

Bruns, Barabara, Alain Mingart and Ramahatra Rakotomalala. 2003. Achieving Universal Primary Education By 2015: A Chance for Every Child. The World Bank. Washington D. C. Paper. Price: Unknown x + 241 pages + compact Disk (CD)

A world of educated and well informed people is the basis for fighting oppression, dictatorship, poverty, civil strifes, and hunger. A world of educated people is also the basis for building the necessary solidarity for combating the health, economic, social, political, cultural and environmental problems that have been mankind's biggest nemeses.

The beginning of the battle is the effort to ensure that every child has the elementary or primary education which form the basic building block for further education such as secondary and post secondary education. A world filled with ignorant and uneducated people is a dangerous world. Barbara Bruns', Alain Mingat and Ramahatra Rakotomalala's book: Achieving Universal Primary Education by 2015: A Chance for Every Child is a great addition to the literature informing the world about the challenges of education for all, progress made in education made in education since Jomtien; what it will take to achieve the goal of Universal Primary Education by 2015; the cost of the millennium development goal (MDG) of universal primary education; and the implications for countries and donors.

The book contains five paragraphs loaded with an in-depth designation and analysis of the issues pertaining to universal primary education for the world. The analysis of the data is based on serious, rigorous and thorough examination of existing data. The statistical analysis explores matters germane to the following: primary school completion progress in Africa, Middle East and North Africa, South Asia Regions, Europe, Central Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean Regions. Primary school completion rates and gross enrollment ratios are also provided for regions of the world. The authors provide analysis with regard to domestic and external financing required to achieve the education millennium development goal (MDG) in 47 countries, average educational attainment of adult population by region and many more important data analyses and projections which lend themselves to policy matters.

It should be mentioned that the book is very well organized and the analyses are equally well conducted so that the reader can see the necessity of why emphasis on education should be placed by countries that are doing poorly in providing primary education to the majority of their citizens. Capacity building must be top priority by these countries so that people can participate in enabling a sustained economic growth to happen. The book stresses this argument. Sustainable development pivoted upon empowering people through education is lasting and comprehensive. Perhaps the authors summed up the theme of the book when they noted:

Combined with sound economic policies, education is fundamental for the construction of globally competitive economics and democratic societies. Education is the key to creating, applying and spreading new ideas and technologies which in turn are critical for sustained growth; it augments cognitive and other skills, which in turn increase labor productivity. The expansion of educational opportunity is a “win-win” strategy that in most societies is far easier to implement than the redistribution of other assets such as land or capital.

By investing in human capacity, the world will be enabling people to fend for themselves, to be creative and to contribute to the betterment of the human race. This book has certainly given the reader a report card on how the regions of the world are doing with regard to primary education. It has made predictions of what might happen if policies are not put in place to rectify the deplorable conditions in many parts of the world. More importantly, it has provided policy makers the tools for making the necessary changes in education. This is a must read by scholars and policy makers of education reform. The tables and charts/graphs are excellent for research work.

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