

## Why will 40 million children in Africa not be at school today?

### Objective:

- To find out what young people think are the problems faced by African countries in providing education for all primary school age children.

### You will need:

- Copies of the 'Reasons' statements cut up, one set for each group of 4/5.
- Copies of the 'Priority' sheet, one for each group.

**Time required:** Approximately 30 minutes

### Instructions:

- Give a set of the 'Reasons' statements and a 'Priority' sheet to each group of 4/5 in the class.
- Ask the groups to read the statements and decide, as a group, why they think 40 million children in Africa will not be at school today?
- Tell the groups to place the 'Reasons' statements on the 'Priority' sheet, limit the number of statements in the Most Likely part of the sheet to three.
- Ask each group to feedback their thoughts about the question; make a record of the most common 'Reason' statements.

### Discussion:

The 'Reason' statements can be used to explore a range of issues:

- Prejudice* – statements like 'Because they don't want to go to school' and 'Because they don't need an education', can be used to explore the negative ideas and images the class have of children in developing countries.
- Cultural* – statements like 'Because they can get their education elsewhere', and 'Because it is more important to educate boys' can be used to explore how different cultures view education.
- Economic* – statements like 'Because they can't afford to go to school', 'Because girls are needed to work in the home' and 'Because they have to earn money for their families' can be used to explore how poverty restricts access to education.
- Political* – statements like 'Because there are not enough teachers', 'Because schools are not near to where they live' and 'Because there are not enough schools' can be used to explore the reasons why some governments are unable to provide an education service for all.

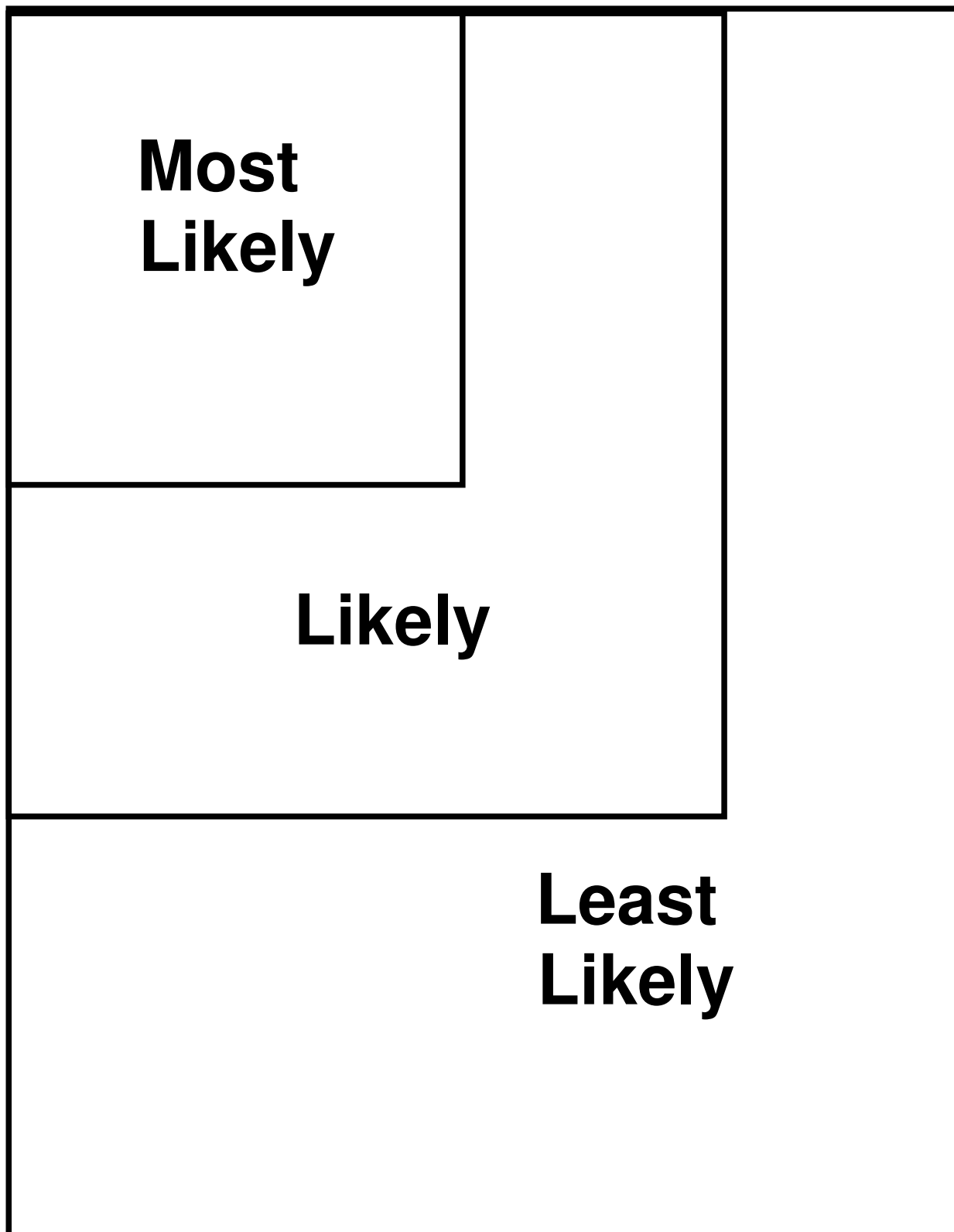
The 'Obstacles' sheet can be used as background information to make the link between the difficulties African countries have in providing an education for all and global economics and politics.



