budgetary allocation for education; to call for the introduction of a state transport system to demand that those in remote areas have access to school; the just treatment of foreign nationals, linked to the “Roll Back Xenophobia campaign”; and to call for the recognition of youth learning centres for those children who are out of school. In addition children have themselves been lobbying by sending postcards to President Thabo Mbeki, asking him to “Please do more to give every child a chance to go to school to get a quality education.”

Photos Left: Dancing in the Youth Assembly. Below: Participants of the national lobby. *Credit: SANGOCO*

Sierra Leone

The colourful Biggest Ever Lobby in Sierra Leone, attended by nearly all MPs, was supplemented by three radio shows dedicated to the issue of children missing out on education. In addition, many politicians throughout the country returned to their schools to see first-hand the status of education in their constituencies.



“Politicians need to spend more money on programmes for out-of-school children and less on the expensive cars they drive.”

Thirteen-year-old Amira, Nigeria

Sudan

Due largely to Sudan's ongoing civil war, schools and clinics are few and far between. An estimated 3 million children are out-of-school. According to Missing Out Maps produced by children in refugee camps at Kassala, White Nile, and South Kordofan, poverty, insurmountable distances to schools, lack of awareness and traditions are reasons why so many do not have access to education. Approximately 30 children presented their messages in front of an audience of 600 people, including the Minister of Education and the President's representative, the Minister of Culture.

Nearly 800 children took part in the opening day festivities. Activities included theatre, poem recitations and songs illustrating the obstacles children face in going to school.

Potential donors were invited to a roundtable with 80 participants to talk about the future of education aid. Hopeful outcomes were anticipated from this meeting, which was the first of its kind. All events were publicised on TV and radio.

Several promising outcomes resulted from Action Week. The Ministry of Education has agreed to keep education free. The Federal Minister announced that he would rethink his closure of boarding schools. The girls' education unit promised to undergo a review and pledged to include civil society in monitoring their work. Additionally, Sudan's GCE coalition has been promised greater recognition overall.

Photos Left: A girl holds out a 'Missing Out' poster. Below: Children, teachers and parents marched to the Ministry of Finance demanding that more Sudanese oil be used to help fund education.

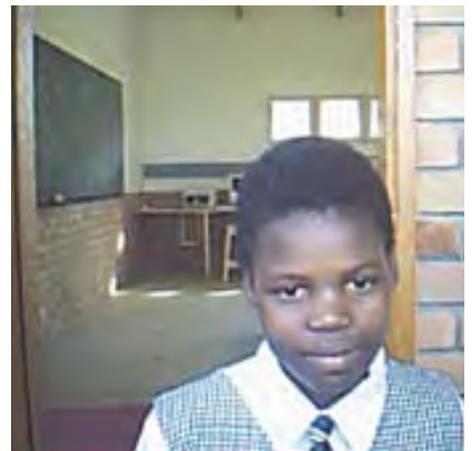
Credit: Oxfam Sudan



Swaziland

The national media were firmly behind Action Week, and covered related events in print and on air. Stakeholders met for a workshop to develop a plan of action for the coming months, and as a result of the lobbying, the government has promised to introduce bursaries to those children who would be forcibly excluded from schools without funding. There would be a flat-rate sum given to schools, 1,500 SZL for secondary students, and 400 SZL for primary students. However, the GCE coalition claims that this may be applied inconsistently, and therefore plans to continue lobbying throughout the year, holding regional meetings in all four provinces and involving children in a lobby later in the year to ensure that words are translated into action.

Photos Top: Bongani Olamini outside his school during Action Week. Below: Betty Shongwe is one of the lobbyists in Action Week. *Credits: SNAT*



Togo

Elie Jouen, the Deputy Secretary-General of Education International, came to Togo to speak at the World's Biggest Ever Lobby during Action Week. About a thousand children lobbied at the Palais de Congrès.

Tanzania

The Director of Basic Education, visiting a school with other politicians, admitted that he had not realized how many children were still missing an education, even after the government abolished fees three years ago. He claimed that colleagues shielded him, being too afraid to talk about the issues. "Whenever they talk to me they say things are okay, but I've learned they are not."

He was struck by one particular case: a girl who had not been to school for three consecutive years. The first time she tried to enrol she was 11, but she was told that she was too old enrol and that she had to wait for the construction of a classroom where there would be a special programme for children her age. She has met with the same response on subsequent attempts, and now, as both her parents are dead, there is little support from her family. The Director promised to reactivate the subject of children missing an education with his parliamentary colleagues.

Children also wrote essays for a competition, entitled "Peers who are Missing Their Education". The prize was \$100 and a set of books. The essays are presently being used for the GCE coalition TEN/MET's advocacy activities, in particular for a position paper, which is to be used as a lobbying tool later in the year.

Many children wrote letters to the President Benjamin Mkapa, outlining that although education is essentially free in Tanzania, approximately 3.5 million children do not attend school, partly due to economic reasons, as textbook and uniform costs often make attendance prohibitive. There are also social and cultural factors. For example, girls are often required to stay at home, either to look after younger siblings, or for marriage. In Tanzania, girls are known to marry as early as age of eleven. In addition, HIV orphans suffer stigma and many children find it difficult to find a permanent place for schooling. As a follow up, the GCE coalition is taking stock of the number of disabled children not attending school. About 13 areas have been targeted for the next year, and the report will go to the district and national leaders for planning purposes.

Uganda

After a week of lobbying, of politicians visiting schools, and of memorandums and music, district leaders made pledges to help children missing an education, either because education is of poor quality, or because they are excluded. The majority of districts agreed to mobilize for more Non-formal Education Schools (NFE). Nakasongola district pledged to try to put an end to early marriages, which pull girls away from education. The district leadership in Teso and Kabaremaido similarly promised to register all marriages to curb the practice, and church and cultural leaders have promised to sensitize the public on the importance of girls' education.

In Masindi, Wakiso, Mpigi and Masaka districts, officers committed themselves to passing a bylaw compelling every parent to send their children to school, instead of keeping them at home to work, often to fish. The events raised a great deal of awareness, and each of the 20 districts focused on a different education issue. For example, in Mbarara and Bushenyi, the theme was HIV/AIDS, and activities and workshops looked at the children affected and infected, and the disease's impact on education.



In Gulu district, the focus was on the impact of war and resettlement on education. The GCE coalition spent a week in a refugee camp, training leaders on an initiative intended to empower girls to take up the challenge of advocating for their education, with boys as allies and adults as guidance. Arura district concentrated on disabled children, who marched and lobbied to show their need for inclusion, both to the government and to parents, and then presented a memorandum for their local MP to take to parliament. In Kampala, a press conference, a public debate, radio and TV shows, art and music displays helped attract nationwide attention.

Each of the events drew large numbers to the schools – politicians, as well as district, sub-county and cultural leaders returned to the classroom. District leaders used the occasion to mobilise their communities to support education, while communities emphasised the plight of children missing out on education to their leaders.

Photos Left: Professor Senteza Kajubi, the Vice Chancellor of Nkumba, giving his keynote address to the participants of the public dialogue during Action Week. Right: A community in Nakasongola taking part in the mapping exercise. Credit: FENU





Zambia

President Mr Levy P. Mwanawasa, S.C. stated, "The role of education in a nation's development process cannot be over emphasised." However, there are still discrepancies in the educational status of Zambian children. Approximately 45 percent of Zambia's population is illiterate, and many children do not attend school, even though school is free.

To bring attention to this problem, children converged to form a state parliament. About 250 children, accompanied by rousing music from the military band, assembled at the Ministry of Education headquarters to form part of the Biggest Ever Lobby. Members of Parliament, including President Mr. Levy P. Mwanawasa, S.C. spoke, listened to poems from the Munali Girls' High

School, songs from Kabulonga High School and letters of support from numerous children. A highlight was a poignant presentation from a child who is missing out on education. The boy, John Phiri, spoke about being a missing out child as a result of losing both his parents, but was now back in school through the community schools initiative where children do not wear uniforms, and are put in an appropriate education level.

Although Mr Mwanawasa said he would not make secondary education free, he pledged to consider the bill written at the children's parliament, which asked the government to formulate a policy to provide free education to orphans and vulnerable children and those with special needs.

The GCE chairperson later received a phone call from the President, who personally pledged educational sponsorship for John Phiri, especially for his tertiary education.

An exhibition of children's artworks was arranged at the Manda Hill shopping complex. Children had drawn images about others missing education. Girls' art focused on forced prostitution and incest, with fathers portrayed as the perpetrators. Girls also took photos of peers who are caregivers and are missing out on school. Boys drew about teenage pregnancy and forced marriage, substance abuse, discrimination and stigmatization from having parents with HIV/AIDS.

Photos Top and below right: This school lacks materials so many children miss out on going to school. *Credit: ZNUT* Below left: Boys at the national lobby call for Education for All. *Credit: ZANEC*



Zimbabwe

The Minister of Education, Sport and Culture, Mr A.S. Chigwere, spoke at the National Rural Lobby, attended by 500 students and activists in Mashonaland East. An urban lobby in Harare included music, dancing and speeches, with over 1,200 stakeholders present. Close to 60,000 students, teachers and stakeholders took part in Action Week in the country's 71 states.

Students from resettlement farm schools, who are taught in old tobacco barns, lamented the lack of learning materials, and spoke about having to drop out of school to work or to care for sick parents. Some had to leave school because they could not pay the fees. The Minister promised to communicate the stories to the head of state and awarded four very needy

students with bursaries. It is hoped that this will not merely be appeasement, but the first step in changing education policy.

The GCE coalition has agreed that activities supporting EFA should be carried out throughout the year and stories and pictures from the event are being used for publications for advocacy. Other groups will also work towards the goal. Members of Women of Zimbabwe Arise discussed how to solve the education debate in community meetings and decided to march for education in Bulawayo and Harare on African Liberation Day.

Photo Women show the love sign as they prepare to march for education. *Credit: WOZA/Zimbabwe*



Americas

A plethora of campaign events pushed politicians into action in the Americas. One city in Bolivia announced that it would increase the education budget to 50 percent of municipal spending. In Brazil children completed a survey of their 'Missing Out' peers, and planned to analyse answers to 70,000 questionnaires. In El Salvador, the Action Week mobilized popular opposition to a threatened \$20 million cut in the education budget, as President Antonio Saca publicly signed a declaration committing his government to the Dakar goals. In Ecuador, the Big Lobby helped campaigners to secure a special budget allocation to ensure that all children will complete at least the first year of primary education. The Minister of Education in the Dominican Republic agreed to abolish the system of parents paying teachers' salaries. In the US, Senator Hillary Clinton announced a legislative initiative to increase aid to education to US \$2.5 billion by 2009. ■

Children taking part in the national lobby
in the congress of Peru. *Credit: CESIP*



“We are responsible for proposing alternatives that can change both education and our country's direction.”

Ivon Paredes, 14, Ecuador

Argentina

The GCE Action Week saw four politicians receive 103 students at the Institute of Education for a question and answer session. In a seminar, children drew attention to those who are not able to attend school because there is no transport to cover the long distance, and because many must work on the streets. Children also wrote letters to the President Carlos Menem requesting that he “please help poor people”. One school in Buenos Aires enclosed a transcript of a meeting with political leaders and 163 students, of whom 123 are deaf. They asked the President to share in their wishes “to achieve with the help of everybody, a better future”.

Photo Children meet four politicians in the Institute of Education.
Credit: CTERA



Anguilla

Over 300 people joined the Action Week, many receiving and submitting posters, others meeting their MPs.

Bolivia

Around 400,000 school-aged children have dropped out of school, and around 2 million young people are illiterate, the majority of whom are native and poor women. In Potosi, 450 children wrote letters addressed to education authorities and the President Carlos Mesa, bringing attention to scores of children who work in mines. In La Paz, Oruro, El Alto, Potosí and Santa Cruz, approximately 1,500 children attended their local events.

Children participated in 25 workshops and produced an analysis of the present state of alternative education. They also came up with a number of solutions that would allow the GCE coalition to petition the government in the future. They said that education needed to be more flexible and appropriate to their needs, and should comprise of technical training opportunities, which would enable them to improve their quality of life. A total of 700 letters written to the President were handed to policy makers during a closing forum in the University Assembly Hall, attended by council authorities, the town mayor, and representatives of the President and the Minister of Education. The mayor of El Alto city promised to increase its education budget until it reached 50 percent of the total municipal budget. In other cities, politicians pledged to make education reform a priority.

Brazil

Thousands of students, parents, teachers, and members of associations and community groups throughout Brazil took to the streets to research why children and adults are not attending school. A total of 70,000 questionnaires were distributed throughout the country. The results of the questionnaires in addition to 13,000 online responses will be studied by a number of institutions involved in the campaign.

In just 36 hours, 12,000 e-cards were sent to the President, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, and MPs, asking for a better quality state education. Students from several schools also wrote letters and drew pictures about "The World of School", which will be sent to the MPs soon. State committees of the GCE Coalition were involved in local actions during Global Action Week.

At the same time, representatives from the Coalition's steering committee participated in lobbying in Brasilia, the federal capital, for compliance with public education

funding rules. The Coalition has filed a formal complaint against the government for failing to comply with an important education funding law: the Fundef law (Fund for Fundamental Education's Sustainability and Development and Teaching Enhancement). This law was intended to help develop primary and secondary education and support education professionals. The law was ratified eight years ago through the efforts of 20 networks and organizations nationwide. During Action Week a special session was held at the Chamber of Deputies. A total of 100 children from several states were present, many of them from the Movement of Landless Rural Workers.

Photos Top left: Students and teachers took to the streets to defend the right to education. Top right: Students and educators during the Action Week 2004. Bottom: In the state of Minas Gerais, children's drawings were exhibited in public squares in Action Week 2004. *Credit: Nat. Camp. For the Right for Educ.*



Canada

A few schools were involved in the GCE Action Week this year, and the coalition is preparing for extensive participation in 2005.





Chile

The Action Week in Chile was a grand event: 500 children met with the Ministers of Education, Labour & Social Security, and Planning & Development. They also met with the Minister Secretary General of the Presidency, Mr Francisco Huenchumilla, and the Minister of Government, Mr Francisco Vidal, in the government palace. In the house of deputies in Valparaiso, other children met with four commissions and were received

by the President of Deputies, Mr Pablo Lorenzini and the Vice President, Mr Manuel Antonio Leal.

About 16,000 children sent postcards and messages to the President Ricardo Lagos, and 4,000 met with their local authorities in schools.

Photos Top and left: Children display their posters and question politicians in the National Congress. *Credit: Global March*

Colombia

The National Congress held a special session on the right to education, coordinated by Senator María Isabel Mejía. The Minister of Education, who was also present, was urged to enforce free compulsory and universal education. He was also urged to take note of other factors influencing access to education, such as child nutrition, transportation infrastructure, uniforms, and learning materials.

During the week simultaneous activities took place in the town hall and district assemblies in Ibagué, Neiva, Medellín and Barrancabermeja. The President of the Republic Álvaro Uribe Velaz, the Minister and Secretaries of Education received hundreds of cards from children in Cali, Villavicencio, Medellín, Barranquilla and Neiva. A young girl from Medellín wrote:

"Dear President, a very good day to you. My name is Yazmín Torres Echavarría. I am 14 years old and I live in the La Cruz neighbourhood and I study in the 9th grade at Bello Oriente School. The only thing I ask of you is that you please give more help to each child and youth to receive a good quality education in a good school."

Reports suggest that Action Week has been successful, as the Missing Out Maps have given a basis for understanding why children are not attending schools, and provided the necessary information to help activists interact further with the government.

Photo A student from Liceo Femenino school is interviewed outside the Biggest Ever Lobby by a journalist from one of the most powerful national radio and TV channels. *Credit: REPEM*



Costa Rica

Hundreds of working children from marginalized populations and those attending alternative education systems were involved in workshops and lively discussions about education. They also prepared reports on local education conditions, and created posters with personal messages.

Children also participated in a national lobby held at Congress where they also met with decision makers, including deputies of the Legislative Assembly of the Republic of Costa Rica, top officials of the Ministry of Public Education and representatives of teachers unions and citizen advocates.

Photos Children creating a Missing Out Map of their area. *Credit: DNI Costa Rica*



“Remember that we are poor children but we have the right to as good, or better, an education as those children who have parents with more resources than ours.”

Claribel Sanchez Romero, Dominican Republic

Dominican Republic

The Minister of Education promised that the government would no longer force families to pay for teachers' salaries. This was one of many pledges made by politicians after they were visited by child representatives from a range of backgrounds. One child, Claribel Sanchez Romero, said, “Remember that we are poor children but we have the right to as good, or better, an education as those children who have parents with more possibilities than ours.”

The President of the National Assembly promised the child lobbyists that government money would henceforth be used for books and pens, instead of weapons. Child journalists conducted interviews with a variety of key actors during their visit to the Senate, recording the visit, the promises made and the politicians' intentions, in order to broadcast the child lobbyists' achievements nationally.

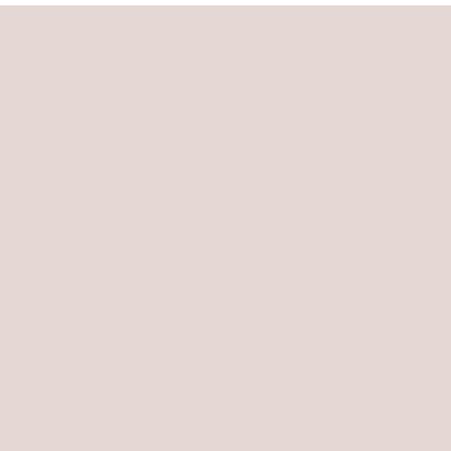
In addition, the GCE coalition led a model class for teachers and ministry technical staff, training

participants to integrate educational debates into their classroom. As a result, over 100 school representatives committed to work with children to raise awareness and to discuss the subject with their parents and others responsible for children's education. A total of 8,000 children across the country wrote letters to the President Rafael Hipolito Mejia Dominquez. Students from the Santo University wrote:

“Why do so many young people, children who work and children who are illiterate, not have the opportunity for education? You have the obligation to work so that each child has an education that is of quality and is enjoyable.”

Many children made Missing Out Maps, which were shared with adults and politicians.

Photos Top: Children write letters to the President. Left: Lobby event at the National Assembly. Right: A child journalist interviews a politician at the Biggest Ever Lobby and records the pledges for national TV. *Credit: Plan*



Child's question to Haitian MP

Ecuador

“We came to tell government that education is neglected,” said Yadira Veloz, the 10-year-old president of the Students’ Board in Riobamba. Yadira was one of 80 children attending the National Congress during Action Week, where politicians were presented with an agenda that had been drawn up by 5,000 children around the country. “The time has come to ask for qualified teachers to teach boys and girls. [But] that’s not all,” she added. “We need to have a budget for infrastructure. We need a division between Anda Aguirra School and ours, as bigger children steal our food.”

Another group went to the Ministry of Education and Culture to meet the Vice Minister, Beatriz Caicedo and the Ministry of Finance, Mauricio Pozo. A youth representative, Nathaly Yepez, said to them, “We know that the country is undergoing a crisis. That can get worse if the Ministry does not act to allocate 30 percent of the budget to education.” At the moment, the government only allocates 12 percent. Another student, Dario Terán, pointed out, “We’ll support the fight for the approval of the Law on

Teachers’ Qualifications. We want not only more teachers, we want them better. This 12 percent provided by the government is not enough. We want you to understand that is insufficient.”

“We are responsible for proposing alternatives that can change both education and our country’s direction. It’s not a dream: if everybody cooperates, we’ll make it possible. We’ll fight to achieve a 30 percent budgetary allocation. The government knows that can be possible,” said Ivon Paredes, a youth delegate.

The Action Week helped to persuade the Ministry of Education to allocate a special budget to ensure that 100% of children enroll in Year 1 of primary school from 2005. The initiative will benefit around 100,000 girls and boys and is welcomed by civil society as the first step towards universalising 10 years of quality basic education for all Ecuadorians.

Photos Bottom left: Mobilisation of schools in Quito during Action Week. Below: Meeting between youth delegates and the representative from the Ministry of education in Quito. *Credit: CSLE*



El Salvador

The President, Mr Antonio Saca, signed a commitment protocol of Dakar’s goals when he met a commission of four girls and boys who presented him with 16,623 letters written by children from around the country. The letters demanded greater action to provide for EFA and expressed their surprise at the lack of political representation in the Action Week events.

More than 24,000 people were involved in the Action Week, with about 1,000 participants in the Big Lobby and close to 5,000 in the Back to School event, in which decision makers were presented with 1,789 Missing Out Maps.

Politicians’ visits left positive results as they made a public commitment to the EFA goals, which have been recorded in the press and officers have undertaken to improve the basic facilities within schools. Earlier in the year, the government had planned to reduce the education budget by \$20 million, but by the end of Action Week, officials admitted that there were severe deficiencies in the current education budget system and saw it necessary to assign more money. The GCE coalition will work to ensure that these politicians will realize their pledges.

Photo Deputy Arnoldo Aleman with children from the Lotificacion San Antonio School Centre in Zacatecoluca, El Salvador. *Credit: CIDEP*



Guatemala

About 900 children from both rural and urban areas came to the national legislature to meet with the Education Commission of the Congress. The children were then received at the Palace of Culture by the Vice Minister of Education and the representative of the Secretary of Social Communication of the Presidency. The children handed over their 6,000 messages and Missing Out Maps, which were created in their communities during workshops involving over 10,000 children, parents and teachers in 13 of the countries 22 provinces. These workshops are continuing, and Missing Out Maps will continue to be sent to the President Oscar Berger.

Photos Right: A child addresses the National Congress.
Below: About 900 children marched in the Biggest Ever Lobby.
Credit: PRODESSA



Haiti

Violence and strife did not stop NGOs and teachers' unions from organising the first-ever Action Week in Haiti this year. In a country where 500,000 children miss out on education, the World's Biggest Lobby captured the interest and imagination of many, including representatives from the four main political parties who met with 300 in-school and out-of-school children. The MPs answered questions such as, "Why cannot all children attend school?" and "Why do politicians always make promises and yet never keep them?"

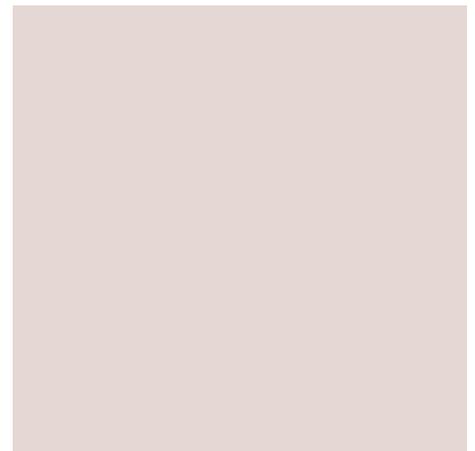
Thousands of school children learned about the right to education and many were prompted to write letters to the President Rene Preval demanding a better education for the country as a whole, and better access to education for those who are excluded. Hundreds of excluded children met a Council of Sages, a non-governmental group, to discuss their options for learning. Awareness-raising sessions also occurred in regional parts of the country like Jacmel and St Marc. A march was held a week later so that children could take their letters to the National Palace.

Honduras

'A town without education is a town without soul' read a banner in a rural area of Honduras. A grand total of 20,000 messages from children were presented to the Minister of Education, Carlos Avila, by 300 child representatives at a special event in the National Theatre. The children also read a letter, on behalf of young people concerned about children who are not in school, including labourers, street children, those affected or infected with

HIV/AIDS, and youth in rural areas. The Minister was so impressed by their eloquence that he encouraged them to deliver the messages to the President of the National Congress. The congressmen and congresswomen applauded the children's contributions.

Photos Below left: The Minister of Education poses with children outside the National Assembly. Below right: The Minister of Education is the first to place his hand print in solidarity with children missing an education. *Credit: EDURED*



Yadira Veloz, 10, Ecuador



Mexico

Approximately 2,500 girls and boys took part in lobbies at the legislative assemblies, including 200 in Mexico State, and 500 in Puebla State, where Governor Melquiades Morales Flores participated along with the Secretaries of Health and Education. In Coahuila State, the Governor and the First Lady went back to school during an event in which several state schools took part to discuss the GCE. The Senate approved a preliminary resolution by the Committee on Education & Culture to increase the budget allocated to education. Additionally, thousands of children from some 200 schools signed or left fingerprints on petitions and sent letters to the President Vicente Fox Quezada.

Photos Children are interviewed by the press at the Biggest Ever Lobby. *Credit: Teté Zúñiga from Morada Infants School in Guadalajara*



Nicaragua

A grand total of 50,000 school children wrote to the President Enrique Bolamos during Global Action Week and 250 children lobbied the Executive and Education Committees of the National Legislature Assembly on the 20th of April.

In addition, children visited 32 town councils and 12 prominent Nicaraguan politicians visited schools during the week, including the Vice-President of the Republic. Prestigious intellectuals Sergio Ramírez Mercado, Ernesto Cardenal, Carlos Tunnermann B., Juan B. Arrien, Alejandro Serrano C., and Miguel De Castilla Urbina supported Global Action Week in press communiqués.

Photo Children previously working on coffee plantations in the Jinotega reintegrated into the formal school system prepare letters to the President. *Credit: Care*



“What you have always declared is that we, boys and girls, are Peru's future. You said it with a lot of enthusiasm, but as soon as you got elected, you forgot about your words. We are not the future, we are the present.”

Dante Fernández Aguilar, Peru

Panama

Over 400 children representatives from all provinces in Panama took part in the Biggest Ever Lobby with the President of the National Assembly. In addition, a delegation of 30 girls and 30 boys talked to the presidential candidates about the obstacles which prevent poor, indigenous or working children from accessing school. They demanded that the candidates ensure that the provision of a quality education be made a government priority, should they be elected. Many children took part in making an interactive Missing Out Map of Panama, which was displayed in the National Assembly.

Photos Some of the 400 children in the World's Biggest Lobby in Parliament. *Credit: IDEMI*



Paraguay

Children met at the National Congress to put forward their peers' rights to schooling, presenting Missing Out Maps researched from seven neighbourhoods in Asuncion. Schools sent 50 messages to the President Dr Nicanor Duarte Frutos. Meanwhile, the President of the Congress, Carlos Mateo Balmelli, the Minister of Education and Culture and the Minister of Youth received the children. The children, struck by the poverty they saw in the neighbourhoods where they conducted their research, made emotional pleas to government officials. “We could not believe that people, who are human like ourselves, with the same rights as us, could live in the middle of such rubbish, with nothing to eat. Children and young people are without a future because they cannot access education.”

The lack of quality education is seen as one of the main problems in the San Felipe Barrio. This is augmented by the fact that many neighbourhood schools do not admit children with special needs. Moreover, mothers do not send their children to school for a number of reasons. The violence in the barrio is rampant, and consequently prevents children from attending school safely. Additionally, 70 percent of all children in the barrio supplement their family's income by working on the streets as vendors or rubbish collectors. Many also fish or work as household cleaners.

Photos Below left: Children interview residents to gauge how many children are excluded from schools. Below right: Children lobby the President of Paraguay, Dr. Nicanor Duarte Frutos, outside the National Congress. *Credit: Colegio Iberoamericano*



Peru

At a very emotional national lobby with 250 children from around Peru, a young girl from Cajamarca brought tears to the eyes of Ministers and policy makers, including the President of Congress and the Minister of Education, when she spoke about children in rural areas who are excluded from school systems. It was the first time in Peru's history that the Congress Executive Board had authorised using the meeting premises for non-Parliament activities.

"In the countryside where I live, there is lack of water and electricity," said one child representative, Rubí Carina León, from Cajamarca. "We walk for two hours to get a bucket of water, from a well where animals use to drink... At school, there aren't good libraries... there aren't dictionaries... in the country, there are clever children, but they cannot learn because of their lack of resources...

they don't have notebooks, they have nothing."

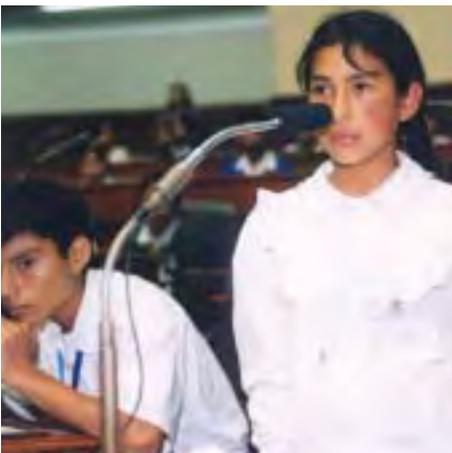
Another young boy, Nilson Villegas Zeta, proposed six tasks for the government to accomplish, among them, the allocation of more money for education, the establishment of public lunchrooms serving traditional food, the participation of private companies, and the improvement of electricity and transportation to help education access.

Child representatives spoke about a range of issues, including the need for educators who can teach in local languages as well as the need to help girls gain access to education. Dante Fernández Aguilar spoke about child labour. "Boys and girls are dropping school to work in the cities, cleaning shoes and selling sweets. What you have always declared is that we, boys and girls, are Peru's future. You said it with a lot of enthusiasm, but as

soon as you got elected, you forgot about your words. We are not the future, we are the present."

Award-winning singer and child ambassador, Susana Baca headlined the event and spoke out in support of Education for All. The Minister of Health, Pilar Mazzetti, closed the day. "I can assure you that in the three Ministries (Health, Education and Women and Social Development) we are going to take with great care your proposals to get them integrated into the policies of each sector."

Photos Top Left: Politicians in the Congress applaud the children's speeches. Bottom left: A young girl evokes strong emotions as she describes the plight of her peers missing an education. Below: Susan Baca draws extra media attention to the Biggest Ever Lobby at the Congress. Below centre: Young girls and boys who are excluded from school demand their rights. Below right: Girls hold banners in Congress. *Credit: CESIP*



“Why is the US not doing its duty? We are the wealthiest country, yet we care close to the bottom in helping poor countries.”

Maya and Hanna, 13, interrogating Senators on Capitol Hill, USA

United States

In response to calls from children and advocates that the US needs to provide more aid for education in developing countries, New York Senator and former First Lady Hillary Clinton announced an initiative to increase US aid for education to \$2.5 billion by 2009. In a high-profile policy address on education, she called on other legislators to help make EFA reality. When asked whether education for US children should take priority over helping children in other countries, Clinton responded that it was possible for a big country like the United States to do both.

“Supporting Education for All is not just the right thing to do, it’s the smart thing to do,” she told the audience in Washington, DC. Senator Clinton and Republican Senator Arlen Specter hosted a reception for children, NGOs and

Congressional staff at the Capitol. A delegation of children ages 8-18 prepared questions for the Senators to address. Maya and Hanna, both 13 years old, asked, “Why is the US not doing its duty? We are the wealthiest country, yet are close to the bottom in helping poor countries.”

Teenage activists Maura Welch and Veronica Lopez spoke about children they had met in developing countries who had been denied their right to education. They met individually with key members of Congress to emphasize the importance of education for all children.

Photos Top: Hillary Clinton gives a presentation to children at Global Action Week in Washington, DC. Below: The former First Lady with a group of children lobbying for Global Action Week.
Credit: Council on Foreign Affairs

Trinidad and Tobago

The Minister of Education opened the week by addressing the nation on the value of Education for All. Other events took place in the media, with Tobago Channel 5 hosting a number of schools, teachers and students to talk about EFA. Students also composed essays, poems, and calypso and rapso songs to express their desire for education. Their work was displayed by the National Library and the Information System Authority.



Uruguay

Thousands of children from schools around Uruguay joined in writing a letter to their President Jorge Batlle and composing Missing Out Maps of their areas. Their enthusiasm was rewarded when Mr Batlle replied to their letters. Although he said that he did not have “concrete answers” to their requests, he “understood and shared” the children’s worries about children missing out on education and promised to do what was within his power “to clear the path”.

When children who attend Colegio y Liceo J.F. Kennedy and N°1 de Práctica y la N°112 de Tiempo Completo held a discussion with the commission of Education and Culture, they asked, “Why are there children working in the fields? Why doesn’t the government create more jobs in education?” The President of the Commission Roque Arregui concluded the session by saying that the children’s concerns were real and would be on his agenda.

Photo Children from Lyceo No.1 Eladio Aristimunos in Chuy involved in making a Missing Out Map of the local area.
Credit: REPEM / GEO



Venezuela

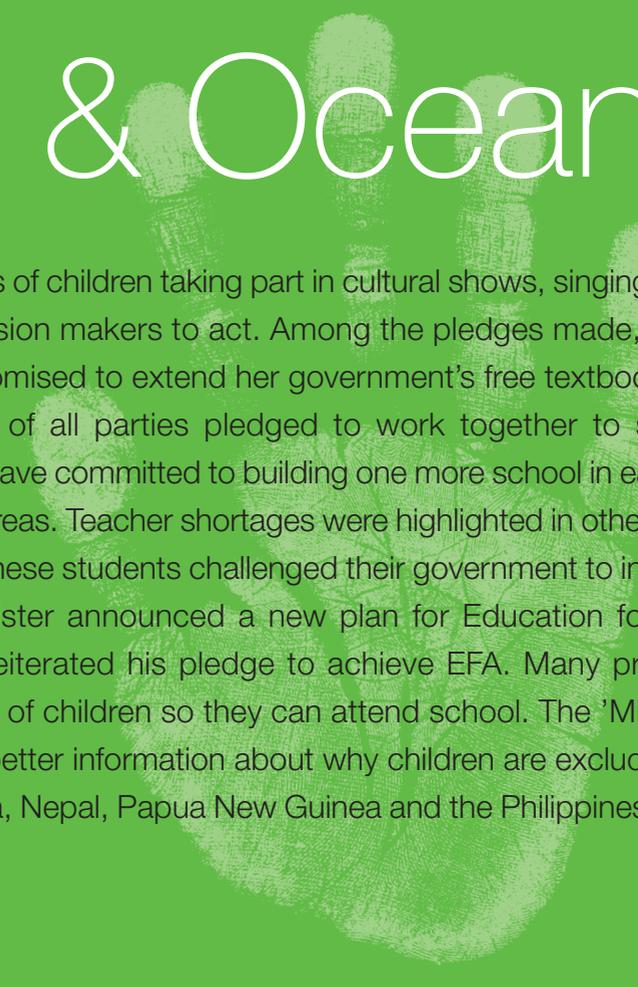
Communication was realised for the first time during the GCE Action Week, when children drew ‘needs maps’, pinpointing the various unfulfilled needs of students, which were presented to their community leaders. In Apure state, after the new Governor, Jesús Aguilarte Gámez, and Major Arévalo listened to the children’s presentation, the Mayor decided to donate a piece of land for building a new school.

The GCE coalition wrote a report summarizing the events, which has been sent to the Ministry of Education for review. It is hoped that the new summary of children’s needs will provide a base for advocacy efforts in the future.

Photos Top: Two girls describe their Missing Out Map. Below: The group at the Biggest Ever Lobby at the university. *Credit: Fundación Puertas de Sión y Organizadora de la CME*



Asia & Oceania



A range of events in Asia, with tens of thousands of children taking part in cultural shows, singing, dancing, art displays and human chains, provoked decision makers to act. Among the pledges made, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh Begum Khaleda Zia promised to extend her government's free textbook initiative to non-formal schools, and parliamentarians of all parties pledged to work together to stamp out harassment of girl pupils. In Cambodia officials have committed to building one more school in each district and training more teachers, especially for rural areas. Teacher shortages were highlighted in other countries including Sri Lanka and Solomon Islands. Japanese students challenged their government to increase aid to basic education. Vietnam's Education Minister announced a new plan for Education for All while Pakistan's President Gen Pervez Musharraf reiterated his pledge to achieve EFA. Many provinces in Indonesia will provide bursaries for the poorest of children so they can attend school. The 'Missing Out' mapping process will be scaled up to provide better information about why children are excluded so that policies are targeted more effectively. Cambodia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines have also planned to use the Maps for the same goal. ■

Hand print from Nepal

“I have to collect dresses from others and wear those. When those are torn I cannot go to school for a few days.”

Nazma Begam, 10, Bangladesh

Bangladesh

As a result of an action-packed week in Bangladesh, the PM, Begum Khaleda Zia, has committed to providing free textbooks to all primary schools in the country, and children have been asked to draft a resolution on education that will be ratified by Parliament following their successful lobby efforts with MPs.

Thousands of children and adults festooned with colourful garlands formed a human chain in Dhaka. Other chains, flowering throughout the country, record an involvement of up to 13,000 people. Celebrities, including film actors and national folk singers, were present to sign autographs. At the same time, about 150 children painted a 50-meter long canvas entitled, “Children’s Perception of Education (future & present)”. This was combined with a cultural programme involving over 1,000 children and adults. Songs, dramas, dances, and plays focussed on the theme ‘No One Will Be Missed Out’.

Thousands of messages, written by children around the country, were collected by facilitators. About 30 children had the opportunity to attend the parliamentary session at the invitation of the deputy speaker. Following the event, PM Khaleda Zia assured that more steps would be taken to build government-NGO partnerships for education. She reiterated that the government had taken up a six-year project in which nearly 35,000 teachers would be recruited. Deputy Speaker Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui, who also attended the session, said the government was working toward Education for All. “We will take steps for betterment of students,” he said.

