

Advocate



Join the movement for *Justice. Compassion. Love.*

Jan - Feb 2023
Newsletter

International Day of Education Edition

Every Child. Everywhere. In School. An Update

As Adventists, we believe that every child, everywhere should be in school. Education is a powerful driver for children across the world to move closer to the fullness of life that God intends for them. At ADRA we committed to undertaking a significant advocacy campaign that spanned the global Adventist community. We recognized that more than just directly serving children through our programs, we needed a movement of people committed to changing the systems and structures that prevent children from receiving a good education. We needed to help address the problem at its source.

We knew it was ambitious when we started, but I am amazed at what we've achieved. More than 1.3 million people signed our petition calling on leaders to see Every Child, Everywhere, In School. They did this even as the world was turned upside down amidst the global Covid-19 pandemic. The petition showed our ability to demonstrate enormous grassroots support for things we believe are important and good, and also created a strikingly huge supporter base. The people that signed this petition and their passion for justice remain one of the greatest assets we have. We also supported several pilot countries to run a 3-year localized advocacy campaign. What amazed me, and I hope will inspire you, is how much they were able to achieve.

Their efforts went beyond our expectations. Even as the pandemic closed schools, squeezed government budgets and distracted the attention of decision makers, these local campaigns were still able to achieve so much of what they set out to do. As a result, more government funding for education was raised, the most marginalized were prioritized, new research was developed, partnerships were formed, capabilities were improved, resilience was built, and commitments to improve policy were strengthened. The result is that more children are in school than would have been otherwise, and they are receiving a better-quality education. Perhaps just as significantly, skills, expertise, and passion were developed amongst Adventists to keep advocating for change.

There is, of course, more to be done. Not every child is in school – indeed, the pandemic, conflict, and climate change have only increased the challenge. That's why we are calling on you to keep praying and taking action with us, as we together continue to push for justice and a world that is a little more like the one God intends.



Michael Krueger

President

ADRA International

Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.."

Leaving no one behind

A Spotlight on ADRA Norway's Education Program

A Spotlight on Our Only Donor Country Pilot Project

Raleef, a ten year old child, has a genetic disorder in her spinal cord. It affects her mobility, her vision, and her ability to learn. She can shuffle with the aid of her walker, but she is otherwise immobile and dependent on caregivers.

In Lebanon, where Raleef lives, life is hard for children with disabilities, especially girls. Often, parents do not see the value in educating a child with a disability. Girls like Raleef are seen as incapable of anything. As such, providing them with access to education is not seen as a priority.

Sadly, it's a similar story in many places across the world. Research has found that in most countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, fewer than five percent of children with disabilities are enrolled in primary school. Children living with disability are up to five and a half times more likely to be out of school than those not living with disability.

At ADRA, we have a vision for a future where all children have access to their fundamental right to education; where all children and their communities are able to flourish and live in the fullness of life God intends for us all.

This vision has been at the heart of ADRA's global education campaign 'Every Child. Everywhere. In School'.

It is a bold and audacious vision; and a vision that will not be realized in full until no one is left behind.

That's why we at ADRA Norway have spent the last 3 years advocating for improved aid and access to education for children with disabilities across the world.

Accessing Education for Children with Disabilities, like Raleef

We know that children with disabilities are some of the most marginalized and excluded groups in the world. It is estimated that one-third of the 58 million children out of school in the world are children with disabilities. Disability has a greater impact on access to education than gender, household economic status, or rural/urban divide.

We know that some of the most common barriers for children with disabilities to access education are stigma or negative attitudes that neglect or devalue their needs by families, schools, and governments; inadequate or inaccessible learning environments such as untrained teachers, inaccessible infrastructure or inaccessible learning materials; school-based violence amongst children with disabilities; and conflict or crises which result in children with disabilities being overlooked and emergency resources and services not being inclusive or accessible.

We also know how important it is to ensure children with disabilities have access to education. It is important for their self-worth - allowing them to interact with their peers and build friendships, to build skills for employment and contribute to their communities. It is also important for their financial independence – educating children with disabilities increases their potential productivity and economic opportunities but also reduces future welfare costs and dependence. Moreover, research has found that low-and middle-income countries that do not adequately educate or employ persons with disabilities lose between 5-7% of their annual GDP annually. Educating children with disabilities will help them become productive members of society and release family caregivers to engage in income-generating activities, contributing to the economy.



