

New UNESCO data proves education transforms development

- *If all children enjoyed equal access to education, per capita income would increase by 23% over 40 years.*
- *If all women had a primary education, child marriages and child mortality could fall by a sixth, and maternal deaths by two-thirds.*

Education has unrivalled power to reduce extreme poverty and boost wider development goals, according to highlights pre-released from UNESCO's next Education for All Global Monitoring Report. The analysis is released ahead of the UN General Assembly discussions on the post-2015 development agenda. The highlights provide fresh proof that investing in education, especially for girls, alleviates extreme poverty through securing substantial benefits for health and productivity, as well as democratic participation and women's empowerment. To unlock education's transformative power, however, new development goals must go further to ensure that all children benefit equally not only from primary education but also from good quality secondary schooling.

'The findings released today confirm more clearly than ever that education can transform lives and societies for the better,' said Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO. *'The world's education goals are very much an unfinished agenda, however. This new evidence should give us all renewed energy to complete what we set out to do.'*

UNESCO's new analysis proves that:

Education empowers women. Educated girls and young women are more likely to know their rights and to have the confidence to claim them.

- In sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia, nearly three million girls are married by age 15 – below the legal age of marriage in most countries. If all young women completed primary education, the number of child brides would be reduced by almost half a million. Completing secondary education would reduce that number by two million.
- In these regions, 3.4 million young women give birth by the age of 17. If all young women completed primary schooling, this would result in 340,000 fewer early births, and if they all completed secondary education the total would fall by two million.

Education promotes tolerance: Education helps people to understand democracy, promotes the tolerance and trust that underpin it, and motivates people to participate in the political life of their societies. Across 18 sub-Saharan African countries, those of voting age with primary education were found to be 1.5 times more likely to express support for democracy than those with no education, and the level doubles among those who have completed secondary education. Findings also show that a secondary, rather than a primary education, increases tolerance towards people of a different religion or those speaking a different language.

Education equality improves job opportunities and increases economic growth: If all children, regardless of their background and circumstances, had equal access to education,

productivity gains would boost economic growth. Over 40 years, per capita income would be 23 per cent higher in a country with equality in education.

Education is part of the solution to environmental problems. People with more education are more likely to use energy and water more efficiently and to recycle household waste. Across 29 mostly developed countries, 25% of people with less than secondary education expressed concern for the environment, compared with 37% of people with secondary education and 46% of people with tertiary education. This concern translates into positive action for the environment: In Germany, 46% of people with tertiary education had signed a petition or taken part in a demonstration in relation to the environment over the previous five years, compared with 12% of those with less than secondary education.

Education saves mother's lives. In some countries, many women still die because of complications during pregnancy and childbirth. Education can prevent these deaths by helping women to recognize danger signs, seek care and make sure trained health workers are present at births. If all women were equipped with just a primary education, maternal deaths would be cut by two-thirds, saving 189,000 women's lives each year.

Some child diseases are preventable but not without education. Simple solutions, such as malaria nets and clean water, can prevent some of the worst child diseases, but only if mothers are taught to use them. Pneumonia, the most frequent cause of child death, could be reduced by 14% if women had just one extra year of education. The third-most frequent cause, diarrhoea, would be reduced by eight per cent if all mothers completed primary education, or by 30% if they had secondary education.

Education saves children's lives. Education helps women recognize early signs of illness, seek advice and act on it. If all women in poor countries completed primary education, child mortality would drop by a sixth, saving almost one million lives each year. If they all had a secondary education, it would be halved, saving three million lives.

Education fights hunger. The devastating impact of malnutrition on children's lives is preventable with the help of education. If all women had secondary school, they would know the nutrients that children need, the hygiene rules that they should follow and they also would have a stronger voice in the home to ensure proper care. This change would save more than 12 million children from being stunted – a sign of early childhood malnutrition.

The director of the EFA Global Monitoring Report, Pauline Rose, said: *'The huge benefits of a quality education are sometimes invisible to donors and policy-makers, so education often slips off the global agenda. Today's analysis presents undeniable proof that this should change. If the world leaders meeting in New York next week want development goals after 2015 to succeed, they must recognize education's central role.'*

The release is accompanied by a [campaign action](#) calling for world leaders to prioritize good quality and equal education in the new development agenda after 2015. The full analysis will be available when the Education for All Global Monitoring Report is released in January 2014.

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For more information, interviews, quotes, photos or case studies, please contact Kate Redman on k.redman@unesco.org 0044671786234 or 0033602049345

To download the full excerpt from the EFA Global Monitoring Report, with more regional breakdowns and country examples, please go to <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002231/223115e.pdf>

To download the infographics designed by Information is Beautiful for this excerpt, go to www.education-transforms.org

Notes to Editors:

Developed by an independent team and published by UNESCO, the Education for All Global Monitoring Report is an authoritative reference that aims to inform, influence and sustain genuine commitment towards Education for All.

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