MPs made the commitment to take the resolution drawn up in the session to parliament. Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman promised to work with the private sector to help provide the funds for education while the government plays a fundamental role.

Events also drew attention to the plight of children such as 10-year-old Nazma Begam, who lives in Noapara village of Chor Amanullah in Noakhali. Three years ago her father, Ismail Hossen, died from a snakebite. The responsibility to care for a family of eight has been quite a burden for Nazma’s mother, Hazera Khatun. Nazma doesn’t have proper clothes to go to school and has neither pen nor paper. She says, “I have to collect dresses from others and wear those. When those are torn I cannot go to school for a few days. Most of the time I go to school without having lunch. At noon, when I feel hungry, I cannot concentrate at school anymore.”

As a follow up, the GCE coalition has sent thank you notes and messages to the PM, Ministers and corporate sector partners to capitalize on high spirits that resulted from the discussions. Letters are being collected to send to the PM, and meetings have been arranged to follow up with systematic reporting and to plan the year’s strategy.

Photos Top: Mr Shamiron Dewan, State Minister visits Thali Community School during Action Week. The parents say that children cry to go back to school, but they cannot afford to send them. Below: Students in a rally in southern Bangladesh.

Credit: CEF Bangladesh



“I have cried several times to go to school. I have even fought with my brother because he goes to school while I don't.”

Arti Kumar, 11, India

Cambodia

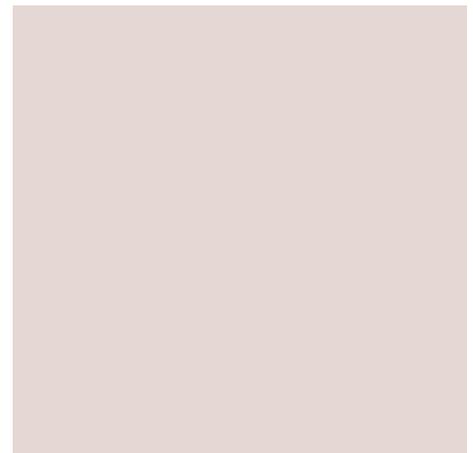
A central achievement of Action Week was that marginalized children and parents were heard by politicians who promised to bring their issues to the government. Participants hope that there will now be more awareness about and less discrimination of disabled and marginalized people, said Thoin Sean Lay from Oxfam GB Cambodia. The week saw 1,020 in-school and out-of-school children preparing Missing Out Maps, and presenting their studies to the village elders. Some representatives made their cases directly to members of the government during “Politicians Go Back to School” events in 21 sites across 10 regions of the country, as well as in the capital Phnom Penh.

A total of 7,500 children marched in various areas of the country, holding banners declaring “Education for All and All for Education”. The children asked for: more money to improve public transportation and roads; more teachers; a scholarship programme; and the teaching of literacy

skills, life skills and vocational training to children in all provinces. Politicians attending the Biggest Ever Lobby included the Undersecretary of State from the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports (MoEYS), the National EFA Coordinator, the Chief of Non-formal Education, Early Childhood and Primary Education of MoEYS, and the provincial and district governors from around the country.

Among other actions, officials agreed to organise an official census of all out-of-school children to assess their economic situation and bring them back to school. They also committed to increasing the number of teachers in remote areas and building at least one primary school per village, one lower secondary per commune and one upper secondary school per district.

Photos Top left: H.E Chey Chab, Undersecretary of State and the Chief of the Department of Non-Formal Education in the Ministry of Education listens to a girl presenting a Missing Out Map in Phnom Penh. Far left: Children making Missing Out Maps. Below: A disabled child reads a message to the Prime Minister Hun Sen. *Credit: Oxfam*





Fiji

The event in Fiji focussed on two visual displays aimed to draw media attention. Children who are missing an education created a poetry, photo and art exhibition. The public held a forum to meet those missing an education. Potential solutions were presented to the Ministry of Education in a panel discussion, which drew attention to the plight of marginalized children. The Minister promised to look into the matter, and the teachers' union has pledged to follow up the events over the course of the year.

India

Nearly 300,000 people participated in a variety of activities across India for the Global Action Week, with over 200,000 letters sent from school students to Ministers. Indian coalitions made the most of the elections to attempt to influence party manifestos, and were rewarded by an announcement from the incoming government which promised to fulfil a longstanding commitment to spend 6 percent of the GDP on education.

Children, drawn from ten different states, expressed their concerns on education issues in a children's consultation and presented their manifesto to the Government of India.

To parallel the children's discussion, an education symposium was held where acclaimed academics and social activists discussed the situation in India.

To engage the press, a human chain was formed in Delhi, similar to that in Bangladesh, of at least 1,500 children

and adults. This was supplemented by colourful banners and street theatre, and around 50,000 joined in other parts of the country. "Symbolic voting", where children cast their votes for education in large ballot boxes, took place in impoverished areas. Out of 807 votes cast in Mangol Puri, only 80 gave positive feedback to the government's record on education. Kailash Satyarthi, the GCE Chair based in India, said, "Throughout the week children made their message loud and clear: they will wait no more, listen no more, nor will they accept more broken promises from the leaders of this country to educate every child. They want their right to education and they want it now!" This was eloquently supported by Arti Kumar, 11, who lives in Delhi. "I have cried several times to go to school. I have even fought with my brother because he goes to school while I don't."

Photo Top: A child posts a "symbolic vote" for education in Delhi. Credit: Global March

Indonesia

Activities took place in Jakarta, Kendari, Kupang, Denpasar, Tasikmalaya, Lampung, Bangkalan Madura, Mataram and Bandung, involving local and national politicians, government officials and children, drawing a total of over 12,000 people. Children met Amien Rais, the Chief of the Indonesian General Assembly, and had the chance to present their questions. Over 7,500 children have articulated their concerns in a letter to the President Megawati Sukarnoputri.

As a result of greater involvement from the media, NGOs and politicians in Action Week, the government has promised to increase the budget for education in the next constitution, and communities have become increasingly aware of problems that their children face. The 200 province leaders involved have shown a willingness to work further to ensure local children attend school. Many have pledged to sponsor children to continue their education. In a more permanent measure, in Bandung West Java Province, the council has promised to set aside funds for the poorest children in the region to attend school.

Missing Out Maps were discussed with school committees and government officials, and an action plan was drawn up to make sure that poor children do not drop out of school. The exercise was so effective that the education ministry agreed to carry out additional mapping with the participation of communities and NGOs. Politicians

went back to school throughout the country later in the week to answer questions from students, who presented their Missing Out Maps and performed dramas. In addition, various cultural shows, exhibits, carnivals and contests continued throughout the week, attracting an array of media attention, including national and local newspapers, national TV and 25 radio stations.

Photos Top: An Indonesian student questions politicians. *Credit: Oxfam Indonesia* Bottom: Japanese children's lobby in the UN Conference Room. *Credit: JIU*



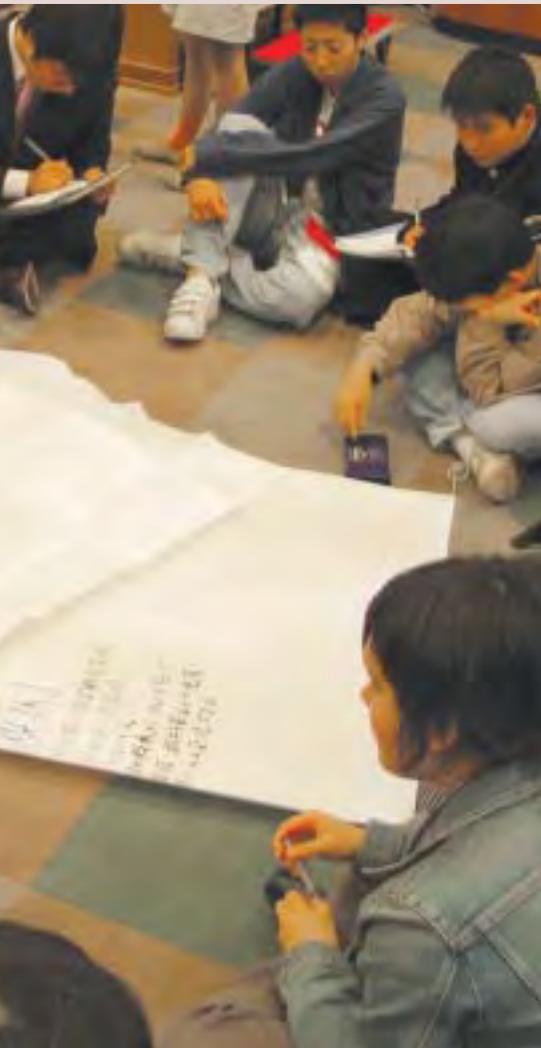
“We want all our friends in the commune to go to school and enjoy life here.”

Student in the SAPA district, Lao Cai Province, Vietnam

Japan

The outcome of a Children's Parliament has been accepted by the leader of the opposition, Mr Okada, who has promised to hand their report to the children in 6 months time. Their statement has already been read to the shadow cabinet's research meeting for children's policy. The parliament consisted of 115 teenagers who met in the United Nations Conference Room in Tokyo. The children worked together to compose a statement for the Japanese government, focussing on three themes: children around the world who are not in school; children missing an education in Japan; and children who are receiving a low-quality education in Japan. They stated, "We promise to do what we can do together for Education for All. Therefore, please promise to act, everyone!"

Photo Below: Children learning about their peers in other countries who are not in school. *Credit: JIU*



Korea

An annual Educational Marathon Race had a record number of participants this year.

Photo Handing out campaign flyers in Indonesia. *Credit: Oxfam Indonesia*



Mongolia

More than 600 children took part in Action Week in Mongolia, while 30 child representatives went to parliament to visit MP Mrs Oyunkhorol. The events raised a considerable amount of press, with coverage in national newspapers and on six national TV channels. Education for All is a new subject in Mongolia; however, many agree that it is a vital topic of study. Only 47.8 percent of children ages 7-29 have ever attended school, according to the country's 2000 census. The Human Rights National Committee recorded that a staggering 85,155 young people do not go to school. Realising the magnitude of this problem has helped galvanize politicians and parents to take action.

Photo A presentation for a TV show and radio show. Development Centre of Mongolian Youth and Children. *Credit: Women Leader Foundation*





“Reaching out to the children has not only been a challenging task but it has also been an eye opener for many of us. The responses that we have got are no less mature and insightful.”

Priti, Global March, Nepal

Nepal

A massive total of 22,000 letters were collected to be given to the Prime Minister Surya Bahadur Thapa, and many were published in national newspapers. The GCE coalition has now formed a task force, which will continue to meet during the year. The group is presently compiling Action Week information into a report, specifically tracking those children who are not in school, and will present it to the Ministry of Education on completion. They are also working on analyzing the extent to which conflict has affected education.

Photo One of thousands of handprints collected from 39 districts in Nepal and presented to the Prime Minister. *Credit: Global March*

Pakistan

The Minister of Education Zobaida Jalal pledged support to the GCE and Global Action Week, while Prime Minister Gen. Musharraf reiterated Pakistan's commitment to EFA. The new coalition remade versions of the GCE poster with Pakistani children on the print to create a greater degree of ownership. There were two exciting breakthroughs. First the groups are keen to form a stronger coalition following the Global Action Week. Second the Minister of Education has agreed to try to involve the President and PM in future events. The Action Week was a huge success. Many children were involved in the Biggest Ever Lobby in Karachi and various seminars took place. Children and teachers spoke at the events and at each there was a district education officer to answer questions.

Papua New Guinea

Students list school fees, gender issues, domestic problems, tribal fighting, child labour and the inaccessibility of schools as reasons why many of their peers are not in school. Creating Missing Out Maps was instructive for the whole community as parents, teachers and community leaders realised just how many children are not in schools. The children presented the maps at a 'sing sing', a cultural show, which was held in Madang. Meanwhile, teachers have united to help address some of the obstacles preventing children from attending schools. They left workshops feeling more confident about working with students and parents to prevent exclusion.

Photos Students in PNG making and presenting Missing Out Maps. *Credit: VSO*



Philippines

About 11,000 people were involved in Action Week throughout the country, participating in lobbies, human chains and mapping activities. The GCE workshop guide, translated into Filipino, reached far-flung areas including villages in the mountains of Benguet and the Mindanao islands in the south. More than 5,500 children from all walks of life presented their case for education in a lobby event organised by the Philippine GCE coalition in the National Parliament. Members of several key portfolio committees, including Human

Rights, Basic Education and Social Services, promised they would push for increases in basic education spending during the next budget round. The whole programme was run by child leaders themselves, who presented the issues of marginalised children through lively cultural events, speeches and debates. MPs, government ministers, teachers' union leaders and a representative of the ILO took part in the national lobby, which was covered on TV and in national daily newspapers. MPs and dignitaries symbolically signed

the children's agenda at the end of the session.