ADRA Norway's Advocacy Efforts



ADRA Norway has been advocating strongly for increasing resources for inclusion of persons with disability within the education portfolio of our country's international aid program. Over the last 3 years we have worked with NGO consortiums and coalitions, helped organize the Global Disability Summit that took place in Oslo in 2022, engaged with the Minister of Development on disability-inclusion, co-wrote a number of news articles and opinion pieces, and developed a partnership with a major university here in Norway, collaborating with masters' students on research on inclusion in education.

As a result of our efforts, and the efforts of our colleagues and partners in the development and disability-inclusion community here in Norway, we are able to celebrate some incredible achievements. We praise God that there is now

sustained long-term funding for disability inclusion in Norway's aid program. We now have a seat at the table and are a trusted voice on matters relating to disability and education.

This International Day of Education we are continuing to call on our government and governments around the world to invest in inclusion. To support policies, networking, and financing for education of children with disabilities within their international aid programs.

Our audacious vision of Every child. Everywhere. In School. will not be realized in full until no one is left behind.

We must continue our global advocacy efforts to make that happen.



Derek Glass

Humanitarian Section Lead
ADRA Norway



Gry Haugen

Communication Director
ADRA Norway

Motivational Minute

“

Our ideas of education take too narrow and too low a range. There is need of a broader scope, a higher aim. True education means more than the pursual of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man

Ellen G White - *Education*, p. 131

Motivational Minute is kindly provided by the Ellen G White Estate.

”

Campaign Impacts Across the World

For the past three years, several ADRA offices participated in our 'pilot country program' in support of our campaign. There is so much to be celebrated in what they have been able to achieve.

Our Global Education Campaign has truly highlighted the power of coordinated, yet localized advocacy efforts. Across the globe, ADRA agencies have been identifying the systems and structures that prevent children from attending school, finding solutions, and doing advocacy in so many creative and strategic ways. As a result of advocacy, we are seeing Governments investing more in quality education, we are seeing more families understanding the importance of educating their girls, and, importantly, we are seeing more children in school.

Here are just some of the highlights from all different corners of the globe:

Somalia

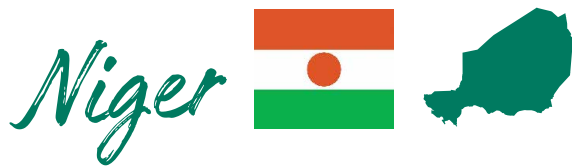


ADRA Somalia has worked hard to break down the barriers that prevent girls from being in school. In developing their advocacy campaign, they worked alongside the Ministry of Education and local-level leadership, ensuring their work was aligned with the Education Sector's Strategic plan and National Development Plan. They also developed and now chair a broad-based, national advocacy working group that includes a wide coalition of partners. These efforts strengthened their influence and opened up access to politicians and decision-makers. Working with their partners and undertaking robust research into what needs to change, they were able to contribute significantly to changes in the national policy framework.



Government funding for education has increased impressively from 3% of GDP to 7%, and the newest version of the Education Sector Strategic Plan has a gender-inclusive focus. This means that there will be more investment in the quality of education throughout the country, and more girls attending school!





ADRA Niger has been advocating for policies that will see a 15% reduction in the number of out-of-school children and young people. They saw two aspects to their advocacy work – first, increasing access to and funding for accelerated learning programs for currently out-of-school children so that they can rejoin the formal education system, and second, increasing in overall government spending on education.

Wisely, ADRA Niger collaborated with the STRØMME Foundation and local NGOs on this project so they could learn from a more experienced advocacy partner and to ensure they could stretch their resources and maximize their impact.

What they have achieved is remarkable; a government commitment to increase education spending to 22% of all government expenditure, an increase in support for non-formal education, and a 15% reduction in children out of school. The result is better-quality education and more children in school!



ADRA Fiji has been instrumental in changing the way education is delivered in emergencies throughout the country. Despite multiple disruptions, including a change of church leadership, a global pandemic, and natural disasters (including several major tropical cyclones and a volcanic eruption), ADRA Fiji has been able to ensure their advocacy remains relevant and useful. Their focus was initially on ensuring facilities were in place to continue schooling during the recovery phase after a cyclone. When the pandemic hit, the team pivoted their advocacy towards ensuring children had access to the resources they needed when they were locked out of school. This included providing access to digital materials and, where the internet wasn't widely available, pre-positioning printed education resources in community-based education centers.

