A
other school day. Once again waking before the day
break and marching to class through the
moist cold of dawn with
a bag of books attached
to my back like a ball and chain. As
my fingers ached from scribbling in
my notebook the last thing on my
mind was any thought on the privi-
leges or benefits of education. But
education extends further than merely
math and science, language and litera-
ture. As Francis Keppel, a US Com-
mmissioner of Education, stated, «Edu-
cation is too important to be left solely
educators.»

Images of classrooms, desks, books
and rulers are invoked by the word:
‘education.’ But not all transfer of
knowledge needs to be rigidly struc-
tured. As demonstrated in this issue,
the positive effects of informal educa-
tion should not be underestimated.
However valuable the informal chan-
nels of education are, they are not an
obvious alternative to well-thought out educational pro-
grammes. It is difficult to decide exact importance of edu-
cation in development. When people are starving or dying
it is hard to declare the importance of education. Neverthe-
less, without education it is difficult to break through the
cycle and to penetrate to the root cause of the problem.
Regardless, leaving people to fester in their ignorance is
not the solution. Ignorance is not the bliss that it is pur-
pored to be. Education can be the difference between life
and death. There are cases where people diagnosed as HIV
positive have had to move due to discrimination, some
have even been burnt to death. People go untreated and
continue to transmit the disease because they cannot rec-
ognize the symptoms or even because they fear the persecution they may
face. This behavior may shock some of
us, but then, we’ve most likely had
some education on AIDS.

People in desperate situations can en-
danger the lives of others, but with guidance
draw lessons and inspiration from others
to channel the actions positively and
peacefully. Where will they draw their
inspiration from without an adequate
education? They will draw it from what
they have learned, they will draw it from
the tragedy and desperation that sur-
rounds them already. They remain under
seige by their ignorance of an alternate
method. As we advocate the distribution
of knowledge we should always keep in
the back of our minds what can be done
with the knowledge. In the words of
Herbert Spencer, «The great aim of edu-
cation is not knowledge, but action.»