

## News Release

### Education Community Responds to CIDA's Children and Youth Strategy

November 20, 2009

Members of the development and education community in Canada agree that CIDA's new Children and Youth Strategy is a step in the right direction towards realizing the right of every person to receive a quality education.

Currently 72 million children do not have access to primary education and millions more are showing up at the school doors ill-prepared and unsupported. In addition, 776 million adults remain illiterate.

The announcement of \$60 million to the Education for All Fast Track Initiative over 5 years (2009 – 2014) was welcomed as a step towards Canada addressing the financing gap to education. What is missing from the strategy is an indication that Canada is moving towards the kind of long-term, stable and predictable financing that will be required if the world is to achieve the Education for All and Millennium Development Goals by 2015. With \$329 million disbursed to basic education last year, Canada still falls short of reaching its \$550 million fair share to fund the \$11 billion financing gap for Education for All.

CIDA should be applauded for shifting the focus towards the *quality* of education, particularly through addressing issues around gender and teachers and teaching. "Without quality teachers, children are not able to realize the full potential of their education. If we are to realize the Education for All and Millennium Development goals by 2015, 18 million teachers will need to be recruited and trained," says Barbara MacDonald Moore of the Canadian Teachers' Federation, and co-chair of the Canadian Global Campaign for Education.

CIDA's strategy to increase the quality of education falls short, however, in its inability to make the link between investment in early childhood and success in education. Across the developing world there is a crisis in the early grades, with high rates of drop-out and less than half of those enrolled mastering basic reading, writing and mathematics skills by grade three

"Research reveals that good quality early childhood care and development services and attention to the transition between home or preschool and school are essential for success in education, most especially for vulnerable children. Without a strong foundation, young children are set up to fail," says Louise Zimanyi, Director of the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development and member of the Canadian Global Campaign for Education.

In order for Canadian aid to education to be a true vehicle for poverty reduction and social development, members of the Canadian Global Campaign for Education urge CIDA to address the full Education for All agenda agreed to in 2000, from early childhood care and education through adult literacy.

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The Canadian Global Campaign for Education is a coalition of civil society organizations (CSOs), including NGOs, universities and unions, working to enhance Canada's contribution to meeting the Education for All goals through policy dialogue, research and public engagement. Visit our website at [www.cgce.ca](http://www.cgce.ca)

The Education for All goals were adopted at the World Education Forum in 2000 by more than 1,100 participants from 164 countries. The 6 EFA goals are:

- 1 Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children
- 2 Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality
- 3 Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes
- 4 Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
- 5 Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
- 6 Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills

The Millennium Development Goals, adopted by the UN in 2000, have two goals that address education:

Goal 2: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

Goal 3: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015