

In the biggest children's lobby the world has ever seen, in April 2004 over 100 countries rang with the sound of millions of children meeting their country's top leaders and simultaneously giving a very simple message - help get the 100 million kids missing an education into school.

In the UK, for example, Hilary Benn, Secretary of State for International Development announced Britain's contribution of £12 million to the Fast-Track Initiative which will help developing countries provide education for the world's poorest children. Together, the millions of children and adults around the world involved in the Big Lobby helped make a real difference to their lives and futures.

The World's Biggest Lobby was organised by the [Global Campaign on Education](#). **Find out more here about [how you can join in with the 2005 Action Week!](#)**

### **What happened around the world at the 2004 Big Lobby?**

#### **IN BURKINA FASO: MINISTER AGREES TO LAUNCH EFA PLAN**

More than 1000 children excluded from school went to the Place de la Nation in order to lobby 31 Elected Representatives including ministers. A visually impaired child was particularly inspiring when she made a strong speech on behalf of all the children present in all three languages of Burkina Faso, Mossi, Duyla and French, asking the elected representatives for a law enforcing Education For All (EFA). As a result of their efforts for Week of Action 2004 and the Big Lobby, the Minister of Education has already agreed to meet with the national civil society education coalition to implement an EFA plan.

#### **SRI LANKA: STOP POLITICAL INTERFERENCE IN EDUCATION, SAY CHILDREN**

In Colombo, 300 children from all provinces addressed leading political figures including the advisor to the PM, Hon Sunimal Fernando, the deputy education minister and various regional education governors. They demanded an end to political interference in teacher appointments, peace and consistency in education. Politicians pledged to give priority to education in their future plans and recognised the need to re-activate progressive plans for education reforms that now lay dormant. Schools got involved throughout the country and 200, 000 postcards with the Global Action Week message are to be sent to the President.

### **SPAIN: SIMULTANEOUS CHILD PARLIAMENTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY**

In 15 localities across Spain 18 simultaneous child parliaments were in action on the 20th of April. A total of 500 children were posing questions to their elected representatives and to date a phenomenal 60,000 Spanish children have written messages to the President.

### **DRC: MPs' EYES OPENED TO SCHOOL CONDITIONS**

MPs and officials have been taken to visit extremely run down schools to highlight the extent of DRC's education crisis. DRC's Vice President launched the Global Action Week at a centre for street kids with more than 1,000 people (mainly children) attending. On Tuesday again more than 1,000 kids were at the parliament to read a message for the parliamentarians, to which the President of the parliament responded.

### **GAMBIA: SPOTLIGHT ON CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

More than 700 children met with MPs, religious leaders, and Education Ministry officials in

Gambia's national assembly on Tuesday, including 100 children representing those missing out because of disabilities. One child asked, 'what is the government going to do about sexual harassment in schools?' another, finding it difficult get into the building, asked 'What is the government going to do about access to schools for disabled people?' Summarising the day's debates, Hon Halifa Sallah, the minority leader in the National Assembly, gave a strong speech promising more resources for basic education, and pledging to tackle cultural and social issues preventing children from attending schools.

### **CAMEROON: "WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR EDUCATION?", MPs ASKED**

500 children took part in the 'Biggest Ever Lobby' in Yaounde and a further 125 children lobbied in Big Mankon Bamenda, posing their questions to town councillors, mayors and MPs. When asked what they were doing for education, one of the MPs present answered, 'we the female parliamentarians are really concerned about the state of children, especially female children. We think children have a right to education and we are committed to making this right respected in Cameroon'.

### **US: "WHY IS THE US NOT DOING ITS DUTY?" CHILDREN ASK SENATORS**

Children aged from 5 to 18 descended on the U.S. Senate on Tuesday to tell their politicians what they needed to do to help education around the world. Maya and Hanna, both 13, asked 'Why is the US not doing its duty? We are the wealthiest country, yet are close to the bottom in helping poor countries.'

Former First Lady, Senator Hillary Clinton, co-hosting the event together with Republican Senator Arlen Specter, agreed that the US needed to provide more help for education in developing countries and announced an initiative to increase US aid to education to US \$2.5bn a year. She called on other legislators to help make it happen. Asked by the young people why she thought all girls should go to school, she replied 'because I am a girl!' [Take a look at the GCE USA website here.](#)

The events form part of the Global Campaign for Education's (GCE) annual Week of Action from 19-25 April, and take place exactly four years after 182 countries met in Dakar, Senegal in April 2000 and committed to provide education for all by 2015.

**Read the Big Book of the worlds' Biggest Lobby!** The excitement and impact of the Big Lobby is captured in photos and stories from over 100 countries in the GCE's 'Big Book'. [It is free to download from the Global Campaign for Education here!](#)