



Fighting to Learn: The Global Campaign for Education Part I

Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Identify economic, political and social barriers to education.
- Discuss challenges to educational access in different parts of the world.
- Learn about the Global Campaign for Education and participate in its advocacy for greater educational opportunity worldwide.

Materials

Three “Breaking the Cycle” Packs: one on Honduras; one on Zambia; and one on Vietnam. Each pack has one country situation page, four information sheets, and four arrows.

“Fighting to Learn” fact sheet

Newsprint/easel paper

Tape

Time

45 minutes

Introduction and Guidelines (5 min.)

Introduce yourself and explain that today’s topic will focus on issues related to education globally. Review the Global Kids guidelines of One Mic (one speaker at a time), Safe Space (respect, support, and agreeing to disagree), and Participation (everyone has something to contribute so join in!).

Warm Up: Human Barometer on Global Education (10 min.)

Rationale

This activity allows participants to debate issues of education, while promoting critical thinking and respect for one another’s opinion.

Procedure (10 min.)

1. In advance, write the words *agree*, *disagree*, and *not sure* in large letters on newsprint, creating three signs. Post the signs *agree* and *disagree* on opposite sides of the room. Put the sign *not sure* in the middle.
2. When the activity starts, ask participants if they know what a barometer is (an instrument that measures atmospheric pressure). Tell participants that they are going to participate in a human barometer, which measures the opinions of *people* in a room.
3. Tell participants that you will read a statement. Participants are to decide if they agree with, disagree with, or aren't sure about the statement. Without talking, each participant is to register his or her opinion by moving toward the appropriate sign.
4. Read the first statement:

Education is a right, not a privilege.

5. After participants have established their positions, call on a few participants to explain why they agree or disagree with the statement.
6. Invite participants to move if they wish to change their position on the statement. Ask a few participants to share why they moved.
7. Repeat this process as you continue, using any or all of the following statements, depending on how much time you have available:
 - **Rich countries should pay to educate children in poor countries.**
 - **It's more important for boys to attend school than girls when funding is limited.**
 - **If parents are poor, they shouldn't expect their children to get a good education.**
 - **In poor countries, children need to work more than go to school.**

Facilitator's Note: If participants begin to debate each other, remind them that a human barometer is not a debate but an opportunity for everyone to express an opinion. Also, be sure to call on participants who haven't spoken so that a range of perspectives on the issue is considered.

Processing:

1. Were there any statements that were challenging to you?
2. What factors do you think influence your opinions?
3. How important is education for all and why?

Segue into the next activity by explaining that there are many factors that prohibit children around the world from receiving an education. According to UNESCO, 104



million children between the ages 6 and 11 are not in school. Sixty percent are girls; nearly 40% of these out of school children live in Sub-Saharan Africa; 35% live in South Asia. Explain that the next activity will familiarize them with some of the challenges children and youth face in other parts of the world.

Main Activity: Breaking the Cycle (30 minutes)

Procedure (15 minutes)

1. Divide participants into three equal groups.
2. Give each group a “Breaking the Cycle” pack consisting of a country situation page, four information sheets, and arrows. After reading the country situation page, ask the groups to decide on the order of the statements, indicating which circumstance leads to the next by using the arrows. The sheets can be arranged in a line or in a circle according to what the groups think is correct. These can be done on the floor, on a table, or taped to the wall. Arrows should be placed in between each statement.
3. Ask each group to think of three ways the cycle they are looking at could be broken.
4. After the three groups finish, ask them to return to the larger group, share their situation, the order of the cycle they determined, and what interventions could be made to stop the cycle.

Processing (10 minutes)

What was your experience of this activity?

How did you decide on the order of the cycle?

How did you feel about the child’s situation you were given?

How did you decide at which point of the cycle to intervene?

How important is education for all? Why is it important or not?

Pass out “Fighting to Learn” fact sheet and review with students.

What contributes to children being kept out of school?

What are the implications of not being educated? Does it matter?