One GCE member from Cebu city is following up with a research project to create an official profile of missing out children. The GCE coalition, The Education Network, has also planned follow up activities including training workshops.

Photo "Missing Out" posters were reproduced without the faces, leaving a blank space in the middle so children could draw in someone they know who is not in school.

Credit: Education Network



“I am luckier than some of my neighbours. I can go to school but they cannot go.”

Student in the SAPA district, Lao Cai Province, Vietnam

Solomon Islands

The Minister of Education and Human Resources Development opened the Biggest Ever Lobby, where children rallied together to demand a better education. A highlight was a speech by a parent explaining why he was unable to send his children to school. The students were keen to voice their concerns and politicians were eager to express their sympathy and dedication.

The principal of Koloale School, which the Finance Minister visited along with the district MP, raised concern about the lack of teacher commitment, the number of untrained teachers and their poor living conditions. The Finance Minister encouraged the school to follow up the situation with the Minister of Education. Although this does not indicate direct change, the school was so pleased to have been visited by the MP that it has spurred them to take action.

Similarly satisfied were the women and children at the DIVIT training centre for girls. Their concern was that they did not have recognition and support from the government. The Permanent Secretary said he would support the centre, and said that they must be treated as equal to boys in education. The Permanent Secretary also said that everyone is responsible for ensuring children go to school. This was the subject of a travelling drama group, who performed a play centred on the theme of giving every child the chance to go to school to get a quality education. The participants hoped to make all stakeholders aware of the fact that they can help children attend school.

Photos Children hold banners and lobby outside their school.
Credit: LASI



Sri Lanka

A total of 300 girls and boys addressed leading political figures, including the advisor to the PM, Hon Sunimal Fernando, the Deputy Education Minister and various regional education governors. The recommendations made by children have already been converted to a Children’s Declaration on Education, which will soon be officially presented to the President Chandrika Kumaratunga and Minister of Education within the next month.

Politicians pledged to give priority to education in their future plans and recognized the need to reactivate progressive plans for education reforms that now lay dormant. Disabled children demanded changes to facilitate their access to the classroom. Schools got involved throughout the country, and it is believed that around 75,000 postcards with the Global Action Week message were sent to the President, who is also the Minister of Education.

In some parts of the country, partners of education networks participated in taking politicians back to school to highlight key issues that affected the provision of quality education in remote areas.

Photo Sunimalee, a girl from the Uva Province of Sri Lanka, one of the most economically disadvantaged provinces, talks about teacher shortages in schools in her area. *Credit: Save the Children*



Taiwan

The GCE coalition placed a 'Missing Out' Poster on the web site and encouraged people to send a letter to President Chen.

Tajikistan

Some 25,000 people took part in Action Week in Tajikistan. Many events took place in the most rural, populous and poorest areas. For example, Members of Parliament went back to Eastern Khatlon to talk with the school children and 25 child representatives from the area visited the regional parliament, meeting and asking questions from the parliamentary head.

Vietnam

The Minister of Education and Training opened the week by launching a National Plan for Education for All. The National Plan set out objectives for the development of education in Vietnam from 2003 to 2015.

Nearly 4,000 children joined in different activities during the Action Week. Local politicians went back to schools and held talks with children. Activities like camping, role playing, singing, dancing, drawing and writing about children's dreams attracted special attention from not only children and their parents but also local authorities.

Child workers from every province came together to express their desire for education. They created drawings and writings which were used in a forum entitled "Listen to the children", attended by many organisations. The children presented their work, and there was a group discussion to explore how their desires can become a reality.

A total of 3,452 children, mainly girls and ethnic children, from Duyen Hai district, Tra Vinh Province, drew pictures of their friends with speech balloons to represent their hopes and dreams. Mong and Dzao children in Lao Cai province led meetings with their local politicians, expressing their views on why their peers do not attend school. "I feel lucky to be here and talk about what I think and hope," said one boy.

Politicians were deeply moved by listening to the children's simple dreams. They expressed their understanding and commitment to support the children's access to education. At the launching ceremony of the national plan, Minister of Education and Training, Mr Nguyen Minh Hien, promised better policy and more resources to address EFA especially for disadvantaged children, girls, ethnic minority children and those living in remote areas. Vietnamese Television (VTV), Voice of Vietnamese (VOV), and other media were present at these activities and covered most of the events.

Photos Top right: Boys from Lao Cai Province at the Biggest Ever Lobby. Below right: A girl in grade 5 facilitates a discussion group on strategies to get more children in school. *Credit: Oxfam*



Europe

The needs of Europe's own 'Missing Out' children were raised during the Action Week, as was the responsibility of the richer European governments towards children in poor countries. In Albania and Macedonia participants lobbied their governments to improve the status of child workers. People in Romania looked at excluded and marginalised populations, and participants in Russia focused on child poverty. In richer countries, children were fascinated and outraged to learn about the problems facing their peers in developing countries, and lobbied MPs to increase aid spending to help every child have a good quality education. Most dramatically, the Swedish Development Minister agreed to increase the amount going to education in the development budget, and the British Secretary of State of International Development pledged £12 million to support the Fast Track Initiative to help achieve universal primary education in poor countries. ■

Albania

A group of 13,000 children were brought together from all areas of Albania, including Tirana, Shkodra, Kucova and Korca, to demand Education for All. About 1,000 children attended the finale, held at Ramazan Jarani Primary School, where they were divided into groups to discuss the plight of those missing an education in Albania and throughout the world.

The children sent messages, a petition and a Missing Out Map to the President Alfred Moisiu and PM Fatos Nano, requesting that they help dropouts in the country.

One message read, "Fifty thousand Albanian children are not in schools, please find a solution to this problem." All 140 MPs were sent a letter by the GCE coalition and the impact of all these efforts is already

seen: the issue of dropouts was addressed in the First National Conference of the Albanian government on Children's Rights.

To maintain attention on education, children from Tirana were invited to enter a flag-drawing competition. Some 2,000 children answered the call from the Mayor of Tirana and participated in the event. Child workers were also invited to take part and drew a separate flag expressing their desires and wishes for education. The flags were raised in the Tirana town square and at public institutions on National Children's Day, 1st June.

Photos Children enter a flag-making competition with the Mayor of Tirana. The winning entry was made into a flag which was raised on National Children's Day. *Credit: CRCA*



“I think it's a good idea that all children should be able to go to school by 2015, but why wait so long?”

Child's postcard to the Prime Minister, Denmark

Austria

Teachers are continuing to apply pressure on the government by writing letters to the Ministers of Education, Finance and Foreign Affairs. They have asked them to do all they can to provide developing countries with the help they need to make every child a student. It is hoped that these letters will also prompt the 13 politicians and dignitaries, including the Vice Mayor of Vienna, who went “back to school” to talk with 260 teachers about what is needed to provide a quality education. Teachers' questions in the “back to school” event focussed on national issues, including the fact that children miss approximately 10 lessons per week due to pay cuts. The politicians promised to consider these problems when making decisions and in their election manifestos next year.

Photo Dr. Michael Ludwig (left), member of the county council, in discussion with teachers and the headmaster of an Austrian middle school. *Credit: Goed/Gmx*



Denmark

The “Reading Rocket”, a collection of short stories written and donated by Danish writers in preparation for the Action Week was read by 44,767 children. The stories looked at children's right to education in different parts of the world. By buying the “Reading Rocket”, children raised about \$20,000 to help support children's education in Angola. In addition, more than 14,000 pupils wrote postcards to the Danish PM, Anders Fogh Rasmussen. One child said simply, “I think it's a good idea that all children in the world should be able to go to school by 2015, but why wait so long?”

During Action Week, 120 student representatives converged on Parliament to debate with seven MPs from each of the political parties. The students, meeting with MPs in small groups asked, “Why is the Danish government spending so much money on the military rather than ensuring children's rights to education?” Another queried, “What have the cuts in Danish aid been used for?”

While the Liberal party made no promises in the ensuing discussion, the opposition was forceful on the matter. Jan Sjurson from Christian People's Party called on government to “Bomb with education and not bombs.” In total, 50,000 students and one third of schools in Denmark participated in the week.

Photos Below and right: Pupils in parliament during a question and answer session with politicians. Over 100 students participated in lobbying in front of the National Parliament with approximately 13,000 postcards. *Credit: ibis*



Finland

About 110,000 copies of a teachers' magazine were distributed with an article written by the GCE coalition and an advisor from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the Millennium Development Goals and EFA.

France

Drawings and petitions for France's President bear the words: "Mr Jacques Chirac, in 2000 you promised to guarantee all children access to schooling. Today, we urge you to take strong action to allow all the world's children access to quality education." A coalition of NGOs launched a large-scale petition-signing campaign addressed to the Elysée Palace and Mr Chirac.

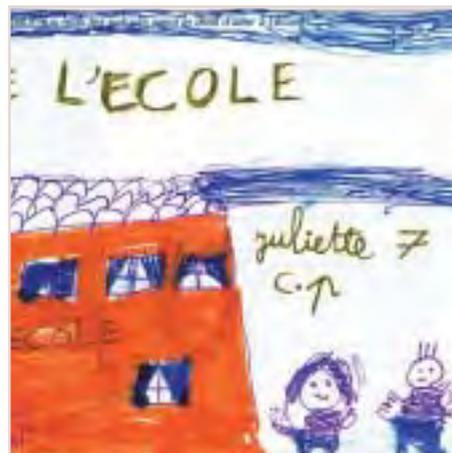
The petitions were written by children, signed by adults and accompanied by drawings. It was in schools, however, that Action Week had the biggest impact where drawing workshops followed a lesson on the right to education and the condition of children in the world.



Everywhere, the messages were the same, underscoring the fact that education is a fundamental right, crucial to attaining freedom. "Without teaching there can be no freedom of thought, or action... Without education, no solidarity," said one student.

The GCE coalition has requested to meet with the President in July to look at French educational cooperation policies. They have already made a commitment to work together on the 2005 campaign.

Photos Children's drawings, including one by 7-year-old Juliette: "Long Live School! My drawing of all the children who have the right to go to school." *Credit: Solidarite laique*



Georgia

"Let's speak out for education in Georgia! Join the movement for Education for All!" wrote one child in a petition to parliament. A total of 235 children, including 60 refugees were brought from round the country to lobby in the National Assembly. The speaker, Mrs Nino Burjanadze empathized with the children's conditions and promised to do more to help them. One student from Zugdidi school told the speaker how she required an urgent operation which her family could not pay for and now can no longer go to school. The speaker assured her that she would personally attend to the problem. The little girl's family received the needed sum a week later.

Hundreds of letters have been sent to the President Mikheil Saakashvili and PM Zurab Zhvania, not only from children, but parents and teachers as well. Many meetings had positive results. Authorities in the city of Poti and the region of Zugdidi have granted bursaries of US\$100 to some children not in school. In the town of Martvili, Action Week culminated with 80 children being given financial assistance and a provision in the new budget for more funds to help children in the future. In the Telavi region authorities decided to open a special place where people could bring clothing, books and other things for children needing assistance. At the local level, communities took part in creating Missing Out Maps, which identified 4,000 out-of-school children.

“I think the Action Week is great because we get to speak to politicians directly. If I was rich, I would help every child to go to school.”

Cem, a 6th-form student, Germany

“The Action Week contributes to the solution of the problem. The more commitment there is, the more governments will pay attention to this topic and the more they will support education for all.”

Local politician Özcan Mutlu during his visit at Aziz Nesin School, Germany

Germany

More than 40 students were invited by the Committee on Economic Cooperation and Development of the German National Parliament to discuss the German government’s commitment to Education for All. This meeting was a result of a successful Action Week 2004.

Over 3,000 school children in Germany eagerly prepared for the week. Highlights included a national email campaign and meetings with politicians. Participants flooded Chancellor Gerhard Schröder with e-cards, asking him to do more to provide every child with a quality basic education.

Students in Standard 7 from Gymnasium Eppendorf in Hamburg drew posters and interviewed people in the streets about education. Their teacher, Andreas Greverath, said, “The activities raised awareness about the fact that we live in one world. In times when the topic of development cooperation does not sell very well, I consider it very important to bring the situation of people in developing countries back to the public mind.”

