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The Billion Child Appeal

Every country is plagued with a seemingly insoluble problem – how to increase social mobility of the disadvantaged and poor. Despite large sums being spent on research and on innumerable initiatives all over the world, very little has been achieved.

There is only one certain route out of poverty and social disadvantage – education.

Sadly, parents in disadvantaged communities throughout the world generally play a small role in regularly promoting the value and importance of education to their children and fail to insist that they remain at school, do homework and study.

The consequence is that many children of the disadvantaged either drop out of school or fail to take advantage of their education.

Mass training and mobilization of parents to inspire and ensure that their children go to school every day, remain at school until the age of eighteen, do homework every day and study for examinations will vastly increase the chances of young people all over the world. It will help them to successfully complete their education and qualify them to take up apprenticeships or attend tertiary institutions.

The establishment of universal national parenting skills training programmes has the potential within one generation to provide millions of children, who are otherwise condemned to live in poverty, the opportunity to escape and become engineers, doctors, teachers, other professionals and artisans.

This will transform our planet. Without the weight of a mass of poor, largely unemployable people our beautiful world will boast a growing, well educated and self motivated work force. This will provide young people with the opportunity to live fulfilled lives contributing to the intellectual capacity and economies of their country and the world.

May I commend the work of The Billion Child Appeal which has set as its goal the establishment of programmes to train the parents of a billion children around the world over the next thirty years.

++ Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu