

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

In many parts of the world, women, people with disabilities, Indigenous People and victims of conflict do not have access to quality education. This goal aims to ensure everyone has access to basic education so we can understand the world around us, critically reflect on what we see, do and hear and make informed choices about our health and well-being. This goal also aims to improve school facilities, increase the number of training and vocational opportunities for people and increase the number of trained teachers available to provide a safe and positive learning environment.

TARGETS

- By 2030, Goal 4 intends to provide early childhood, primary and secondary education for all.
- For adults, the goal is improvements to technical, vocational and job skills education, including university.
- Eliminate gender disparities and ensure equal access for vulnerable populations.
- Ensure all youth and a substantial amount of adults achieve literacy and numeracy.
- Promote global citizenship topics in all subjects including sustainable development, sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality and peace through education.
- Build and upgrade education facilities that are safe, inclusive, non-violent and effective learning environments.
- Increase the number of qualified teachers through training and education investment.

“A well-educated mind will always have more questions than answers.”

Helen Keller
American author,
activist



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1** Learners will understand the role of education and lifelong learning (formal and informal) as integral to sustainable development.
- 2** Learners will understand the value of education as a public good, fundamental human right, and also as a basis for empowerment.
- 3** Learners will understand the role of education to help create a more sustainable, equitable and peaceful world.
- 4** Learners will be able to raise awareness of the importance of quality education for all and find ways to motivate others to take action on this issue.
- 5** Learners will be able to understand, identify and promote gender equality in education.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Media

What are the big issues being reported in your community about education?

Environment

How can we turn education about the environment into action?

Poverty, wealth and power

How is access to education related to poverty?

Indigenous Peoples

What are the barriers and opportunities for Indigenous Peoples in education?

Oppression and genocide

How do conflict and oppression impact education?

Health and biotechnology

What can education do for health promotion?

Gender politics

How is education a gendered issue?

Social justice and human rights

How are social justice opportunities and human rights impacted by education?

Peace and conflict

What is peace and global citizenship education about?



THE BIG QUESTIONS

1 Where did it begin?

- The right to education is written in international law, in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Learning can be **formal** (in an institution delivered by trained teachers) or **informal** (occurring outside of a school setting, cultivating learning through conversation and experience).
- Education is a fundamental **human right** and is essential to understanding all other human rights. Being able to learn about the world around you promotes freedom, empowerment and understanding.
- However, more than 59 million children of elementary school-age are being denied the right to education. Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for more than half of all children worldwide out of school, 55 per cent of whom are girls.¹
- The problem is that many millions of children and adults do not have access to education. The biggest reason people are deprived of education is **poverty**, in addition to **gender**, conflict, isolated populations, ethnicity and disability.

2 Why does this issue matter?

• Education is the key

Education unlocks the potential for many other **SDGs** to be achieved. When people are able to access quality education, they are able to begin breaking the **cycle of poverty**, learn about sustainable living, make healthy choices and inform themselves and their communities about important issues.

• Education promotes gender equality

Education has the potential to significantly improve the well-being of women and girls. Having access to education can help girls and women increase their income, narrow wage gaps in and promote economic independence. When women are educated and have surplus income these increased resources also benefit their families and communities.

• Education promotes environmentalism and sustainable development

Environmental education can help give individuals the skills needed to make changes to policies and practices in their community. Future farmers who pursue secondary education will have a strong foundation for implementing **sustainable agriculture**. It is also important to teach **sustainable development** topics like environmental protection, sustainable agriculture, human rights, **gender equality**, peace and **global citizenship** to get people talking and doing something about our present and future.



3 Who and what are affected?

- **Girls**

Within education systems, women and girls continue to be discriminated against due to various political, religious, cultural and social beliefs and principles. Two-thirds of illiterate adults are women, and out of 59 million children out of school worldwide, more than half are girls.

- **Migrants, refugees and internally displaced people**

People who are away from their home regions or countries often have difficulty exercising their right to education. Currently, 91,000 Syrian children registered with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees remain without access to formal education.² In addition to the Syrian Civil War, there are millions of migrant, refugee and internally displaced children who lack access to education. Poor infrastructure, inadequate resources and a lack of trained teachers are common limitations in refugee camps. It is often difficult to find education in their mother tongue while displaced or away from their home regions.

