



for every child

Education

53 percent of children in low- and middle-income countries cannot read and understand a simple story by the end of primary school.

Education is one of the smartest investments that can be made to support child survival, growth and development. Targeted investments in education lead to higher income, poverty reduction, and the empowerment of girls. On average, an extra year of schooling increases a person's income by 10 percent.

From 1970 to 2009, the world saw immense reductions in child mortality. This decline can be attributed to more education for women, which is the single most influential factor in reducing the under-five mortality rate. Educated women are more likely to see a doctor for prenatal care, and their children are more likely to be vaccinated against deadly diseases.

And yet, more than 258 million children, adolescents and young people remain out of school. Children in the poorest, most marginalized communities are least likely to access an education. Those living in conflict zones and fragile states, who are refugees, who are living with disabilities, or who are members of ethnic minorities face considerable barriers to learning.

For too many children, schooling does not equal learning. At current rates, by 2030, 1.4 billion school-age children in low- and middle-income countries will not be on track to learn the most basic skills in childhood, and 825 million will not be on track to learn the secondary-level skills they need to succeed in life, work and active citizenship. A new approach is needed to address the global learning crisis and enhance learning outcomes



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

© UNICEF/UN061310/DEJONGH

for all children. In Chad, for every 100 boys of primary age in school, only 78 girls of primary age attend school.

UNICEF in Action

UNICEF works in 144 countries to provide access to quality education for the most marginalized children. Using an evidence-based approach, UNICEF collects and analyzes data — through traditional household surveys and real-time crowdsourcing via chat, text, and social media — to catalog the barriers holding children back. UNICEF works in direct partnership with governments at the highest levels to establish country-specific policies and budgets. In Malaysia, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education in

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, safe 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](https://www.unicefusa.org).

developing an early warning data system to identify individual students at risk of dropping out of school, based on seven new indicators.

Simultaneously, UNICEF works at the community level with administrators, teachers, parents and children to increase access to education in quality learning environments. 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 program with WASH in schools to ensure that girls and boys have separate latrines, as well as access to hand-washing facilities and safe 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, promotes education in the children's home language, and tackles discrimination against ethnic minorities and children with disabilities.

For children who cannot 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. For example, UNICEF and partners ran 25 Súper Panas, integrated spaces that provided non-formal education opportunities and psychosocial support to children on the move in Boa Vista, Manaus and Pacaima. UNICEF and partners reached over 12,000 children and adolescents with non-formal education.

UNICEF invests in disaster risk planning, peacebuilding and emergency preparedness in schools by supporting risk assessments and providing training to prepare for and respond to crises. For example, in Pakistan, UNICEF helped to strengthen 368 schools' capacity in disaster risk resilience and preparedness. Through disaster management planning, training and evacuation drills, UNICEF helped create structures to protect continued education for 29,440 children in disaster-prone regions.

Overall in 2019, UNICEF invested US\$40 million leading coordination of education



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

© UNICEF/UN057906/GILBERTSON

during humanitarian responses.

2019 UNICEF Education Snapshot

In 2019, UNICEF:

- Provided support in the form of individual learning materials to over 12 million children, and delivered skills development programs to more than 4 million children and youth.
- Had over 800 education staff working across 144 countries.
- Spent about US\$1.2 billion on education, including US\$21 million on inclusive education for children with disabilities, with \$13 million spent on system-strengthening activities such as ensuring countries have disability laws and policies that establish the right of all children to receive an education.
- Helped 7.4 million children gain access to formal or non-formal basic education in humanitarian situations. ●

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

To learn more, visit [unicefusa.org](https://www.unicefusa.org)