Are there other ways to influence leaders around the world to ensure that all children have a chance at education?

What role can youth play in increasing education for all? What role can you play?

Standards

This lesson addresses the following McREL Fourth Edition standards:



- ***World History***

Standard 44: Understands the search for community, stability, and peace in an interdependent world.

Standard 45: Understands major global trends since World War II.

- ***Economics***

Standard 3: Understands the concept of prices and the interaction of supply and demand in a market economy.

- ***Health***

Standard 2: Knows environmental and external factors that affect individual and community health.

- ***Civics***

Standard 22: Understands how the world is organized politically into nation-states, how nation-states interact with one another, and issues surrounding U.S. foreign policy.

Standard 23: Understands the impact of significant political and nonpolitical developments on the United States and other nations.

Case study information adapted from Global Campaign for Education (UK) materials.

COUNTRY SITUATION 1: HONDURAS

Maria de Jesus Aguilar is a 48-year-old widow with ten children, eight of whom live at home. Coffee is the family's main source of income. Maria owns two small plots of land, which she grows coffee on with the help of her children. Maria says she is unable to keep her youngest children in primary school as a result of the worldwide drop in coffee prices. Maria's 9-year-old daughter spends her days picking coffee to help support the family.

Maria says: "What would I say to the big coffee producers? I would ask them not to be so unfair with the prices – I would tell them that they should help poor producers. I would tell them that they have to find ways to be fair and to help us. Sometimes we can't even buy the really basic things that we need like clothes and medicine. There are so many things we would like to be able to have, at least I would like to buy a bicycle or some toys for my children. I would like to have better living conditions. I would like to be able to afford better food for the family. I would like to be able to buy meat, milk, cheese, and butter, at least once a week. But these are things that we go without because I can't make ends meet".

Case study information adapted from Global Campaign for Education (UK) materials.

Coffee production opens up in Asia and due to lower prices paid to workers and the lower cost of living there, Latin American coffee growers are unable to compete with them.

Local growers in Honduras who have land where they have only grown coffee have to work extra time and cut costs to be able to sell their product to international companies.

For some families that depend on growing coffee for survival, the costs of uniforms, books and not having 2 extra hands in the coffee fields is not worth it because the family has to eat.

**Without any skills,
children who are
unable to go to
school due to
having to work in
the fields, are
destined to have the
same jobs as their
parents and be
dependent on the**

international coffee trade for survival.

COUNTRY SITUATION 2: ZAMBIA

About 45 percent of Zambia's population is illiterate. Primary education is free, but secondary education is not free in public schools. Mary's completed primary school and wants to go to high school in order to have a better future. Her mother lost her job because she was sick all the time, and her dad died a few years back. She fears that her mother may have HIV/AIDS and die soon, leaving Mary an orphan. Mary's aunts and uncles are not rich and she doesn't know who can pay her school fees since any extra money right now goes towards her mother's medicines and medical treatment.

Mary has started working as a maid in the home of a local family. She hopes to save up enough money to be able to go to high school, but the longer she stays out of school, the harder it will be to enter back in, especially since there are competitive exams that only about 50 percent of students pass in order to go on to the next grades.

Mary worries about herself and her younger brothers and sisters who she will have to look after if her mother passes away. The additional duties of cooking and cleaning for her siblings will make it difficult to work and go to school.

Case study information adapted from Global Campaign for Education (UK) materials.

**The President
refused to remove
fees for high school
students to attend
public schools
because he said the
government could
not afford to pay for
it.**

Copper prices in Zambia dropped and since that was the country's major industry, the government took out large loans whose repayment left little for building schools.

There are not enough schools in Zambia for all students who want to attend. After 7th and 9th grade, students have to take an exam, and only 50% of those who pass will get to go on.

Students who cannot study have trouble finding jobs and end up working in low-paying jobs, or dangerous conditions like in the Copper industry.