- **Persons with disabilities**

An estimated 93 million children live with a moderate or severe disability.³ In many countries in the Global South, disabled children are the most likely to be out of school compared to any other group. States are obligated to ensure that people with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system because of their disability, yet accessibility to buildings and the education system remains a barrier.⁴

- **Persons in detention**

Detention can include people who have committed a criminal offence, people awaiting trial, illegal migrants, persons in health centres and detained children. People in detention are often denied their right to education before and during their incarceration. Education can also play a key role in their rehabilitation and reintegration into society.



4 What needs to be done?

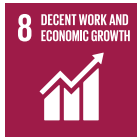
- Ensuring schools are safe and violence-free will help reduce the likelihood of girls dropping out. It also helps protect their right to learn without fear. Employing adequate teachers and helping them improve their skills through training can have strong impacts in the quality of education for girls. Focusing on the needs of the student and engaging the community helps involve diverse **stakeholders** to support high quality education for girls.
- To achieve this goal, we need to improve the quality of education and the number of children in schools. Some countries have done this by eliminating school fees, providing food at school, educating parents and improving resources and training for teachers. Enrollment increased by 51 per cent in Malawi after school fees were abolished.⁵ Actions like these can help improve the quality of education and encourage enrollment, reducing barriers and allowing children and adults to access education.
- Physical accessibility, **sanitation** and learning materials need to be provided in formats that suit the needs of learners with different abilities, in order to improve education for disabled learners. Inclusive education is continuously evolving and teachers should be trained to encourage lessons that are inclusive, learner-centred and empowering.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

Nelson Mandela
South African anti-apartheid politician



CONNECTION TO THE OTHER GOALS



Investing in education is one of the greatest ways to break the cycle of poverty. When people have basic life and literacy skills, economies grow quickly and **poverty rates** decline. Strengthening the quality of education services and access is a huge step forward for **poverty reduction**.



For each additional year of school completed, a girl's wage can increase up to 25 per cent.⁶ An investment in girls' education is an investment in the community by enabling more opportunities to involve diverse stakeholders and contributors to growth and development. Eliminating barriers to education is a mission of gender equality.



Improving the quality of education needs to include education about sustainability and our environment. Engaging students to think critically about the world around us and how our practices and policies have an impact on the environment will help sustain the momentum for change.



Consequences of Inaction

- Without access to a full education, girls' ability to learn essential life skills, learn about health and hygiene, avoid unwanted pregnancy and improve their income is deeply impacted. By not achieving equal access to education for all children, regardless of their gender, we are denying them a fundamental human right.
- When we don't include aspects of environmentalism and sustainable development in education models and systems, we miss the opportunity to educate future generations on the important issues of our time. Our ability to pass on important knowledge to improve how we engage with our environment and resources is then limited, hindering future generations.

REFLECTION AND ACTION QUESTIONS

- 1 How do you feel about the issue now that you know more about it?
- 2 How might this issue have been prevented? What could have been done differently?
- 3 How has this problem changed over time? Where do you see it going in the future?
- 4 What questions do you still have?

“One child, one teacher,
one book and one pen
can change the world.”

Malala Yousafzai
Pakistani education
advocate



RESOURCES

How to take action

- **Host a documentary screening.** Find films that focus on quality education nationally or internationally. Invite classmates, colleagues and community members to join in on a creative learning experience.
- **Start an awareness campaign.** Explore the [Malala Fund](#) website for useful facts and figures. Use these to start an awareness campaign or initiative that focuses on educating others on the lack of quality education around the world.
- **Work to achieve quality education in your own community.** Focus on accessible supplies, accessible buildings and structures, sports equipment and educational opportunities for students.
- **Help others understand how a lack of quality education affects everyone.** Design a campaign to give people the opportunity to explore their right to education and learn about others around the world who are denied this right.