They've also worked with government, education providers, and parents to ensure everyone understands the importance of children continuing their education in emergencies – even if that has to be from home. As Adventists are a significant education provider, and because of ADRA Fiji's reputation and relationships, including with government ministers and departments, ADRA Fiji was able to speak directly to decision-makers about what policies were needed and assist in their implementation. In a time of significant disruption, ADRA Fiji's advocacy efforts have ensured that children's education has not been forgotten.



Mozambique



ADRA Mozambique has become one of the leading subject matter experts on education policy in the country. The team built their advocacy knowledge through research, relationships, partnerships, and training. ADRA Mozambique compiled a groundbreaking report recognizing the lack of rural infrastructure and support in regional areas and has partnered with a local university to produce a report on the impact of conflict on education. They have received widespread media coverage, hosted workshops and forums, engaged government decision-makers, and are now actively advocating for policy change – including the development of school feeding programs.



Thailand



ADRA Thailand has been focusing on education for about 364,000 migrant children who currently reside in Thailand – approximately 200,000 of whom are out of school. ADRA Thailand has been advocating for a clear and time-bound commitment from the Thai Government to see out-of-school migrant children in school by providing effective language support programs. They've taken action by writing and engaging the minister and working with others to see this change happen.

Myanmar



ADRA Myanmar had initially set out to ensure that minority ethnic groups still received access to high quality education in their local dialects. The team had developed significant expertise in this area and knew what steps the Government needed to take to accelerate their efforts. Due to political circumstances and instability, however, ADRA Myanmar had to pivot their focus to building internal staff capacity and further developing their research and data to support future advocacy endeavours. Although they have had to pause their advocacy for now, ADRA Myanmar has learned a lot through this process and are excited about future advocacy prospects.

Call to Action

Please join us in prayer on International Day of Education

Loving God,

We thank you that millions more children are in school now than a decade ago. We pray that this progress would be sustained, and every child, everywhere would be given the chance to gain an education and pave a brighter future for themselves, their families, and their communities.

We thank you for the amazing achievements of the Every Child. Everywhere. In School campaign. We thank you for the policies that have been improved, the attitudes that have been shifted, and the lives that have been changed as a result of advocacy done by ADRA teams across the world.

Please continue to bless and sustain the work of ADRA. Help us continue to work towards a world where all children can flourish and live in the fullness of life that you intended.

Amen.



ADRA

Our Purpose

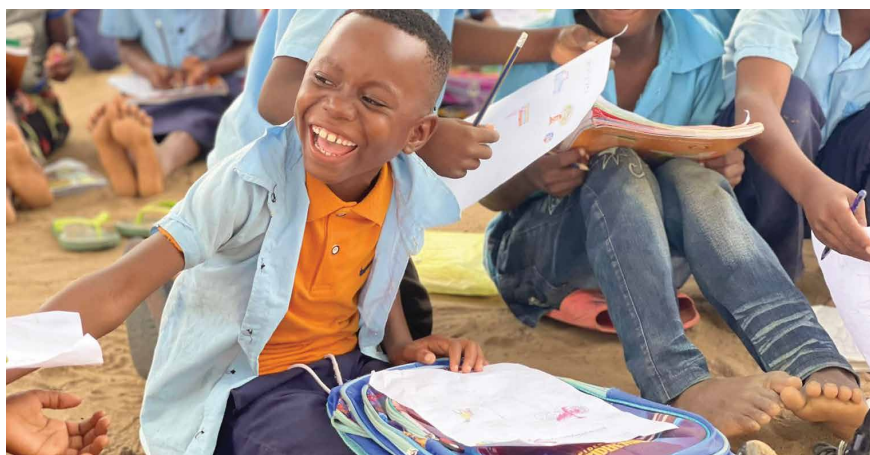
To serve humanity so all may live as God intended.

Our Motto

Justice. Compassion. Love.

What We Do

We are the global humanitarian arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church—part of the 20-million strong Adventist community, with hundreds of thousands of churches globally and the world's largest integrated healthcare and education network. We deliver relief and development assistance to individuals in more than 118 countries—regardless of their ethnicity, political affiliation, gender, or religious association. By partnering with local communities, organizations, and governments, we are able to deliver culturally relevant programs and build local capability for sustainable change.



**Read more
about us here:
ADRA.org**



Our work touches millions of lives in more than 118 countries around the world. Our on-the-ground approach allows immediate assistance in times of crisis and true partnership with the communities we serve.

Stay in Touch!

If you'd like to subscribe to our digital newsletter use the QR Code:

Or go to: <https://Source.ADRA.Cloud/Subscribe-Advocate/>

