



children first.

# Education

264 million children and youth are out of school.

Education is one of the smartest investments to support child survival, growth and development. Targeted investments in education lead to higher income, poverty reduction, and the empowerment of girls, the poor and the excluded. On average, just one additional year of education can increase a child's earnings later in life by 10 percent.

From 1970 to 2009, the world saw immense reductions in child mortality. An estimated 50 percent of that progress is linked to an increase in the education of girls and young women. Educated women are more likely to see a doctor for pre-natal care, and their children are more likely to be vaccinated against deadly diseases and see a doctor when they are sick.

And yet, 264 million children are out of school. Some 63 million children are missing out on their education due to conflict and crisis. Even when children are in school, the quality of education is often poor, and they are learning very little. This is not only a missed opportunity. It's a denial of children's basic human right to learn and become productive members of society.

Children in the poorest, most marginalized communities and situations have the worst chances to gain an education. Those living in conflict settings and fragile states, refugees and the internally displaced, children with disabilities, and ethnic minorities are least likely to get a quality education. In countries like Nigeria, Yemen, and Syria, there has been an increase in attacks on schools and children. During conflicts, girls are 2.5 times more likely



In the Côte d'Ivoire, an enthusiastic schoolgirl raises her hand in class.

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to drop out of school than boys. Girls are more likely than boys to never set foot in a classroom, despite all the efforts and progress made on girls' education over the past two decades. In fact, some 15 million girls of primary school age will never get the chance to learn to read or write in primary school compared to about 10 million boys.

## UNICEF in Action

UNICEF works in 155 countries to scale up access to quality education for the most marginalized children. Using an evidence-based approach, UNICEF collects and analyzes data — through traditional household surveys

## About UNICEF

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) works in more than 190 countries and territories to put children first. UNICEF has helped save more children's lives than any other humanitarian organization by providing health care and immunizations, clean water and sanitation, nutrition, education, emergency relief and more. UNICEF USA supports UNICEF's work through fundraising, advocacy and education in the United States. Together, we are working toward the day when no children die from preventable causes and every child has a safe and healthy childhood.

For more information, visit [unicefusa.org](http://unicefusa.org).

and real-time crowdsourcing via chat, text, and social media — to illustrate why and how children aren't getting the education they're entitled to. UNICEF then works in direct partnership with governments at the highest levels to establish the right policies and budgets based on country-specific needs. For example, in Mongolia, UNICEF was instrumental in the passage of a law on preschool education in 2016, which will now allow over 300,000 children to access kindergarten and school lunches for free.

At the same time, UNICEF works at the community level with administrators, teachers, parents and children themselves to increase access to education in a quality learning environment. Focusing on early childhood education, increasing spending for children in rural areas, and tackling barriers to girls' education bring massive returns on investment. Oftentimes, families simply cannot afford to send their children to school due to the costs of uniforms, books and transportation. Cash transfer programs for those families can increase school enrollment and retention rates. To ensure the full participation of girls, UNICEF links its education programs with WASH in schools, to make sure girls and boys have separate latrines, and that schools have handwashing facilities and safe drinking water.

Once children are in school, they need a quality learning environment to succeed. UNICEF supports teacher training and curriculum development for basic math and literacy skills, social and emotional learning, promotion of education in children's mother tongue, and behavior change to tackle discrimination against children with disabilities and ethnic minorities, and prevent violence in schools.

For children who can't attend formal school, such as those living in conflict settings or children from nomadic communities, UNICEF works to provide non-formal education and accelerated learning programs that meet local needs. For example, in 2016, UNICEF helped reach over 15,000 out-of-school children in Somalia with alternative basic education.

UNICEF invests in disaster risk planning, peacebuilding and emergency preparedness in schools by supporting risk assessments, and providing training to prepare for disasters and respond to crises. In 2014 and 2015, UNICEF worked closely with administrators and teachers in Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia to train teachers on how to safely operate schools

during the Ebola outbreak to prevent the spread of disease and save lives. In 2016, UNICEF led or co-led the emergency education cluster response in 74 countries. In Syria alone, UNICEF reached over 2.5 million children with textbooks and learning materials in 2016.

## 2016 UNICEF Education Snapshot

In 2016, UNICEF:

- Provided 15.7 million children with learning materials through nearly 331,000 classrooms and supported approximately 39,000 communities with school management, planning, and inclusive education training.
- Had over 700 experts working on education programs in 155 countries.
- Spent \$1 billion on education, including \$39 million for girls' education; \$45 million on training and deploying teachers; and over \$41 million for life skills, vocational training and development for adolescents.
- Reached 11.7 million children with education in humanitarian situations.
- Had innovative peacebuilding education programs in 14 conflict-affected countries, reaching more than 2 million children, teachers, and community members to promote peace in homes, schools and communities. ●



Children sit in a class at a refugee learning center in Athens, Greece.

Global poverty could be cut in half if all adults completed high school.