Educational resources

- The World's Largest Lesson page for Goal 4 has downloadable comics, posters and lesson plans [here](#). You can also download three separate lessons. A [Multilingual Treasure Hunt](#) highlights the difficulty some children face when education opportunities are not in their native language. [Children on the Move](#) explores how migration has and continues to affect everyone and gain a deeper understanding of what life is like for people who are forced to flee their homes. [The World is Not Equal. Is That Fair?](#) highlights the different types of inequality and helps students explore the impact inequality can have on the wider society and economy.
- Get involved with the Malala Fund and take a stand for girls' education with this [student toolkit](#).
- Learn about the right to education and the journey of countries around the world to universal education through the [Right to Education](#) primer page.
- Learn more about gender equality in the classroom and explore ways teachers can help girls realize their full potential with UNESCO's [A Guide for Gender Equality in Teacher Education Policy and Practices](#).
- Try out [Girls' Education in Afghanistan](#) from Oxfam. This activity includes a PowerPoint presentation, teacher's notes, lesson plan and an action plan. Targeted for ages 11 to 14, this activity allows students to briefly understand and experience what an Afghan school experience would be like.
- Additionally from Oxfam, try out [Developing Rights](#) (ages 11 to 14). This activity allows students to decide what human rights are important, encouraging critical thinking about their own rights and how young people around the world are claiming theirs.



- Support [National UNICEF Day](#), helping children access quality education, by using these resources in your classroom.
- Visit [Global Campaign for Education](#) for lessons that focus on the right to education and the barriers that youth face around the world. Activities and lesson plans are available for students of all ages, from kindergarten to Grade 12.
- Learn more about inequalities in access to education from [this UNESCO video](#) explaining the lack of global progress.

“It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength.”

Maya Angelou
American poet and civil rights activist



CASE STUDIES

1 Malala Yousafzai

When girls were prevented from going to school by the Taliban in her region in Pakistan, Malala Yousafzai spoke out about the right for education through her blog and a documentary. After surviving an assassination attempt, Malala became a global advocate for the millions of girls around the world being denied a formal education. She and her father started the Malala Fund to bring awareness to the social and economic impact of girls' education and raise their voices to demand change.

2 United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO)

At the international level, the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) works to transform lives through education. They know education is at the heart of their work around eradicating poverty, building peace and encouraging sustainable development. UNESCO actively promotes education throughout life as a human right, and that access to education must be matched by quality.

3 Making Waves: Radio Based Learning

The Making Waves: Radio Based Learning project is piloting a new model of radio-based learning, known as Interactive Radio Instruction in the southern and northern axis of the city of Uvira in the Democratic Republic of Congo. By turning lessons into informative radio shows, this War Child program is helping 200 out-of-school girls in conflict areas access secondary school education.⁷

4 Canadian Organization for Development through Education (CODE)

The Canadian Organization for Development through Education (CODE) began the program Reading Ghana in 2015 to address the learning needs of youth in under-served communities. Primary school libraries are provided with high-quality books and teachers have the opportunity for professional development. Access to resources and well trained teachers are key to ensuring students have the chance to stay on track with their education.



5 Mennonite Central Committee: Light and Hope

When girls are exposed to violence, they are at a greater risk of dropping out of school. To support the education of Syrian refugees and Lebanese girls, the Mennonite Central Committee established the Light and Hope program to help reduce drop-out rates for this vulnerable population. The project provides after-school support to schoolgirls, informal education in life skills development and informal education in language development for refugee girls not currently enrolled in school. The project also provided a five-day Summer Wellness Resiliency Camp that delivered recreational activities and trauma healing for girls most at-risk.

6 Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan

In 2016-2017, the organization Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan developed a program to improve and promote reading and science education in the Herat Province. This project provided ten high schools in Herat province with School Starter Kits: a basic science lab, and a basic school library in a box. Using active learning methods, teachers are able to provide a stimulating classroom environment for students, increasing quality of education and student engagement.

End notes

¹https://www.unicef.org/education/bege_61657.html

²<http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/ngos-urge-world-community-remain-engaged-syrian-refugee-plaint>

³<http://www.right-to-education.org/node/110>

⁴<http://www.right-to-education.org/node/110>

⁵<http://www.borgenmagazine.com/education-in-developing-countries>

⁶<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/commission-on-the-status-of-women-2012/facts-and-figures>

⁷<https://www.warchild.ca/assets/documents/Interactive-Radio-Instruction.pdf>