



Why is Basic Education So Important?

Education spurs economic growth at home and abroad.

- Today, the fastest-growing markets for American goods are in developing countries, representing roughly half of U.S. exports and 1 out of every 5 American jobs.
- In 2009, the U.S. exported \$510 billion worth of goods and services to developing countries, and 97% of these export revenues went to small and medium-sized American companies, the major engines of U.S. job growth.
- Basic education in the developing world is essential to building the stable trading partners that growing U.S. export markets require. Quality education equips people with the knowledge, skills and self-reliance they need to increase income and expand opportunities for employment.
- No country has achieved rapid economic growth without investing in education and reaching an adult literacy rate of at least 40 percent.
- Research has found that 171 million people could be lifted out of poverty if all students in low-income countries left school with basic reading skills – the equivalent of a 12% drop in world poverty.

Education promotes democracy and stability.

- By 2050, there will be 1.2 billion youth around the world – with nine out of ten living in developing countries. This means that most young people are coming of age in societies that lack basic education and employment opportunities.
- Improving the educational outcomes of the world's most vulnerable children is a matter of both national and global security.
- Every additional year of formal schooling for males reduces the risk of their becoming involved in conflict by 20%.
- In addition, citizens of voting age with a primary education are 1.5 times more likely to support democracy than people with no education, rising to 3 times more likely for a person with a secondary education.
- Education fosters tolerance and understanding, and promotes democratization and stability.
- An educated citizenry that is capable of making informed decisions, voicing opinions, and holding elected officials responsible is essential for democracy to survive and flourish.

Education saves lives and improves family well-being.

- Educating women and girls is one of the most cost-effective ways to spur development.
- Each year that a girl attends school beyond fourth grade results in a 20 percent increase in wages.
- When an educated woman's income increases, she will invest 90% of that money in her family, generating economic empowerment and stabilizing communities.
- Educated women marry later, have fewer children and better prenatal care. Their children have higher survival rates, better health and nutrition, and are more likely to attend and succeed in school, creating a ripple effect throughout society.
- In addition, a recent Lancet study found that half of the reduction of child mortality over the past 40 years was due to better education of women.

Education is one of the most effective preventative weapons against HIV/AIDS.

- Young people with little or no education are twice as likely to contract HIV/AIDS as those who have completed primary school.
- The Global Campaign for Education estimates that if all children completed primary education, 700,000 new cases of HIV/AIDS in young people could be prevented each year, totaling seven million cases in a decade.



Building Economic Growth through Basic Education

"In 10 to 20 years, being competitive as a nation will require being able to sell products to an emerging middle class in Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa."

--Rajiv Shah, USAID Administrator

The developing world plays a large role in determining America's economic fortune. Today, the fastest-growing markets for American goods are in developing countries, representing roughly half of U.S. exports and one out of five American jobs. In 2009, the U.S. exported \$510 billion worth of goods and services to developing countries, and 97% of these export revenues went to small and medium-sized companies, the major engines of U.S. job growth.

Basic education in the developing world is essential to building the stable trading partners that growing U.S. export markets require. Education reduces poverty and stimulates economic growth, and no country has achieved rapid economic growth without investing in education and reaching an adult literacy rate of at least 40 percent.

Quality education equips people with the knowledge, skills and self-reliance they need to increase income and expand opportunities for employment. When more young people have a quality basic education, we see more prosperous and secure societies that can trade with the U.S. and other nations.

Why Invest in Basic Education?

Building economic stability around the world is directly in the U.S. national interest. Today, 1 out of 5 American jobs are tied to international trade. For every 10% increase in U.S. exports, there is a 7% boost in employment in the U.S.

171 million people could be lifted out of poverty if all students in low-income countries left school with basic reading skills – the equivalent of a 12% drop in world poverty.



The Basic Education Coalition is a group of 19 organizations dedicated to ensuring that all children in the developing world receive a quality, primary education. Its members are the Academy for Educational Development, American Institutes for Research, Bread for the World, CARE, Catholic Relief Services, ChildFund International, Creative Associates International, DevTech Systems, Education Development Center, International Youth Foundation, IREX, Plan, RESULTS, RTI, International, Save the Children, Women Thrive Worldwide, World Education, World Learning and World Vision.

Key Facts & Statistics

Increasing Individual and Household Earnings and Productivity

- An individual's earnings increase by 10% on average for each year of school completed.
- Households headed by a more educated person have, on average, higher wealth and lower poverty.
- Economists estimate that each extra year of preschool education will increase a person's future productivity by 10-30%.
- For each additional year of secondary school, an individual's wages increase by 15-25%. A farmer with just four years of education is 9% more productive than one with no education. He or she is more likely to understand the causes and treatment of crop diseases and how to introduce new farming techniques.

Boosting GDP

- Countries that have experienced surges in literacy rates of 20-30% have seen simultaneous increases in GDP of 8-16%.
- Research shows that one standard deviation difference on test performance is related to a 1 percent difference in annual per capita GDP growth rates, yielding incomes that are 64% higher over a 50-year period.
- If OECD countries boosted their average (PISA test) scores by 25 points over the next 20 years, it would increase OECD gross domestic product by \$115 trillion over the lifetime of the generation born in 2010.

Enhancing Income Distribution and Equality

- Education encourages economic growth not only by increasing and improving human capital but also physical capital and social capital – that is, by reducing inequality.
- Being born into the poorest 20% of households in a country is strongly associated with lowest levels of educational opportunity.

Particular Economic Benefits of Educating Women and Girls

- Lawrence Summers, former Director of the National Economic Council, has observed that for every year beyond fourth grade that girls go to school, wages rise 20 percent.
- Each one percent increase in the level of women's education generates 0.3 percent in additional economic growth.
- When an educated woman's income increases, she will reinvest 90 percent of that money in her family, as compared to 30-40 percent for a man, and can gain greater decision-making power within the household.
- It has been estimated that the failure of 65 transitional, low- and middle-income countries to educate girls to the same standard as boys collectively costs them \$92 billion every year.
- Some 0.4--0.9 percentage points of differences in annual per capita growth rates between East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East can be accounted for by differences in gender gaps in education between these regions.

The Quality of Education Matters Most For Economic Growth

- Recent research has found that educational quality—measured by what people know—has powerful effects on individual earnings, on the distribution of income, and on economic growth.
- Differences in learning achievements matter more in explaining cross-country differences in productivity growth than differences in the average number of years of schooling or in enrollment rates.
- “A country able to attain literacy scores 1% higher than the international average will achieve levels of labor productivity and GDP per capita that are 2.5% and 1.5% higher, respectively, than other countries.”



Investing in Girls' Education Drives Development



"The surest way to keep a people down is to educate the men and neglect the women. If you educate a man, you simply educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a family."

- Dr. J. E. Kwegyir Aggrey,
a visionary Ghanaian educator

The Benefits of Ensuring Girls' Education

Mounting evidence shows that educating girls is one of the most cost-effective ways to spur development. Educating girls and women creates a ripple effect throughout society:

- Boosting economic productivity and reducing poverty
- Lowering maternal and infant mortality rates
- Protecting against HIV/AIDS
- Enhancing social status
- Increasing gender equality
- Delaying sexual activity
- Improving reproductive health
- Increasing per capita income, with earnings more likely to benefit family and community
- Promoting better management of environmental resources
- Contributing to the development and strengthening of democracy

For every year beyond fourth grade that girls go to school, wages rise 20%. And when an educated woman's income increases, she will reinvest 90 percent of that money in her family, compared to 30-40 percent for a man. A recent Lancet study found that half of the reduction of child mortality over the past 40 years was due to better education of women. If all women in sub-Saharan Africa had a secondary education, 1.8 million lives could be saved each year.

The Current Situation

Educating women and girls is critical to economic development, and the world is making progress in expanding access to girls' education.

- Primary school enrollment rates for girls worldwide have increased 50% since 1960.
- Some countries - Kenya, United Republic of Tanzania, Bhutan, India, and Nepal - have made remarkable progress in achieving gender parity in primary education.

Yet, poverty and discrimination remain huge barriers to girls' education in many parts of the world.

- In 2009, 67 million children were not in school, and girls accounted for 53% of the global total.
- In Afghanistan there are 66 girls enrolled for every 100 boys, and in Somalia only 55 girls are enrolled for every 100 boys.
- Two-thirds of the world's 796 million illiterate adults are women. In 41 countries, women are twice as likely as men to be illiterate.

Girls Missing Out on an Education

When families struggle to find money for school fees, uniforms and books, girls are the ones most likely to miss out since they are often required to stay home to help earn money or look out for younger siblings. Of those who do enroll, millions of girls drop out of school each year, leaving without the basics of literacy and numeracy.

- Globally, 53% of out-of-school girls have never been to school, compared to 36% of out-of school boys.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, almost 75% of out-of-school girls are expected to never enroll in school, compared to 66% of the boys.
- Research by the World Bank and UNESCO estimates the economic cost to 65 low and middle income countries of failing to educate girls to the same standard of boys at \$92 billion each year.
- Had the world achieved gender parity at the primary school level in 2008, an additional 3.6 million girls would have been in primary school.

Barriers to Girls' Education

Social traditions, poverty, and discrimination remain huge barriers to girls' education:

- Many families cannot afford the fees, uniforms or supplies required to send all of their children to school. If parents must choose, boys are usually given precedence over girls.
- Poor families cannot withstand the loss of income or labor contributed by children, and they must often choose to send them to work rather than to school.
- Traditional divisions of labor disadvantage girls. Girls are more likely to have tasks that interfere with schooling, such as household or agricultural chores and caretaking of family members. Boys go to school with less direct costs to the family.

Classroom and logistical issues impose other barriers:

- Outdated curricula and poorly trained teachers create learning environments that do not support the educational needs of girls and reinforce negative gender stereotypes.
- Poor infrastructure - such as a lack of separate sanitation facilities - makes adolescent girls more vulnerable to sexual harassment or assault. In addition, transit to school may present safety hazards that discourage parents from sending their girls to class.
- A shortage of female teachers, too few role models for girls, gender biases in the classroom, and a lack of guidance and counseling services leave girls with little motivation to succeed.

Daniela's Story

The children of Oruro - a town high in Bolivia's Altiplano - are some of the poorest in all of South America. For decades, educational achievement, nutritional status and life expectancy have been below the standards for the rest of South America, and for Bolivia as a whole.

Things are changing in Bolivia now, and 10-year-old Daniela is just one example of how girls' education is contributing to a brighter future. A generation ago, chances are that Daniela would have been among the 70 percent of indigenous girls who never completed primary school. Today, she is an enthusiastic fifth grader in the Carmen Guzman de Mier School, and Daniela has set her sights on a professional career.

"My favorite subjects are mathematics and technology," says Daniela. "And I enjoy the multi-purpose classroom, which we call the library. It has games and books that we can use. If I weren't studying, I would have to go to the field to take care of sheep just like my friend Marlene. She does not go to school and she does not speak Spanish."

"When I grow up, I want to be a lawyer or an engineer. If I don't study I will have to work as a household servant in other people's homes. I want my life to be different than my mother's life." Daniela expects that when she becomes a professional, she will have enough money to help her family pay for health care if she gets sick. She would like to get married when she is 25 and have two children, a boy and a girl. "When I have children, they will have better opportunities than I did, because I will educate them."



Building Security Through Basic Education

"When large numbers of young people are denied access to decent quality basic education, the resulting poverty, unemployment and sense of hopelessness can act as forceful recruiting agents for armed militia".

- UNESCO Global Monitoring Report 2011

Rethinking National Security

By 2050, there will be 1.2 billion youth around the world - with nine out of ten living in developing countries. This means that most young people are coming of age in societies that lack basic education and employment opportunities.

The combination of a 'youth bulge' and failures in education represent a risk of conflict. Improving the educational outcomes of the world's most vulnerable children is a matter of both national and global security.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies' Commission on Smart Power found that:

"Education is the best hope of turning young people away from violence and extremism."



Photo credit: UNESCO/Akhtar Soomro

Gates and Petraeus on Education:

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and General David Petraeus have repeatedly called on the US to expand its use of non-military tools to address global security. In reference to stabilizing efforts in Pakistan and fighting Al Qaeda and the Taliban, General Petraeus stated that addressing illiteracy was a top priority, and "found it more helpful to teach [Pakistanis] to read up to an eighth-grade level than anything else."

Uneducated Children: A Growing Threat

- Today, there are 67 million children out of school around the world, and almost half of these children live in conflict-affected countries.
- In Pakistan alone, there are 7,261,000 school children who are not in school.
- Researchers have found that low educational attainment is a significant factor in predicting the outbreak and continuation of conflict.
- It's been found that societies with large male adolescent populations are at greater risk for conflict when male secondary education rates are low.
- With over 60% of the population in many conflict-affected countries under age 25, education of good quality is critical to overcoming the economic despair that often contributes to violent conflict. Research has shown that poor education is associated with extremist views, including authoritarianism, intolerance and prejudice.
- In conflict areas, government spending is often diverted to war activities, further diminishing the quality of education. Currently, 21 of the world's poorest countries spend more on military budgets than on primary education.

Education: A Building Block of Security

Basic education is the most cost-effective way to achieve stability and long-term development.

- An annual growth rate of 5% has the same stabilizing effect as one year of schooling. Every additional year of formal schooling for males reduces the risk of their becoming involved in conflict by 20%.
- In crisis situations, education offers children safe spaces for learning and provides a sense of normalcy, stability, and hope.
- “The provision of non-formal education, skills training or accelerated learning services prevents recruitment into military or criminal activities and contributes to demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration.”
- Education “reduce(s) the risk of violence and civil unrest” by teaching values of respect, tolerance and understanding.
- In post-conflict reconstruction, education builds peace and social cohesion and facilitates economic recovery and sustainable development. In order to prevent the collapse of fragile states, “countries need a critical mass of educated people in order to work out and implement a reform strategy.”
- People of voting age with a primary education are 1.5 times more likely to support democracy than people with no education, rising to three times more likely for someone with a secondary education.

Case Study: Afghanistan

The effects of conflict have lasting impacts on education systems and on entire generations of students. In Afghanistan, hundreds of thousands of boys and girls were denied an education for many years during Taliban rule. With over half of the population in Afghanistan under the age of 18, the lack of schooling has long-term impacts on the country’s stability, and ultimately, on global stability. There are many children as old as 12 or 13 years old who have never been to school in Afghanistan.

To address crises facing Afghanistan’s educational system after 25 years of war and internal strife, USAID funded a project called the Afghanistan Primary Education Program. This program addressed gaps in schooling through an accelerated-learning program, which gave children, who had not received an adequate primary education, a chance to reach their appropriate grade level and enter the formal education system as quickly as possible. The accelerated-learning program has educated nearly 170,000 children since 2002.

Key Elements to Education and Stability

The guidelines below offer strategies to help ensure that education is used to support peace:

- **Inclusion/access:** Primary schools must be free and close to home, and must do all they can to attract all children in a community.
- **Safety/protection:** Schools must be safe from attack and must be perceived as places where intellectual curiosity and respect for universal human rights is fostered.
- **Relevance:** Schools must use a non-biased curriculum, and educational materials that are relevant to the children and their context.
- **Accountability:** School management must be authorized to make necessary decisions for the pupils’ welfare. To achieve this, the opinions of children, parents and community members must be taken into consideration.

The following is an excerpt from: "MDGs in Focus - MDG 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education" from the website of the United Kingdom Department for International Development.

Getting girls into school

GEP (Girls Education Project) is a joint initiative between the Federal Government of Nigeria, DFID (the UK's Department for International Development) and UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) which aims to get more girls into school and to improve their quality of life. Increasing the number of female teachers in rural schools is a key element of the GEP programme and its trainee teacher scholarship is encouraging more women into the classroom. Habibah is one of their latest recruits and she's looking forward to taking her new found teaching skills back to her village, "I grew up in Nagopita village and attended the primary school there from 1995 to 1999. Now, because of the scholarship, I can show girls in my village the happiness of education," she says.

Role models and mentors

GEP was launched in December 2004 and was rolled out in six northern states in Nigeria with the worst disparities between boys' and girls' enrolment in primary school. Qualified female teachers, who are likely to return to their rural villages, help to make schools girl friendly. They act as role models and mentors, promoting education and ensuring that parents are happy to send their girls to school. "The day I was preparing to come to this college my mother was very happy, and my father too. There is a big difference now in our family; my father listens to my suggestions now because he feels I am educated. "I will use myself as an example of someone who was given the opportunity to go to school. Whatever it is that a person hopes to get from this life, you need an education in order to achieve it."

Fighting for children to be educated

Grace Bumba is another newly qualified teacher thanks to the support of UKaid and the GEP. In addition to teaching, she has become a role model and mentor to girls in her poor rural community. Her enthusiasm for education is infectious and she has convinced many parents to send their girls to primary school. "When a woman is educated," she explains, "she will fight for her children to be educated."

The following is an excerpt from: "Scholarships for Nigerian Women and Girls" from the website of the Peace Corps Nigeria Alumni Foundation.

In an effort to help eliminate some of the barriers that discourage or exclude girls from the benefits of basic and advanced education, Peace Corps Nigeria Alumni Foundation established its first scholarship program for Nigerian girls in 2003. The scholarship recipients were selected from each of the six regions of Nigeria, giving the program national scope. The program targeted girls enrolled in the final level of junior secondary school (grade 9), and supported the scholarship winners for the full three years needed to complete their secondary school education. A total of twelve girls received scholarships through that program. Building upon the success of the inaugural program, PCNAF currently sponsors three scholarship programs for female Nigerian students: one for secondary school girls in northern Nigeria, and two for college students (one for students in the United States, and another program for students in Nigeria).

Nigerian Girls Scholarship Program

This program provides financial assistance to needy girls entering senior secondary school in Kano and Katsina states of northern Nigeria, where the number of girls out of school is extremely high. PCNAF is collaborating with the Kano-based Inclusive Community Education and Development Association (ICEADA) to implement the program.

Young Women's Scholarship Program

The Young Women's Scholarship Program is for female Nigerian undergraduate college students in the metropolitan Washington, DC area. It was created in an effort to help ease the financial burden of students with outstanding academic and leadership potential who are facing difficulties finding the money to stay in school because they have an international student visa.

PCNAF-FON Nigerian Female Leaders Scholarship

PCNAF has partnered with Friends of Nigeria (FON) and American University of Nigeria (AUN) to create a scholarship program at AUN that is administered as part of the President's Crisis Fund. The purpose of this fund is to provide assistance to AUN students who experience sudden, unexpected financial problems. In addition to need, the focus is on students who have a strong academic record as well as significant participation in community service. The scholarship program targets female students from northern Nigeria who meet these criteria.