

# GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATION

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Global Campaign for Education

Press Release

1st April 2009

Message to G20: don't fail the world's poorest, fund education or millions will miss out

As the G20 prepares to meet tomorrow, the Global Campaign for Education calls for leadership and renewed aid commitments to education. The poorest cannot be failed - the world cannot afford it. Aid and pro-poor policies must be put in place to ensure that the progress towards Education for All is not lost. A failure to do so will result in millions of children, recently given the chance to go to school, being forced to drop out.

“Poor people didn't make the crisis – the least the G20 can do is make a better world for future generations by defending and extending the fragile gains made in education over the last few years”, comments Kailash Satyarthi, President of the Global Campaign for Education

Talks of the global financial crisis continue as world leaders gather in London this week. The agenda is set to be dominated by further fiscal stimulus in rich countries, regulation of financial institutions, markets and practices, and an expanded role of the IMF. Yet it's the world's poorest feeling the worst effect of the global crisis, and campaigners are increasingly concerned that their needs will be marginalised in the debates.

“Slow but steady progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, especially in education, risk being swept away by the current climate. Families struggling to

survive will resort to sending their children to work to meet their basic needs”, David Archer, Board Member of the Global Campaign for Education.

Public education is one of the best investments that can be made right now. A single year of schooling can increase a girl’s future income by 10-20%. Investing in education protects the poorest from some of the worst economic harm. Educated and healthy people have the best opportunities to participate in and make lasting contributions to their societies, and are the strongest line of defence for any country’s economic survival and comeback.

The G20 must act now to prevent the crisis from undermining the prospects for future generations to lift themselves out of poverty through education. Aid to basic education has already dropped to \$4.4 billion per year, against the \$16 billion needed to ensure ‘Education for All’. Shrinking domestic revenues will lead to falls in public investment in education services. Inflexible IMF policies further restrict governments’ ability to free up own resources whilst at the same time result in diversion of aid flows.

Rich countries have the resources to protect their own citizens from the worst impacts of economic disaster. Investment in banks alone (not including other public investment programmes) has reached \$375 billion already. Developing countries must also be given the resources and freedom to pursue policies that will protect their people from slipping further into poverty and ignorance.

The Global Campaign for Education is calling for:

- \* Rich countries to meet the 2005 aid targets, adding an additional \$4.5 billion per year to make up for the deficit caused by contracting GNI.

- \* Rich countries to ensure that they pay the full share of the ‘Education for All’ financing gap of \$16 billion per year on a predictable basis to ensure.

- \* International financial institutions to undertake governance reforms so that the countries most affected by their actions have a greater say to ensure equity.

- \* New revenue streams and lines of credit, extended to the IMF, to be conditional on substantive reforms in their policy advice and lending instruments to low-income countries, to better align macroeconomic policy and EFA goals.

- \* Developing countries to be given access to credit lending terms that are responsive to their needs and capacities, including implementation of the IMF’s Special Drawing Rights programme

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Notes to Editors

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The Global Campaign for Education, founded in 1999, brings together major non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and teachers' unions in more than 120 countries. GCE promotes access to education as a basic human right and raises public awareness to create the political will for governments and other leaders in the international community to fulfil their promises to provide at least a free, public basic education for all children. Every April GCE organizes a week of campaigning on education called Global Action Week. This year's Action Week is called 'The Big Read' 20th – 26th April [www.campaignforeducation.org/bigread](http://www.campaignforeducation.org/bigread)