



EDUCATION AND POVERTY: an explanation text

For you to do

- Read the explanation and choose the best sub-heading for each paragraph:

HEALTH

TEACHERS

FEES

CHILD LABOUR

CONFLICT

Introduction

In Australia and other rich countries, all children will spend time in school and learn to read and write. Education is a right for all children that gives people choices and opportunities in life. However, in the world today, 115 million children will never go to primary school. Poverty causes many children to miss out on the chance to go to school. Why? What is it about poor countries that causes so many children to miss out on their right to an education?

Firstly, in most poor countries, both government and private schools charge fees. Governments in poor countries have a limited amount of money and so they charge fees. Many families are too poor to pay the fees and so the children miss out on education. Poor parents struggle to pay for the food and clothes they need.

Secondly, poor families often need their children to help bring in money or help around the home. Children may drop out of school because they are sent out to work. Many children in Africa, especially girls, will spend much of their day walking four to six kilometres to collect water from a well or working in the fields. Also, many girls will stay at home to look after the children and do chores while their mother goes to work.

Thirdly, poor countries struggle to spend enough money to train and pay qualified teachers. Developing countries need to increase the number of teachers and the quality of teachers – and this means they need to increase the pay for teachers too.

Next, schools need to be seen as safe places. In countries where there is war or conflict (e.g. East Timor, Iraq, Sudan), children may be kept from school to help keep them safe. Peace is essential if children are going to attend school and be able to concentrate on learning.

Finally, malnutrition and illness are much more common in developing countries. Dirty drinking water and poor sanitation cause diseases that keep children and teachers from attending school – and can even kill them. Also, when parents are sick, children have to go to work or stay at home to do the household chores.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there are many reasons why children in poverty miss out on their right to a basic education. These are factors that can be changed, but poor countries need our help to do that.



A thatched roof classroom in Mozambique was so hot and crowded it was hard to learn – and a hard place to keep good teachers.

World Vision and Education

World Vision Australia works to improve education for children in developing countries by :

- training and developing of teachers
- the provision of textbooks and school supplies
- building schools
- improving access to safe drinking water
- peacebuilding activities in regions of conflict
- lobbying for the removal of fees in schools
- helping parents understand the importance of education for all their children