



# Basic Facts on Basic Education

*When people lack literacy, society as a whole suffers from lost opportunities for higher productivity, shared prosperity and political participation.*

## More kids are in school.

- Today, more children around the world are enrolled in primary school than at any time in history.
- Since the 1950s, the number of children in primary school has more than tripled, from 206 million in 1950 to 694 million in 2007. Global literacy has risen from 76% in 1990 to nearly 84% in 2007.
- The number of children out of school worldwide has dropped by 33 million since 1999.

## However, millions remain out of school.

- Approximately 72 million primary school-age children are not in school – the equivalent of the populations of New York City, Shanghai, Los Angeles and Tokyo combined.
- Girls account for 54% of the out-of-school children.
- More than half, or 39 million, of the world's out-of-school children live in areas impacted by conflict.
- An estimated 44% of out-of-school children in developing countries are unlikely ever to enroll.
- Children in school often face overcrowded classrooms, inadequately trained teachers and a lack of books, which leads millions of students to drop out before reaching the fifth grade.

## The United Nations set the goal of universal primary education by 2015.

- In 2000, global leaders from 164 countries met in Dhakar, Senegal and promised to ensure that every child around the world would receive a quality basic education by 2015. The Education for All goals include:

### Education for All Goals

- Goal 1: Expand early childhood care and education
- Goal 2: Provide free and compulsory primary education for all by 2015
- Goal 3: Promote learning, skills for young people and adults
- Goal 4: Increase adult literacy by 50 percent by 2015
- Goal 5: Achieve gender parity by 2005, gender equality by 2015
- Goal 6: Improve the quality of education

## Universal access to basic education is critical, but will we get there?

- UNESCO estimates that \$16 billion per year in additional international assistance is required to reach Education for All by 2015.
- By 2007, 62 countries had achieved universal primary education. Currently, 36 countries are making progress but may not reach the goals by 2015. A total of 30 countries will likely miss the 2015 goal, including India, Bangladesh and Pakistan – countries with surging populations and high rates of illiteracy.
- UNESCO estimates that if current trends continue, 56 million children will still be out of school in 2015.

## What is the United States Government doing to promote basic education?

- The U.S. is devoting \$925 million this year to support basic education in developing countries. This is a significant increase over the \$98 million spent by the U.S. in 2000, but additional funding is needed.
- The U.S. Government traditionally carries the responsibility for about one-fourth of major international initiatives, which would make its proportionate share of the Education for All around \$4 billion per year.