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AFRICA REGIONAL EDUCATION WORKSHOP
*Education in a Changing World:
From Vision to Action*

T H E D A I L Y R E P O R T E R

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EFA's Status in Africa Reported

Progress continues to be made toward achieving the six education goals outlined in the Education For All (EFA) global initiative. However, more work is needed to improve educational opportunities at all levels, especially for girls, children in rural areas, special groups and disadvantaged youth, according to Aicha Bah Diallo, former assistant director general for education, UNESCO.

There are about 72 million children worldwide who still do not have access to quality basic education and nearly two-thirds are girls, she said, citing new statistics from UNESCO's *2008 Global Monitoring Report*. "They say when girls go to school they stay and succeed," Dr. Diallo said. "In Africa, they are the ones who drop out."

Dr. Diallo noted that adult illiteracy has declined across sub-Saharan Africa, and that gender disparities have decreased as well. She pointed out in particular that progress was impressive in Benin, Ethiopia, and Guinea, among other countries.

Madagascar has mapped out a reform strategy that among other things would remove school fees, increase central funding for education, recruit new teachers for rural schools, and raise compulsory school attendance from five to seven years. Ethiopia is pursuing a school agenda to increase enrollment, particularly among hard-to-reach and disadvantaged and young children, and to improve the quality of teaching and learning and its management and administrative systems.

Education is the tool for economic and social development, Dr. Diallo reiterated. "In basic education," she said, "we need to look at the whole system and give priority to the basics."



John Chandler, moderator for the AREW session on Emerging Technologies, shows visiting Ethiopian students the latest in computer-assisted learning. The students are recipients of AEI's Ambassador's Girls Scholarship Program.

Assessments Aid in School Improvement

Countries need to make better use of assessment results to improve their education systems. That was the conclusion of session participants who discussed the importance of continuous assessment, structured to inform teaching and learning, and the need for teacher guidelines for assessment.

Continuous assessment should be a part of the education system and a factor when considering promotion. Assessment results should be shared with teachers and parents and used to build capacity to improve performance. Too often the assessment is conducted and the results filed until the next assessment.

It is important to use reliable procedures and trained personnel when collecting assessment data and to understand the purpose of the assessment in order to design a process that adequately addresses the expected objectives. Participants were encouraged to learn about different assessment activities occurring in Africa.