UN Millennium Development Goal 2
Universal Education

TARGET
• Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

Measures of success:
2.1 Net enrolment ratio in primary education
2.2 Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary education
2.3 Literacy rate of 15-24 year-olds, women and men

QUICK FACTS
Enrolment in primary education in developing regions has reached 89% in 2008, up from 81% in 2000. We are not set to reach the goal at the current pace we are going at.

There are about 69 million school-aged children not in school. About half of these children live in sub-Saharan Africa.

WHERE DO WE STAND?
Projections suggest that without further investments universal primary education will not be achieved by 2015. Inequalities in access to education continue to pose major barriers to fully attaining the target. The children most likely to drop out of school or to not attend at all are often girls and those from poorer household or living in rural areas.

Enrolment totals have continued to rise, reaching 89% in 2008, but this is still insufficient. About 69 million school-aged children are not going to school. This number is down from 106 million children in 1999.

Between the years of 1999 and 2008, enrolment numbers in sub-Saharan Africa increased by 18%. This means that one in four children of enrolment age are still not attending.

Drop-out rates in many countries still remains high. In sub-Saharan Africa, more than 30% of children drop-out before finishing the final grade of schooling.

For children to reach their full potential and countries to develop, the gains made in universal primary education must be replicated at the secondary level. At present, less than 55% of children of the appropriate age in developing countries attend secondary school. In Oceania, for instance, ~2/3 of children of secondary school age are out of school. In sub-Saharan Africa, only 1/4 of children of secondary school age are in secondary school.

In many areas, providing enough teachers and classrooms for students has been troublesome. An estimated double the amount of teachers currently in sub-Saharan Africa are needed.

WHAT HAS WORKED?
• Abolishing school fees has led to a surge in enrollment. Challenges in providing sufficient school buildings and teachers still remain. Burundi, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda
• The WFP provides school meals as an incentive for parents to send their children to school.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?
• Ensure sustainable education systems, delivering quality services and retaining professional staff.
• Ensure universal coverage in primary education.
• Raise domestic spending on education to 15% to 20% of national budgets.
• Provide $11 bill in aid needed annually to achieve universal primary education by 2015.
• Integrate education as a key part of humanitarian responses to post-conflict and emergency situations.
• Eliminate school fees, particularly for low-income families.
• Provide cash transfers to poor families conditional on their children’s, especially girls’, enrollment in school.
• Provide children with transportation to and from school when needed.
• Offer free meals and basic health services at school to improve children’s health, nutrition and cognitive development.
• Expand pre-primary school educational programs.
• Improve aid effectiveness for education.

TURN OVER TO SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP