



# Science in the City

Building Participatory Urban Learning Community Hubs  
through Research and Activation





# QUALITY EDUCATION: WHY IT MATTERS

**262 million  
children  
and  
adolescents  
remain out  
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617 million  
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in reading  
and  
mathematics**



# 4 QUALITY EDUCATION



Obtaining a quality education is the foundation to creating sustainable development. In addition to improving quality of life, access to inclusive education can help equip locals with the tools required to develop innovative solutions to the world's greatest problems.

Over 265 million children are currently out of school and 22% of them are of primary school age. Additionally, even the children who are attending schools are lacking basic skills in reading and math. In the past decade, major progress has been made towards increasing access to education at all levels and increasing enrollment rates in schools particularly for women and girls.



# 4 QUALITY EDUCATION



Basic literacy skills have improved tremendously, yet bolder efforts are needed to make even greater strides for achieving universal education goals. For example, the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, but few countries have achieved that target at all levels of education.

The reasons for lack of quality education are due to lack of adequately trained teachers, poor conditions of schools and equity issues related to opportunities provided to rural children. For quality education to be provided to the children of impoverished families, investment is needed in educational scholarships, teacher training workshops, school building and improvement of water and electricity access to schools.



## **What is the goal here?**

Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning.

## **Why does education matter?**

Education enables upward socioeconomic mobility and is a key to escaping poverty.

Education is also essential to achieving many other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

When people are able to get quality education they can break from the cycle of poverty.

Education helps to reduce inequalities and to reach gender equality. In fact, one extra year of education is associated with a reduction of the Gini coefficient by 1.4 percentage points.

Education empowers people everywhere to live more healthy and sustainable lives.

Education is also crucial to fostering tolerance between people and contributes to more peaceful societies.

## How much progress have we made so far?

Despite years of steady growth in enrolment rates, non-proficiency rates remain disturbingly high. Globally, an estimated 617 million children and adolescents of primary and lower secondary school age— more than 55 per cent of the global total—lacked minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics in 2015. Non-proficiency rates are highest in sub-Saharan Africa and Central and Southern Asia, where more than 80 per cent of children of primary and lower secondary school age were not proficient in reading.



## Where are people struggling the most to have access to education?

Adequate infrastructure and teacher training play a critical role in the quality of education. Sub-Saharan Africa faces the biggest challenges in providing schools with basic resources. The situation is extreme at the primary and lower secondary levels, where less than one half of schools in sub-Saharan Africa have access to drinking water, electricity, computers and the Internet. Another important step towards the goal of good quality education for all is getting enough trained teachers into classrooms. Here again, sub-Saharan Africa lags behind.



## Are there groups that have a more difficult access to education?

Yes, women and girls are one of these groups. About one-third of countries in the developing regions have not achieved gender parity in primary education. In sub-Saharan Africa, Oceania and Western Asia, girls still face barriers to entering both primary and secondary school. These disadvantages in education also translate into lack of access to skills and limited opportunities in the labour market for young women.





## What can we do?

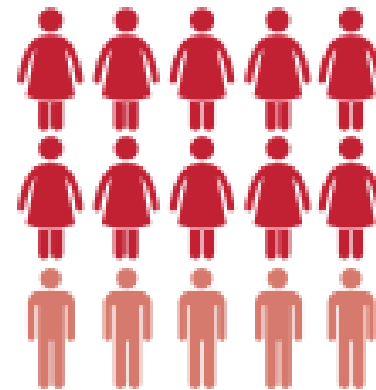
Ask our governments to place education as a priority in both policy and practice. Lobby our governments to make firm commitments to provide free primary school education to all, including vulnerable or marginalized groups. Encourage the private sector to invest resources in the development of educational tools and facilities. Urge NGOs to partner with youth and other groups to foster the importance of education within local communities.



**617  
MILLION**

CHILDREN AND  
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**LACK** MINIMUM  
PROFICIENCY  
IN READING AND  
MATHEMATICS

**750 MILLION  
ADULTS STILL  
REMAIN  
ILLITERATE**



TWO  
THIRDS  
OF THEM  
ARE  
**WOMEN**



## MORE THAN HALF OF THE SCHOOLS IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO

- BASIC DRINKING WATER
- HANDWASHING FACILITIES
- THE INTERNET
- COMPUTERS



**1** OUT OF **5** CHILDREN  
BETWEEN 6 AND 17 YEARS

ARE NOT

ATTENDING SCHOOL



IN CENTRAL ASIA, **27%** MORE GIRLS THAN BOYS  
OF PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE ARE NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL

## Facts & Figures

- Enrolment in primary education in developing countries has reached 91 per cent but 57 million primary age children remain out of school.
- More than half of children that have not enrolled in school live in sub-Saharan Africa.
- An estimated 50 per cent of out-of-school children of primary school age live in conflict-affected areas.
- 617 million youth worldwide lack basic mathematics and literacy skills.



## Goal 4 Targets

**4.1** By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and Goal-4 effective learning outcomes

**4.2** By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and preprimary education so that they are ready for primary education

**4.3** By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

**4.4** By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

**4.5** By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

**4.6** By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy



## Goal 4 Targets

**4.7** By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

**4.A** Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

**4.B** By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries

**4.C** By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states

## Links

[UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural](#)

[Organization](#)

[UN Children's Fund](#)

[UN Development Programme](#)

[Global Education First Initiative](#)

[UN Population Fund: Comprehensive](#)

[sexuality education](#)

[UN Office of the Secretary General's](#)

[Envoy on Youth](#)





To find out more about Goal #4 and other Sustainable Development Goals, visit:

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>