Other schools held similar activities. A class from Realschule Oberaden (North Rhine-Westphalia) invited national politician MP Dr Dieter Wiefelspütz to a discussion forum. “He was seriously interested and self

critical. He thinks that more politicians need to address EFA and promised to campaign for the topic. This also motivated our students,” a teacher reported.

A total of 48 schools invited local and national politicians and members of parliament back to school for the day. MPs Gabi Klein, Wolfgang Reinhart and Nico Schultz were presented with posters and questions depicting the situation of children in poor countries. “What can you do to help children who cannot go to school?” asked one pupil. Politicians promised to display the posters made by the pupils in the Provincial Parliament in order to raise awareness among other MPs for EFA.

In many classrooms throughout the country, the atmosphere during Global Action Week was livelier and more festive than usual. “The children were shocked and disturbed by the reports about other pupils in their age group who have to work under harsh conditions and are therefore unable to go to school. The learning atmosphere was full of emotional concern culminating in the decision that something has to be done,” said Ms Masuch, a teacher at Aziz Nesin Primary School in Berlin.

Photo School children from Aziz Nesin Primary School in Berlin during their presentation and discussion with politicians back to school day. *Credit: Oxfam Germany*



Greece

NGOs, teachers and students are now motivated about the issue of children missing out on education after exciting Action Week events, involving about 1,000 schools across the country, covered by Greek media and capturing politicians' attention. A "Children Missing Out" lesson took place in many schools, encouraging students to prepare a photo of the classroom with hands up for education. Students wrote a message for the Greek PM and the President of the Greek Parliament, asking them to help achieve EFA by 2015. All photo-messages were forwarded to the PM and the President of Parliament by a delegation of children.

Later in the week, about 100 children from four different primary schools in Athens displayed a huge handmade banner demanding EFA. The display was enhanced with a photo collage, using some of the photos sent by peers for this purpose, and conveyed the message of EFA to the Greek public. The motto on the banner read: "No more absentees from schools." The pupils then marched to parliament with the banner and met the Head of the Greek House of Parliament, Ms Psarouda Benaki, who upon receiving the 200 messages, praised the pupils for their initiative and declared that she would convey the message to other MPs and the Prime Minister.

Photo Children participate in a "Children Missing Out" lesson in Kipseli school. The photo will be signed and sent to the President Costis Stephanopoulos with a message asking for Education for All. *Credit: Actionaid Hellas*



Ireland

Two lively seminars on children missing out and adult literacy were complemented by lessons countrywide on marginalisation – part of a "School is the Best Place to Work" campaign. Children from primary and secondary schools eloquently gave a powerful presentation to their Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs, Tom Kitt, in a national lobby attended by representatives from the education sector, NGOs, teachers' unions, Development Cooperation Ireland, and the Department of Education and Science. One teenage spokesperson particularly called for Tom Kitt to "ensure that European Union members work together to allocate at least 8 percent or more of the EU's overseas development aid to formal primary education" while Ireland still holds the presidency of the EU until 2005.

Primary school children called on the Prime Minister Bertie Ahern to "Please do more to give every child the chance to go to school and get a quality education." They were featured on national TV speaking out for EFA on "The Den", a popular programme for children. Countrywide, young people produced and sent materials and messages to An Taoiseach (head of government), PM Bertie Ahern. The Irish Coalition for GCE members utilised their newsletters and web sites to encourage further lobbying action by civil society during the Irish presidency of the EU.

Photos Top right: David Rogas Trujillo and Emil Yonkov from Educate Together North Bay Primary School are interviewed. They appeared with other students on the TV show 'The Den' to promote EFA. Centre right: Aoife and Eva are Secondary School students. The Minister was directly addressed on EU aid to education by Eva Foreman and Eadaoin McCole. Below right: Minister Tom Kitt in the centre flanked on either side by the Presidents of the Irish National Teachers Organisation and the Association of Secondary School Teachers Ireland. *Credit: EI / Community Development*



Italy

An Italian web site received 90,000 hits around Global Action Week and continues to draw attention. It asks members to send Mr Berlusconi letters about EFA. The GCE Coalition targeted Mr Berlusconi with a hand-written letter signed by union leaders, demanding an increase in funds to developing countries. An article in a magazine on Global Action Week, circulated to 3,000 people, covered the aims of the campaign and demanded that the Italian government increase funds to for EFA. It describes the importance of education for the development of poor countries. Gabriella Giorgetti of CGILSCUOLA teachers' union said, "We worked a lot to make our members and the public aware of the question of Education for All and we think the work done is a small, but useful contribution to the campaign."

Latvia

Members of the LIZDA teachers' union were offered seminars and workshops relating to the problems of children missing out an education. Over 160 teachers attended these workshops, where they were also trained as facilitators and encouraged to organize their own local sessions and activities.

Macedonia

"We should not spend our childhood being forced into labour to earn a living, education provides us with knowledge that in the future we will be able to find jobs," said Murat, after a video entitled "The Right to Dream" was broadcast during Action Week. The film, shown on Telma, a Macedonian TV channel, reveals cases of exploitation in several nations around the world. This spurred children to get involved. In a workshop, 20 children presented a pantomime in which they acted out the lives of their peers who are exploited and endangered by having to work.

A student, Ivana Stojanovska said, "Education is required for each and every child to have safe future, without education we would not be able to achieve our goals and life aims. Each child's dream is to become a teacher, lawyer, singer, an artist, doctor and so on, but it would not be possible without the education. That is only

one of the many reasons why children should go to school instead of labouring or asking for charity."

Her peer, Andrijana, supported her statement, "All children in the world regardless of their race, colour or religion are the same and should be able to go to school. Work should be done by the grown ups and not by the children."

Action Week has encouraged various NGOs to go to the government to lobby for improvement in child protection laws, and close loopholes that permit child labour to continue. NGOs are developing proposals for identifying, rehabilitating and reintegrating children vulnerable to the worst forms of child labour. Discussions in parliament have taken place since April and have included representatives from the Commission for Labour and Social Policy.

Photo Children prepare visuals in the Week of Action.
Credit: FCEW MEG.JASHI



Netherlands

A group of 60 student representatives from Dutch primary schools joined nine politicians from the main political parties and the EU government to discuss their action plan to secure EFA by 2015. The Peace Palace in The Hague provided a beautiful venue, and Max van den Berg, Chairman of the Dutch Socialist Party in the EP participated from a live link in Strasbourg.

Schoolchildren collected 66,475 signatures on a petition calling for the PM and incoming chairman of the EU, Jan-Peter Balkenende, to promote better policies regarding education in development cooperation.

On 29 June, children met with the Minister of Development Cooperation to deliver the petitions and discussed how the Netherlands can spur greater aid efforts by rich countries.

Photos Right: Children lobby outside the Peace Palace in The Hague. Below: The Dutch Minister of Development Cooperation, A. van Ardenne, receives 66,475 signatures from children demanding EFA. Credit: Novib



Northern Ireland

The campaign in Northern Ireland attracted support from all of Northern Ireland's main political parties. One of many politicians, SDLP leader Mark Durkan visited his former school, St Patrick's in Pennyburn. "As well as raising the issue of Education for All, we hope that the GCE Action Week will engage young people in learning about issues that affect children's lives globally, giving them an opportunity to take action in support of children's rights everywhere."

Children in Limavady put on a short drama highlighting the comparisons between education in Northern Ireland and education in developing countries. MP Gregory Campbell described it as "very powerful". "It's a terrible reality that there are millions of children across the world who do not have access to basic learning," he said. Jeffrey Donaldson MP promised the primary 7 class he visited in Killowen Primary School, Lisburn, that he would address their concerns to the PM and the Secretary of State for International Development.

In preparation for visits, schoolchildren did a great deal of work with their teachers, in which they considered their own views on education. Students at Rathmore Grammar School wrote poems, made posters and put together interactive presentations. One child's poem, entitled "The Forgotten Continent", clearly illustrates a feeling of solidarity with children who are currently missing an education:

The children of Africa, the Forgotten Continent.

Our blunder shapes its future government.

Education is the only option

*To stop today's mistake becoming
tomorrow's problem.*

Students from North Coast Integrated College took a petition and posters to the Mayor of Coleraine and were invited into the council offices. In the Mayor's Parlour they had an opportunity to talk about the issues with him. The students also addressed their school in an assembly and made their peers aware of the problems so many children face in going to school.

Many of the events attracted press coverage. Children were particularly motivated and enjoyed having the opportunity to engage with their politicians as well as developing their knowledge of children's rights. The partners in the Coalition in Northern Ireland are committed to continuing with campaign activities in 2004 and 2005 to keep these key issues alive in Northern Ireland.

Photos for Northern Ireland are displayed on page 55

Norway

“You promised education for all by 2000. Why didn’t you deliver? We have learned that you are supposed to keep your promises,” said one child to the Parliamentary Education Committee in the Biggest Ever Lobby. Further questions emphasised that education is a crucial element in fighting poverty as it is only through the knowledge of reading and writing that a child can have an impact on its society and contribute to the development of democracy. The session was opened by 17-year-old Sharda Parajuli from Nepal who eloquently expressed how she is now studying to become a teacher, despite having been hit by polio.

The politicians’ answers reflected the political agenda of the respective parties. Nevertheless all MPs agreed that Norway had to increase funding for education in developing countries and the Biggest Ever Lobby was televised live and made TV news.

Photos Top: Sharda Parajuli from Nepal opened the Biggest Ever Lobby. Below: Children and politicians at the Parliamentary Commission. *Credit: Plan Norway*



Portugal

A group of committed children came up to the stage in a park in Lisbon to explain why they think education is so important for everyone, especially children, and how it is crucial for the development of poor countries.

The children endorsed a collective message to President Sampaio asking for his support for EFA and signed three letters to be sent to Prime Minister Barroso, the Minister of Education and the State Secretary of Cooperation requesting that they “try harder to give every child the chance to go to school and get a quality education”.

A postman took the message to the President Jorge Sampaio and delivered it directly to the President’s Palace. Some classes made collective posters and one even made a book with all their contributions, demanding more commitment from politicians.

Another 350 students gathered in Viana do Castelo, in the north of Portugal. Some schools sent the letters by email to the three members of government and also to the heads of the parliamentary groups.

Photo A class presenting their ideas about education. *Credit: Oikos*



Romania

The results of Action Week in Romania include a manifesto of children’s ideas, which was presented in a roundtable discussion with representatives from the Ministry of Education, the school inspectorate, teachers, children and members of the GCE coalition. The event was presented on national TV and all participants considered this document to be useful in the future for advocacy.

The document consolidated a number of activities. About 10,000 children took part in debates across ten counties; 715 children wrote letters, one from each class, to the government; and there were radio broadcasts and productive roundtable discussions. Children also drew pictures illustrating their frustrations with education. The main issues arising in all these activities are that school conditions vary widely. Not only are some schools unhygienic, but many do not offer vital educational materials. In addition, the children felt that the curriculum was overloading them. There are also huge problems with exclusion, particularly of the minority Roma children and those with disabilities. The children asked that the government target teachers and parents to raise awareness of the necessary integration of Roma children, saying that it was them who had the power to determine and change people’s attitudes. They also asked that governments create daycare centres within schools and offer food for poor children. Thanks to their courageous statements, children’s consultation is likely to become a regular part of the education system.

Photos Right: Writing letters to the President Ion Iliescu. *Credit: Save the Children: Romania*

“Having participated in the Action Week I realized that a child should attend school. Children shouldn’t skip classes, as some of them do, because knowledge, which they gain at school, will help them in their lives.”

Mitrofanova Ulyana, 10 years old, Russia

Russia

Vera Tilkun, deputy of the Serov Duma, visited an orphanage in Serov city to discuss the reasons why children miss school and explore how these issues can be resolved at different levels. She was one of 18 politicians who visited their local schools during Action Week, joining 3,049 students from schools and higher educational institutions and teachers from seven Russian regions, including Moscow, Astrakhan region, Sverdlov region (Serov city), Tver region, Tyumen region, Voronezh region and Republic of Kalmykia (Elista city). Class activities, discussions and meetings with students were organized in all areas. Schoolchildren from Elista city had a meeting with Vice PM L. Vasiljeva at the Conference Hall of the Parliament of Republic of Kalmykia.

One 12-year-old boy, Produvalov Pavel, said “I’ve understood a lot after taking part in the Action Week about the reasons for missing school. There are a lot of problems in life. If a family is poor, parents can’t pay for their children’s education. I think the state should provide money for such families or should establish a special fund.” He went on to write his message to parliament. Similar activities took place around the country.

