



Education

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What Is It?

Knowledge or skill developed by a learning process or experience.

Education is central to development. It empowers people, strengthens nations, and is key to attaining the [Millennium](#)

[Development Goals.](#)

Getting an education is one of the best things you, as a young person, can do for yourself to ensure you lead a better, more fulfilling and prosperous life.

Education can significantly improve people's lives. It benefits people, society, and the world as a whole.

- It enables people to read, reason, communicate, and make informed choices about their lives.
- A more educated person often has more opportunities in life, earns more and has a higher standard of living.
- Did you know that each year of schooling increases a person's earnings by 10%!
- Skilled workers enable a country to develop and become wealthier as a nation, which benefits all.
- A skilled labor force creates, applies and spreads new ideas and technologies. Without education, inventions like electricity, medicine, cars, computers, video games, and much more wouldn't exist!

RELATED STORIES

- [In Afghanistan: Out of Conflict and Into School](#)
- [Paying Girls to Go to School](#)
- [Tsunami: Schools Struggle to Get Classes Up and Running](#)

MULTIMEDIA

- Video: [Education and Training on World Bank's B-SPAN](#)

LEARN MORE

- **Test your knowledge:** Take the [Youthink! quiz about Education.](#)

- **Engendering Education:** read this additional story about girls and education in our [Gender section.](#)

Explore these sites:

- [World Bank's Education Homepage](#)
- [UNESCO](#), the United Nations Agency for Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Why Should I Care?

- 115 million children around the world aren't in school. Poor kids often can't go to school because they need to work to help their families survive.
- Two-thirds of the kids who don't go to school are girls.
- More than 70% of the out-of-school children are in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.
- Of those who go to school, one-third drop out before they learn to read, write and count.
- Over 15% of children in developing countries don't complete a course of primary education. In Sub-Saharan Africa, less than 60% of children complete a course of primary education.
- Nearly 1 billion adults in the world are illiterate. Women account for 2/3 of all illiterate adults.
- Enrolment in tertiary education (enrolling in a university) in poor countries was less than 10% in 1997, compared to 57% in rich countries
- Rich countries some spend \$4,000 on a student each year, while developing countries spend \$40.

Around the World

- In **Sub-Saharan Africa**, at least 40 million children are out of school—22 million of them are girls.
- In **South Asia**, 36 million of children are out of school—22 million of them are girls.
- In **East Asia and the Pacific**, there are 12 million children out of school—6 million of them are girls.
- In **the Arab States**, there are 7.4 million children out of school—4.5 million of them are girls.
- In **Latin America**, there are 2.5 million children out of school—1.2 million of them are girls.

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THINK ABOUT IT

"I go to collect water four times a day, in a 20-litre clay jar. It's hard work! ... I've never been to school as I have to help my mother with her washing work so we can earn enough money ... If I could alter my life, I would really like to go to school and have more clothes." —*Elma Kassa, a 13-year old girl from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*

World Development Report 2004, Making Services Work for Poor People

What Is the International Community Doing?

At the World Education Forum in 2000, world leaders and 180 countries agreed that by 2015 all boys and girls should be enrolled in school and be able to complete primary education.

This international commitment to give every boy and girl in developing countries a good, free and compulsory primary school education is called Education for All (EFA).

To help all countries accomplish the EFA goals, donors partnered up with the countries most in need to help them develop good education plans and help all kids complete their schooling.

This global partnership called the Education for All—Fast Track Initiative (FTI) was launched in 2002. Donors provide financial and technical support while countries work to develop sound national education plans.

The Fast Track Initiative includes all major education donors, which is more than 30 bilateral, regional and international agencies and development banks. As of June 2005, these countries are receiving support from FTI: Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Madagascar, Mauritania, Moldova, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Vietnam, and Yemen.

The World Bank is the biggest funder of education in the world. The Bank works closely with governments, United Nations, donors, civil society organizations, and other partners to help developing countries enroll all children, especially girls and disadvantaged children, in school and enable them to complete a primary education.

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What Can I Do?

First, in whatever way you can, **keep learning**. Go to school, read books, learn a new craft, and talk to people who are different from you. Lifelong learning can enrich your life and the lives of those in your community socially and financially. Education helps you to strengthen your skills, learn your rights, and find your voice.

- **Become a tutor!** Ask a school head or teacher how you can help people with difficulties in school or visit the [Take Action resource page](#) of this site for a list of websites that offer volunteer opportunities.
- **Donate a Book!** [Book Aid](#) offers different ways for you to help “open up the world through books.”
- **Build a School!** Join [Habitat for Humanity](#) in the construction of a school.

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