COUNTRY SITUATION 3: VIETNAM

Oanh is a primary teacher from Vietnam. She went to visit an outlying village where few children, especially girls, are able to go to school. She writes, “It had been raining for several days and we walked slowly on the mountain paths made slippery by rain. We really began to understand how difficult it was for girls and boys from this area to get to school. When we arrived in the village we went to Mr. Giang A Tra’s house. All his family members were there sitting around the fireplace. His young 9-year-old daughter brought water to welcome us. I asked what grade she was in at school. She said, ‘I have no chance of going to school. According to our custom, girls don’t go to school, it’s only for boys’.”

“I turned to her father to ask him why he didn’t send his daughters to school. He said, ‘According to our custom, it is not necessary for girls to go to school. They only need to know how to weave fabric and embroider as well as do farming to help their parents. They can get married with a good husband and receive a lot of silver, wine and meat if they know how to serve people well’.”

Case study information adapted from Global Campaign for Education (UK) materials.

**Schools are far away
and few jobs exist
for girls after
finishing school, so
parents focus on
getting daughters
married and
teaching them
farming & weaving,
which they can do
at home.**

Mothers have not gone to school so they may not see the necessity for their daughters to go to school. Girls are needed to help around the house and at the farms.

Since rural communities don't send their girls to school, the government doesn't invest a lot of money into building schools where they will not be used.

Since most teachers are men, parents are reluctant to send their girls far distances to learn from men who may take advantage of them and ruin their future chances for marriage, where they can get silver and other things the family needs.



FIGHTING TO LEARN FACTSHEET (Part I)

- 104 million children between ages 6 and 11 are out of school – 60% of whom are girls – are not in school. Nearly 40% of these out-of-school children live in Sub-Saharan Africa; 35% live in South Asia (UNESCO 2003).
- Another 150 million children are at risk of dropping out of school before they finish primary school.
- One third of all children, and one in two in Africa, never complete 5 years of primary school – the minimum length of education needed to achieve basic literacy.
- More than 140 million young people, ages 15-24, are entering adulthood illiterate.
- Of every dollar rich countries give in development assistance, only about 2 cents goes to basic education.
- At least 86 developing countries are at risk of missing the goal of universal primary education by 2015.
- **Obstacles that keep many children out of school:**
 - School fees: In many poor countries, it can cost a month's wages or more to send one child to a government primary school. Enrolments doubled or tripled in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Malawi after these countries abolished school fees. Yet at least 101 countries are still charging fees for primary education, according to the UNESCO Global Monitoring Report on Education for All (2003).
 - Child labor: Because many families cannot afford school fees and need additional income, many children work in unsafe conditions instead of going to school. Many children spend their days at tedious and unhealthy jobs such as making bricks, collecting scrap metal, sewing footballs or begging in the streets. Yet 132 governments have signed ILO Convention 182, which calls for immediate action to ban the worst forms of child labor.
 - Poor quality: Even those who are able to attend school cannot afford the basic supplies for learning. In addition, classrooms often lack the basic tools for learning, such as books and desks. Finally, poor communities often do not have properly trained teachers. Class sizes may be very large, or the school day may last only 2 or

3 hours. In these circumstances, even children who do attend school may still be missing an education, since they are unlikely to acquire functional literacy skills.

- **Many children face other social barriers and discrimination as well:**
- Discrimination against girls and women: The majority of out-of-school children are female, partly because schools are physically unsafe, too far away from home, or lacking any female teachers.
- Disability: Many countries do not provide any help for children with disabilities to attend school.
- HIV-AIDS: In Africa and parts of Asia, AIDS is forcing children to drop out of school – either because they have lost their parents, because they have to stay home and care for sick relatives, or because they have to work to help the family survive.
- Conflict: Wars and civil strife destroy communities and uproot children. Refugee children frequently get no access to education.
- Lack of relevance: Some governments insist that all schools conform to a rigid academic format that is out of step with local cultures, languages and livelihoods. Parents may see this type of schooling as a threat to cherished ways of life.

Source: Global Campaign for Education, USA
http://www.campaignforeducationusa.org/facts_default.asp