Photos Top right: All materials were handed over to Vera Tilkun, the Deputy of the Serov Municipal Duma, who participated in events. Below: Two out of about 2,000 children in Tyumen city who discussed and drew pictures of those children missing an education. *Credit: New Perspective Foundation*



The children of Africa, the Forgotten Continent.
Our blunder shapes its future government.
Education is the only option
To stop today's mistake becoming tomorrow's problem.

An extract from 'The Forgotten Continent'
Christopher, Rathmore Grammar, Belfast

Scotland

A determined group of 20 children presented a petition to Parliament and 129 pupils – one for every parliamentary seat – engaged in a lively question and answer session with speaker George Reid. Numerous regional activities took place in schools throughout Scotland, and 50 MPs packed their school bags in order to face discussions about the need for Education for All with more than 4,000 students. In Lhanbryde Primary School, pupils prepared for the visit of the MP of Moray Mr Angus Robertson by

making a wishing well from card and classroom materials, in which they dropped coins, petitions and messages intended for the British PM Tony Blair.

Photos Top left: Pupils at Lhanbryde Primary learn about their MP Angus Robertson. Below left: Wishing well made by Primary 6/7 Lhanbryde Primary Moray Scotland to collect coins with messages for Tony Blair UK Prime Minister. Below: Student Parliament ready to lobby Mr. Angus Robertson MP of Moray who visited school on "Politicians Return to School Day" 23rd April 2004.
Credit: Fiona Milne



Spain

A total of 18 simultaneous Children's Parliaments took place in 15 locations across Spain. About 500 children posed questions to their elected representatives, and a phenomenal 60,000 children wrote messages to the President Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero.

Photos Children and elected representatives at the Children's Parliament in Seville. *Credit: Entreculturas*



Sweden

Over 100 participants met to discuss Education for All. An official letter, signed by the GCE committee, was sent to the Development Cooperation Minister Carin Jamtin, who replied "Education for all children is the key for the future and for sustainable development. Education's part of Swedish development aid will increase." The seminar subdivided into ten discussion groups, covering such issues as education in the South and EFA status in Baltic countries.



United Kingdom

During the World's Biggest Lobby, Development Minister Hilary Benn announced that the UK would commit £12 million (\$20m) to the EFA Fast Track Initiative, a fund set up to provide support for countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals on education. More than 700 children had gathered at Westminster to lobby Hilary Benn and Charles Clarke, Secretary of State for Education. The children also delivered a call to action to 10 Downing Street. June Sarpong, presenter of 'T4', a program on Channel 4 which airs on Sunday mornings, chaired the event.

A total of 500 politicians, including 485 MPs – almost three quarters of the House of Commons – visited 1,000 schools across the UK as part of "Back to School Day". From Oban to Oxford, MPs went "back to basics". They listened to children's presentations about the importance of education and responded to questions from students

on actions to ensure it is effective. Cabinet ministers took part, and 150,000 children were involved.

In addition to national press coverage, there were more than 400 articles printed in local papers around the country.

Photos Top right: Hilary Benn MP visits Castleton Primary and Windmill Primary Schools in Leeds and talks to students about his work, what the government is doing, and the importance of meeting international promises to provide education for children in the developing world. *Credit: Tullett/imediauk* Middle right: Children lobby Jane Davidson AM at the Welsh National Assembly *Credit: Oxfam* Below right: Starting the Biggest Ever lobby at Malone College Belfast with Carmel Hanna Member of Legislative Assembly of Northern Ireland, Christine Patterson, Save the Children, Northern Ireland, Mike Aaronson, Director General of Save the Children, UK, Seamus Leonard, the school's principal and students. *Credit: Save the Children Below: Children lobbying outside Parliament in London. Credit: Oxfam*



Taking Part

The GCE congratulates teachers' unions, NGOs, schools and other supporters for working together so effectively at the national and local levels to make the World's Biggest Lobby a success. Particularly notable are the countries where diverse groups coordinated their plans through a national organising committee or a national coalition. Such coalitions, which may represent dozens or hundreds of different organisations, are highlighted in bold. Formally constituted national coalitions belonging to the GCE are noted with an asterisk*.

AFRICA & MIDDLE EAST

Angola UNESCO

Benin GCE Coalition, Aide et Action, CAEB, Care-Benin, GRABS, ID-RACINE, Plan-Benin, SNEP-Benin, SYNAPES, SYNESTP

Burkina Faso Coalition Nationale pour l'EPT, CCEB*, ABOLA, MEBA, ABPAM, AEC, AFNB, ANTBA, APAC, AREB, CIEFFA, FRB, GRADE, LIPEL, ActionAid, MESSRS, ODE, OSEO, Sahel Solidarité, SNEAB, SYNATEB, UNESCO

Burundi EFA Coalition Bafashebigi, ActionAid International Burundi, APPEB, CCOD, CPAJ, OAG, STAMM, STEB

Cameroon COSEC, ANACLAC, CEF, EFA National Coordination, FAWECAM, Cameroon Committee for the Global March, YOP

Comores CNAD, FAWECOM

Congo CARESCO, FAPE, FNUAP, PNUD, World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF

Democratic Republic of Congo ACRJ, ACVDP, AFAC, CNEPT, FENESCU/UNTC, IDK, Les Anges Du Ciel, Oxfam GB

Egypt CEOSS, UNESCO

Ethiopia Basic Education Network (BEN), ActionAid International Ethiopia, ANPCAAN, Ethiopian Muslims Relief and Development Association, Help for Persons with Disability Organisation, Oxfam GB, Pact Ethiopia, Plan International, Rift Valley Children and Women Development Association, Save the Children Alliance, Federal MOE, World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, Wabi Children's Aid and Training

Gambia ActionAid Gambia, Al mudous, Association of Vocational and Skills Training, Gambia Organization of Hard of Hearing, Gambia Organization of Physically Disabled, Gambia Organization of Visually Impaired, Gambia Press Union, Gambia Teachers' Union, Madrassa and Traditional Daras, National Assembly, Play School, Refugee Children, Sight Savers International, SIMMA Vocational Skills Training Centre, UNESCO Club, VSO, World View Gambia

Ghana GNECC*

Guinea ACADAO, ACEEEF, Comité d'Équité des Ministères en charge de l'Éducation, Direction Nationale de la Petite Enfance, FEG/FAWE, L'Inter Syndicale, ONEB, SNA

Ivory Coast AADD, DEFi Consultants International, ESPT, Ivory Coast Mouvement du Nid (movement for the abolition of prostitution)

Kenya ANCEFA, City Council, Department of Adult Education, Elimu Yetu, Ministry of Education, National Union of Teachers

Lesotho NGOC, Ministry of Education and Training, LAT, Save the Children UK, UNICEF

Liberia ALPO*, CSML

Madagascar CAA, DCRE/CNNU, Renin-jaza Kristiana FJKM, Scouts, UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF

Mali ASSAFE*, **Groupe Pivot Education de Base**, Cena/Mali, Comité de Conseil et d'Appui Aux Organisations

Non Gouvernementales, Commission Nationale Malienne pour l'UNESCO, ENDA tiers monde Mali, Fédération Des Collectifs d'ONG du Mali, Mali Enjeu, Ministère de L'Education Nationale, Plan International Mali, UNESCO, UNICEF

Malawi CSCQBE, ActionAid International Malawi,

Mauritania DEFA, ESPEG, Groupement Educatif en Mauritanie, GUM, NEBI

Morocco UNESCO

Mozambique MEPT*, ActionAid International Mozambique, AMME, Aro Juvenil, CDF, CEF, Concern, KARIBU, Oxfam International, UDEBA, UNESCO

Namibia Teachers' Unions, UNESCO

Nigeria Civil Society Action Coalition for Education for All (CSACEFA), ActionAid International Nigeria, Federal Ministry of Education, UNESCO, UNICEF

Niger Aide et Action, ANPE/E, CCSEN, Concern, Global March Niger, Oxfam, Plan Niger, ROSEN, SNEN,

Senegal Coalition Nationale EPT du Sénégal, SNEEL, SYPROS

Seychelles UNESCO

Sierra Leone Civil Society Movement – SL, 50/50 Group, ActionAid - SL, Anti Corruption Commission, CCF, Children Associated with the War, Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools, Evangelical Fellowship of SL, FAWE-SL Chapter, Help a Needy Child International, International Organisation of Good Templers' International Rescue Committee, National Commission Of War Affected Children, National Council of Head Teachers' Council, National Youth Council, Norwegian Refugee Council, Oxfam GB, Plan/ SL, Sierra Leone Association Of University Women, Sight Savers-SL, SLTU, Talking Drum Studio, UNESCO, UNICEF, War Child, Women's Forum, World Vision- SL

South Africa GCE South Africa*, SANGOCO

Sudan Education Network, Islamic Relief Agency, Ministry of Education, Oxfam GB Partners, Oxfam GB, Plan Sudan, SCF Sweden, SCFUJ, UNESCO, UNICEF, World University Services

Swaziland GCE Coalition: SNAT; Council of Swaziland Churches, CANGO, SAS, Women Resource Centre, SWAGAA, WLSA, MISA, LHR, FODSWA

Tanzania TEN/MET*

Togo CNT/CME*, ActionAid International Togo, Care, FAWE, WAO Afrique, LTTF, Plan Togo, REPT

Uganda FENU, ActionAid International Uganda, CARE Uganda, EUPEK, FAWE, LitNet, Madrasa resource centre, NESCAA, NUIE, SCF Uganda, SCF USA, SCORE Uganda, TERREWODE, Uganda National Aids Support Organizations, UNAB, UNATU, USDC, UNHCR

Zambia ZANEC*, AEAZ, BEI, Catholic Secretariat, CCAS, Children in Need, CEF/Oxfam, Development Aid from People to People, EFA Secretariat, Edusport Foundation, FLMZ, Fountain of Hope, FAWEZA, GAZ, Ministry of Education and line ministries, Mulumbo Early Childhood and Development, NYCA, PAF, Primary Education Teachers'

Union of Zambia, SCOPE-OVC, UNESCO, UNICEF, University of Zambia, VSO, WVI, YMCA, YWCA, Zambia Civic Society, ZCSS, ZADE, ZNUT, ZOCS

Zimbabwe SCFUJ, MOESC, PTUZ, WOZA, ZIMTA

AMERICAS

Anguilla ALHCS, Anguilla Commonwealth Youth Programme, Anguilla National Trust, Anguilla Teachers' Union, Education Department

Argentina CTERA and partners

Brazil National Campaign for the Right to Education, Ação Verde, ActionAid Brasil, Ação Educativa, APP/PR, Campanha Nacional pelo Direito à Educação, CCLF, CEDECA -CE, Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores em Educação, CEPAC, CRIA, FETEMS/MS, MST, SAMOPS, SINDIUPES/ES, SINSEPEAP/AP, SINPROESEM/MA, SINTE/RN, SINTE/SC, SINTEAC/AC, SINTEAM/AM, SINTEGO/GO, SINTER/RR, SINTERO/RO, SINTESE/SE, SINTET/TO, UNCME, UNCME-AL, UNCME-MG, UNDIME, UNIPOP

Bolivia Consejo de Educación de Adultos de América Latina (CEAAL), AUMM, Ayuda en Acción, Care Bolivia, CEBIAE, Centro Comunal El Carmen, CEADL, Centro Educativo Holanda, Fundación Arco Iris, IIPS, Iniciativa Maya Paya Quimsa, Instituto de Investigación y Capacitación Pedagógica, PRODIS, Save the Children, SEDEGES, UMSA, USB,

Canada CTF, Results Canada

Chile Opción Corporation, UNESCO Chile

Colombia REPEM, CEM, CODACOP, FUNDAC, FUNDEIN, La Campaña Nacional por el Derecho a la Educación, SINERGYA, GAP

Costa Rica ACJ Costa Rica, ANDE, Asamblea Legislativa de la República de Costa Rica, Defensoría de los Habitantes, DNI Costa Rica, Foro Nacional de Educación para Todos, IE, IPEC, MEP, PANI, SEC

Dominican Republic Coordinating Committee, CIPAF, EDUCA, Foro Socioeducativo, Plan International

Ecuador Contrato Social por la Educación, CSE; CEALL- Ec, DNI, ESQUEL, Foro Nacional de la Juventud, GPP, Plan, PMT, UNICEF

El Salvador CIAZO, Ayuda en Acción, CEAAL, CEES, CENCAPP, CIDEP, Departamento de Educación de la UES, FEDEC, FUSANMIDJ, IMU, Las Dignas

Guatemala ActionAid, ANAC, AMERG, CIEP, CEPACHER, CNPRE, COPMAG, CEPD, CONAMEPG, Coordinadora de Organizaciones por el Derecho a la Educación – Uchuq'ab' Tinamit, MOJOMAYAS, PRODESSA, UNACODHI

