

1. Why don't 115 million primary school age children go to school?

Objective:

To find out what young people think are the problems faced by developing countries in providing education for all primary school age children.

You will need:

- Copies of the 'Reasons' statements cut up, one set for each group of 4/5.
- Copies of the 'Priority' sheet, one for each group.

Time required:

- Approximately 30 minutes

Instructions:

- Give a set of the 'Reasons' statements and a 'Priority' sheet to each group of 4/5 in the class.
- Ask the groups to read the statements and decide, as a group, why they think 115 million primary school age children don't go to school.
- Tell the groups to place the 'Reasons' statements on the 'Priority' sheet, limit the number of statements in the Most Likely part of the sheet to three.
- Ask each group to feedback their thoughts about the question; make a record of the most common 'Reason' statements.

Discussion:

The 'Reason' statements can be used to explore a range of issues:

- *Prejudice* – statements like 'Because they don't want to go to school' and 'Because they don't need an education', can be used to explore the negative ideas and images the class have of children in developing countries.
- *Cultural* – statements like 'Because they can get their education elsewhere', and 'Because it is more important to educate boys' can be used to explore how different cultures view education.
- *Economic* – statements like 'Because they can't afford to go to school', 'Because girls are needed to work in the home' and 'Because they have to earn money for their families' can be used to explore how poverty restricts access to education.
- *Political* – statements like 'Because there are not enough teachers', 'Because schools are not near to where they live' and 'Because there are not enough schools' can be used to explore the reasons why some governments are unable to provide an education service for all.

The 'Obstacles and Responses' sheet can be used as background information to make the link between the difficulties countries have in providing an education for all and global economic / political institutions.

Because they don't want to go to school.	Because there are not enough teachers.
Because they can get their education elsewhere.	Because girls are needed to work in the home.
Because they can not afford to go to school.	Because they do not need an education.
Because they have to work to earn money for their families.	Because the schools are not near to where they live.
Because there are not enough schools.	Because it is more important to educate boys.

**Most
Likely**

Likely

**Least
Likely**

Obstacles and Responses

The governments of poor countries in the world would like to provide primary education for all their children by 2015 but have difficulties finding the money to pay for it. The main obstacles are:

Trade:

They don't get enough money from the sale of their products on the world market – food stuffs like cocoa, minerals like copper and manufactured goods like clothes. The richer countries should pay a higher price.

Response from the World Trade Organisation:

The world market determines the price of goods. Any price fixing would go against the principles of free trade. Countries wanting to earn more money should change to producing goods with a higher market value.

Debt:

They have to use the money they earn to pay interest on international loans – with individual countries like the UK and with financial institutions like the World Bank. The richer countries should cancel the debt.

Response from the World Bank:

Money lent must be repaid. Cancellation of debts would undermine international finance and make credit worthiness meaningless. How could the World Bank be sure that the money not being used to pay interest on loans was being used to educate children?

Aid:

They have little say in how international aid is to be spent – donor countries like big prestigious projects like hydro-electric dams. Richer countries should spend more aid money on education.

Response from Bilateral Aid Donors:

Aid projects which are aimed at improving the infrastructure stimulate economic growth. Money generated by this growth can be used for education. How could aid donors be sure that money provided for education reaches those who need it the most?

SAPs:

They are restricted in how much money can be spent on education by international finance institutions. Structural Adjustment Programmes are a condition of receiving support from the International Monetary Fund. The richer countries should change the way the IMF works.

Response from the International Monetary Fund: The IMF needs to ensure that international money lent to countries is being used wisely. Relaxing the rules would only make their economic problems worse. The countries who provide financial support through the IMF can not continue to 'bail out' countries with economic problems, they must be able to stand on their own 'financial feet'.