## Reasons statements

Because they don't want to go to school.	Because there are not enough teachers.
Because they can get their education elsewhere.	Because girls are needed to work in the home.
Because they can not afford to go to school.	Because they do not need an education.
Because they have to work to earn money for their families.	Because the schools are not near to where they live.
Because there are not enough schools.	Because it is more important to educate boys.

Priority sheet



## Obstacles to primary education for all in Africa

The governments of African countries would like to provide primary education for all their children by 2015 but have difficulties finding the money to pay for it. The main obstacles are:

### **Trade:**

African countries don't get enough money from the sale of their products on the world market – foods like cocoa and coffee, minerals like copper and manufactured goods like clothes. African producers are also adversely affected by subsidies paid to producers in rich nations and by tariffs which make it difficult for African products to enter 'western' markets.

The Commission for Africa has called on rich nations to dismantle the unfair subsidies they pay to their producers and lower tariff barriers on African goods. At the G8 conference in July 2005, rich countries made a commitment to work towards cutting subsidies and tariffs, but did not agree how, or on a timetable for doing so.

### **Debt:**

African countries have to use the money they earn to pay interest on international loans. These debts are owed to both individual countries and financial institutions like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The Commission for Africa has called on rich nations to cancel 100% of the debt owed by poor countries in sub-Saharan Africa. At the G8 conference in July 2005, rich countries agreed to cancel the debts of the 18 poorest nations in Africa. However, critics argue that this cancellation comes with strings attached ('conditionality') and that the debt relief package is being used as a way to force countries to open up to private inward investment and privatisation.

### **Aid:**

African countries have often had little say in how international aid is to be spent – donor countries tend to fund large scale projects such as hydro-electric dams which do not always benefit the poor.

The Commission for Africa has called on rich nations to donate an additional US\$25billion per year to Africa and commit to giving 0.7% of their annual income in aid. This aid should be predictable and untied they say. At the G8 conference in July 2005, rich countries did agree to increase aid to Africa by \$25 billion over the next few years, more than doubling the amount of aid given to Africa in 2004. There was also a promise by G8 leaders to provide access to anti-retroviral drugs for all people living with HIV/AIDS by 2010. However, there was no agreement on donating 0.7% of their annual income towards aid; European countries have agreed to work towards this figure, but not until 2015.

For further information on aid, debt and trade, see the student-friendly pages from Global Eye:  
[http://www.globaleye.org.uk/secondary\\_autumn2002/focuson/index.html](http://www.globaleye.org.uk/secondary_autumn2002/focuson/index.html)