Haiti REPT, ActionAid International Haiti, CEAAL, CNEH, FOKAL, Haiti, Tipa Tupa, UNNOH

Honduras Concorde, Aldeas SOS, Ayuda en Acción Honduras, Care Honduras, Catholic Relief Service, Christian Children Foundation, CIARH, COIPRODEN pre Natal, Junior Achievement Honduras, PLAN Internacional, PREPACE, Save the Children Honduras, UNESCO, Visión Mundial

Mexico Centro de Apoyo para el Movimiento Popular de Occidente (REPEM-México), DIF, El Centro de Estudios e Investigación en Desarrollo y Asistencia Social, Morada Educativa, Plantel Guadalajara y Ciudad Guzmán, Presidencia Municipal de Guadalajara, Red Nacional de Promotoras y Asesoras Rurales, Sección 16 (SNTE), Senado de la República, Universidad Pedagógica Nacional

Nicaragua CEAAL, CODENI, Coordinadora Civil, Foro de Educación y Desarrollo Humano de la Iniciativa por Nicaragua

Panama Asociación de Maestros Unidos, IDEMI, Instituto para el desarrollo de la mujer y la infancia, RED Voz de la Niñez & partners, La Honorable Asamblea Legislativa

Paraguay Gran Colegio Iberoamericano

Peru CEDEP, Adisur, Ancaras, Asociación Civil Puririsun, Asociación Educativa Cenepa, Asociación Encinas, Asociación Lupuna, Asociación Pukllasunchis, Ayuda en Acción, Capirona Investigación y Desarrollo, Caritas – Iquitos, CEDER, Centro de Estudios Sociales Solidaridad, Centro de Labor Cerro de Pasco, Centro de Transferencia Tecnológica a Universitarios San José, CEPSCO, Ceprom, CESIP, CIPDES, Cometa Cooperación Decal, Edufuturo, Escaes, Foro Educativo, IDEL, Instituto de Educación y Comunicación de Puno - Red Titikaka, Instituto Educa, Milenia Radio, Perú en Acción, PRODIA, Red Nacional de Educación de la Niña Rural – Florecer, Save the Children Canada, Save the Children UK, TACIF, Tarea Tierra de Ninas, UNESCO, UNICEF, VISAID, Yancana Huasy

Trinidad and Tobago UNESCO

United States American Federation of Teachers, Amnesty International, Basic Education Coalition, Care, Child Labor Coalition, Concern USA, International Centre for Child Labor and Education, Council for Foreign Relations, National Education Association, NetAid, Oxfam International, Save the Children, Teach for America, Youth Activism, Youth Advocates International

Uruguay GEO/ICAE, REPEM

Venezuela Fundación Puertas De Sion, Zona Educativa, Ministry of Education

ASIA & OCEANIA

Bangladesh CAMPE*, ActionAid International Bangladesh, Bangladesh Boy Scouts, BRAC, CEF & partners, Dhaka Ahsania Mission, National Forum on Child's Rights, Teachers' Associations, Proshika, WAVE

Cambodia ADD, Care Cambodia, CITA, CSF, CT, DAC, DAC-IE, HEADO, HoS, KHEMARA, LICADHO, NH, OEB, Oxfam GB Cambodia, PNKA, KAPE, PWD, Wathanakpheap, WDA, World Education Option

Fiji FTU

India Working Group for Global Action Week (WG4GAW), Action for Ability, CACL, Development and Inclusion (AADI), CARE, Commonwealth Education Fund, India Alliance for

Child Rights, National Coalition on Education*, Plan India, SACCS, Teachers' Unions of India (this comprised of a number of networks that, in turn, represented hundreds more organisations throughout the country).

Indonesia Alpen Kendari, CBE, Faytayay NU Bangkalan Madura, Gita Perthiwi Denpasar, Gravitasi Mataram, Jaringan Mitra Perempuan Bali, KerLip Bandung, LePMil Kendari, Lestari Yogya, Novib, Oxfam GB, PPLH Bali, Santai Mataram, Indonesian National Department of Education, UNESCO, Yascita Kendari, Yayasan Purnama Kasih Kupang

Japan JNNE*, FTCJ, Japan Teachers' Union, ACE, Oxfam

Korea KFTA

Lebanon UNESCO

Mongolia Mongolian Youth Federation, Women Leader Foundation

Nepal GCE- Nepal, ActionAid International, Concern, EJC, CWIN, IFCD, ILO, NNNTA, PLAN, SC-Norway, SC-US, UNDP, UNESO, UNICEF, WFP

Pakistan EFA Network*, **Pakistan Coalition for Education**, ActionAid International, APGSTA, CEF, Godh, LAW, Nirali Kitabon, Oxfam, PEF, Save the Children, SPARC and SPO, UNICEF,

Papua New Guinea Christian Women's Association, VSO

Philippines Education Network*: ABLE, ACT, Akbayan Youth, AMANPHIL, BigLead, CBE, CCHDM, ECCD-Duyog, ELF, Lakas Bihawo, NAFTED, Oxfam GB, Paaralang Bayan, PEPE, Narito Munting Puso, Piglas-Kababaihan, PINASAMA, Plan Phils., SMP-NATOW, Sarilaya, Save the Children-US, TCP, TCI, WomanHealth, World Vision Phils., Other: EI, Care, CCF, Children's Lab, ERDA, ILO-IPEC, NCCP, UNESCO-ASPNET, Visayan Forum

Solomon Islands ASPBAE, D.A. Drama Group, Education Coalition Solomon Islands, Literacy Association of Solomon Islands

Sri Lanka ADAPCA, CEF, ILO, National Association for Total Education, Novib, Plan Sri Lanka, Sarvodaya Women's Movement, Save the Children Sri Lanka, UNICEF, Young Entrepreneurs Sri Lanka

Taiwan NTA

Tajikistan Adabsaro, Oxfam

Vietnam ILO, Non- Formal Education (and partners in provinces of Lao Cai, Tra Vinh, Ha Tinh, Ha Nam, Ninh Binh, Quang Ninh, Hanoi, Thai Nguyen, Phu Tho, Nam Ha, Quang Tri & Quang Ngai), Oxfam, Plan Vietnam, Save the Children UK, The Institute for Strategy of Education, UNESCO Vietnam

EUROPE

Albania Child Legal Protection Office, CRCA, Educational Authority of Tirana, CRCA, ILO-IPEC, IRCCR Albania, Municipality of Tirana

Austria GÖD-BS

Denmark Ibis*

Finland OAJ

France Solidarité Laïque, Agir Ici, Aide et Action, CEMEA, EEDF, FCPE, FEP CFDT, FOEVEN, FSU, GREF, la Ligue de l'enseignement, les Francas, les Pupilles de l'enseignement public, SGEN-CFDT, UNSA Education

Greece ActionAid Hellas

Georgia EWTUG, FTUTG

Germany GCE Campaign Committee, CARE Deutschland e.V, Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft, OXFAM Deutschland e.V, Plan International e.V, World University Service e.V, World Vision Deutschland e. V

Ireland Irish GCE Coalition*, ActionAid Ireland, Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland, Concern Worldwide, Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Irish National Teachers' Organisation, GOAL, Oxfam Ireland, Teachers' Union of Ireland, Union of Secondary Students

Italy CGILscuola, CISLscuola, UILscuola

Latvia LIZDA

Macedonia ANTIKO, Association for Protection of Children's Rights, Association of Women – Prestige, Association of Women Aureola, Association of Women Lawyers, First Children's Embassy, FIOOM, MIA - STOP AIDS, Natasha Gaber Damjanovska, Organization of Women from Sv. Nikole municipality, ORT – Association for Information, Trainings and Development, Phurt, Polio Plus, Roma Women Organization of Macedonia – DAJA, Shelter Centre – for Women and Children Victims of Violence, TEMIS, Women Citizen Initiative, Women Union Norma – F, Women's Lobby Against Violence and Trafficking – open Gate

Netherlands Dutch GCE Coalition, Algemene Onderwijsbond (General Education Board), Novib – Oxfam Netherlands, Plan - Netherlands

Northern Ireland GCE Coalition **N.Ireland**, Association of Teachers and Lecturers and the Irish National Teachers' Organisation, Irish Congress of Trade Unions, NASUWT, Oxfam, Save the Children, Ulster Teachers' Union,

Norway Elevorganisasjonen, Operation Day's Work (Student's international solidarity work), Plan (International) Norway, Save the Children Norway, Skolenes landsforbund, SL Norway, UNESCO Norway, UNICEF Norway, UEN

Portugal Cooperação e Desenvolvimento, ESE-Viana do Castelo, INP, Oikos,

Romania Ministry of Education and Research, Save the Children, School Inspectorate of Bucharest

Russia All areas - New Perspectives Foundation, Astrakhan, Committee on Affairs of Family, Children and Youth, Lyceum # 2, Education and Science Employees Union of Russia Kalmykia, Ministry on Youth Affairs, Tourism and Sport, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Elista city, School # 3 / # 4 / # 10 / # 12 / # 20 / # 23 /Ethno-Cultural high school, Vocational lyceum, National Pre-high school, Moscow, School # 405 / #411, UNESSCO-Sphere, Tver, Organization of "Young travelers", Lyceum #11, School # 1

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/ # 20 / # 21 / # 29 / # 38 / # 40 / # 45 / # 48, Tyumen, School # 5 / # 49 / Kizhevato Children's Club, "Sirius", "Nadezhdinsk" volunteer centre, Serov, Boarding school, Voronezh, "Iskra", Lyceum # 4

Spain Ayuda en Accion, Entreculturas, INTERMON

Sweden Centre for Development Co-operation (Forum Syd), Liberia Dujar Association, Plan International, Plan Sweden, PMU Inter Life, Save the Children, Save the Children, Svalorna, The Africa Group, The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, The Swedish Teachers' Union (Läraryrbundet)

UK ActionAid International, Association of Teachers and Lecturers, Educational Institute of Scotland, NASUWT, NUT, Oxfam, Plan UK, Save the Children, Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association, Ulster Teachers' Union, VSO

The following countries also took part in the GCE Action Week. Unfortunately reports were not available for this document: Antigua & Barbuda (A & BUT), Bosnia & Herzegovina (ITUSS), Bulgaria (SEP-Prodkepa), Chad (SET), Guinea Bissau (SINAPROF), Kazakhstan (KNTUTSW), Kyrgyzstan (TUESWK), Lithuania (Lithuanian College of Democracy) Malaysia (NUTP) Mauritius (GUT), Serbia & Montenegro (ITUESCSM), St Vincent (SVGTV), Thailand (NTTU).

For additional information, or to get in contact with the GCE coalition in a particular country, please contact: actionweek@campaignforeducation.org

GCE Members

Regional and International Organisations

ActionAid International
ANCEFA
ASPBAE
CAMFED
CARE
CEAAL
Education International
FAPE
FAWE
Fe y Alegria
Global March Against Child Labour
Ibis
Inclusion International
NetAid
Oxfam International
PLAN International
Public Services International
Save the Children Alliance
SightSavers International
VSO
World Alliance of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts
World Vision International

National civil society coalitions

Bangladesh: CAMPE
Brazil: CDE
Burkina Faso: CCEB
El Salvador: CIAZO
Gabon: CONCEG
Gambia: GEFA
Ghana: GNECC

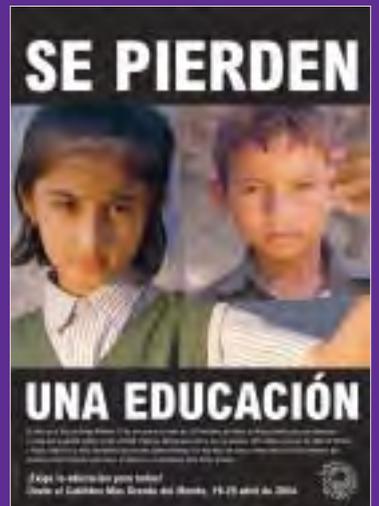
India: NCE
Ireland: Irish GCE Coalition
Japan: JNNE
Lesotho: LCEFA
Liberia: ALPO
Malawi: CSCQBE
Mali: ASSAFE
Mozambique: MEPT
Nigeria: CSACEFA
Pakistan: EFA Network
Sierra Leone: EFA Network
South Africa: GCE-SA
Tanzania: TEN/MET
Togo: CNT/CME
Zambia: ZANEC

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Information on country activities and those taking part is based on reports submitted by participating organisations. While GCE has made every effort to check this information, we cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions. Opinions or political judgments reflected in country summaries are not necessarily those of the GCE and its Board.







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