

## **UN Millennium Goals**

### **Why Education Should be Our First Priority**

The United Nations has eight main goals to ensure a brighter future for people living all over the world. They would like to eliminate extreme poverty and hunger, empower women and promote gender equality, improve child health and maternal health, cure diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria, come up with a way to be sustainable in our environment, and promote a global partnership for development. But one goal is more important than the rest, and without it, we would never achieve many other goals. This goal is to “ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.” Without education, we could accomplish nothing, so it should be our primary goal.

A basic education is a commodity in developed nations such as the United States. School is such a routine activity that we never realize how important it is and how many children go without an education. About one fourth of the world’s population is illiterate. Our education is really our biggest key to a successful life. If you do well in school and are learned, life is much easier than if you don’t know much outside of common sense. Children who do not receive educations tend to be those that do not receive good jobs, and don’t make much money. If more children are educated, more people around the globe can lead better, more productive lives with jobs that have greater salaries.

Education is not only a key to one’s personal success, but the success of their entire nation. “A sustainable end to world poverty as we know it, as well as the path to peace and security, require that citizens in every country are empowered to make positive choices and provide for themselves and their families” is what the UN stated about the need for education. Educated adults make better choices for the people around them, and will be more helpful in solving crisis. Additionally, educated citizens will be more informed about governments, allowing them to vote for leaders they find best suit their needs.

However, much opposition to this view exists. Perhaps one of the most dominant conflicting arguments is that poverty and hunger are more imminent threats. Supporters of this case state that hungry and poor families do not have time for schooling. Underprivileged children often have to stay at home to farm or help produce food or make money. Furthermore, they state, hungry children would not learn well in a school environment. They even go so far as to say that an education would not be useful to these impoverished children.

But what followers of that argument fail to realize is how important an education really would be to poor farmers. Learning better agricultural techniques, basic botany, and zoology would all be incredibly important to hungry and poor impecunious. With this sort of education, farms would increase productivity, feeding more, and providing money to the impoverished. An

education is the most important thing anyone can have, especially if they're living in poverty or are going hungry.

Another point of view is that health is more important than an education. This position points out that if you are unhealthy, you will need medical health instead of an education. They say that providing hospitals to cure people with infectious diseases and providing pediatricians and doctors for the pregnant must come before education and learning. They believe that with someone dying of malaria less than every 30 seconds and 42 million people living with AIDS, curing diseases like HIV/AIDS and helping TB and malaria victims is more important than making sure children go to school.

While this opposition does seem persuasive, it has flaws too. The only way to ensure that fewer people *get* HIV/AIDS, malaria, and TB is not through hospitals, but education. Studies show that "Young people who have completed primary education are less than half as likely to contract HIV as those missing an education. Universal primary education would prevent 700,000 cases of HIV each year – about 30% all new infections in this age group." If people were educated about these diseases, they would be much less likely to contract them. Additionally, it is important to note that the only way to cure a disease is to know more about it. With more educated doctors and scientists, cures could be found to help those who have such diseases.

Probably the best known and definitely the most talked about goal is to ensure environmental sustainability. It is commonly known that pollutants are being poured into the water and air. This not only wipes out species and kills humans, but will slowly rise global temperatures. By ruining our environment, they argue, we wipe ourselves out.

However, like most other arguments, this opposition fails to realize that education must come before a solution to the crisis can be made. In fact, we wouldn't have even known about this threat if educated environmentalists hadn't discovered how closely we are tied to the environment and how much we harm it. Also, even if we do solve our current ecological problems, future generations will make the same mistakes if not taught about how important the ecosystems are and what damages them.

Education is the most important issue in today's world. If more people are given the opportunity to go to a school, many lives could be significantly improved. People would make more money and provide more food for themselves and their families, diseases could be prevented and cured with proper education, and our world could be more sustainable. With an educated populous, the world's productivity could soar to all new heights, and people could be more informed about how to improve their lives. If universal education is achieved, we can accomplish anything.