

UNESCO: Sustainable development begins with education

New widely-supported paper shows education is a catalyst for the proposed post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals.

Education will be central to the success of the international targets that will replace the Millennium Development Goals when they expire in 2015. That's the key point of a new booklet that will be released when the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly convenes from 16 September. Produced by UNESCO's Education for All Global Monitoring Report, the booklet states that new global development targets after 2015 should be based on a holistic approach to sustainable development.

The booklet has received far-reaching support from across the development world, including from the **United Nations Secretary General, the Director-General of UNESCO, the President of the World Bank, the Advisor to the UN Secretary-General on Post-2015 Development Planning, the Prime Minister of Norway, the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, the Founder and Chairman of the UN Foundation and the President, Foundation for Community Development & Founder, Graça Machel Trust, Graça Machel.**

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says: "Education is a fundamental right and the basis for progress in every country. Parents need information about health and nutrition if they are to give their children the start in life they deserve. Prosperous countries depend on skilled and educated workers. The challenges of conquering poverty, combatting climate change and achieving truly sustainable development in the coming decades compel us to work together. With partnership, leadership and wise investments in education, we can transform individual lives, national economies and our world."

The need to provide quality education to the greatest number of people is woven through all the proposed new goals:

Goal 1: Poverty reduction: The booklet shows that education is critical to escape chronic poverty and to prevent the transmission of poverty between generations. Education also enables those in paid formal employment to earn higher wages: One year of education is associated with a 10% increase in wages.

Goal 2. Nutrition improvement: The devastating impact of malnutrition on children's lives is preventable with the help of education. If all women had a secondary education, they would know the nutrients that children need, the hygiene rules they should follow and they would have a stronger voice in the home to ensure proper care. Improved nutrition would save more than 12 million children from being stunted – a sign of early childhood malnutrition.

Goal 3. Health and wellbeing: Education helps women recognize early signs of illness in their children, 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 can prevent maternal death by helping women recognize danger signs, seek care and make sure trained health workers are present at births. If all women completed primary education, maternal death would be cut by two-thirds, saving 189,000 lives each year.

Goal 5. Gender equality and women's empowerment: Educated girls and young women are more likely to know their rights and have the confidence to claim them. In sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia, nearly three million girls are married by age 15. If all young women in these regions 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.

Goals 6 and 7: Water and energy sustainability: Education can help people make better use of scarce resources. A study of households in 10 OECD countries found that those with more education tended to save water.

Goal 8 and 9: Economic growth and decent work: Education generates productivity gains that fuel economic growth: An increase in the average educational attainment of a country's population by one year increases annual per capita GDP growth from 2 to 2.5 per cent.

Goal 10. Inequality Reduction: Expanding education, in particular ensuring that most people have secondary schooling, is essential to reduce inequality within countries. In France, Malaysia and Brazil, income inequality fell by about seven percentage points over two decades as the share of population with secondary education grew.

Goals 11- 15: Environmental protection: The higher the level of education, the more likely it is that people express concern for the environment. In 47 countries covered by the 2005–2008 World Values Survey, a person with secondary education was about 10 percentage points more likely to express such concern than a person with primary education.

Goal 16. Peaceful, just and inclusive societies: Analysis of surveys in 36 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America shows that education is associated with higher voting levels. This is especially true for countries where average levels of education are lower. In addition, while a low level of education does not automatically lead to conflict, it is an important risk factor: if the male secondary school enrolment ratio were 10 percentage points higher than average, the risk of war would decline by a quarter.

"The evidence is unequivocal: education saves lives and transforms lives, it is the bedrock of sustainability," says UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova. "This is why we must work together across all development areas to make it a universal right."

UNESCO appeals to all to [sign up to a pledge](#) online saying that they pledge to collaborate and work together in the future'. The full list of signatories will be presented to the UN Secretary-General's Advisor on Post-2015 Development Planning at the end of the 2014 United Nations General Assembly.

Aaron Benavot, director of the EFA Global Monitoring Report said: "This paper provides compelling evidence of the dynamic interplay between education and other development priorities. It reminds us that only by working together can we achieve development that is comprehensive, equitable and lasting."

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors:

EVENT: An event, supported by the UN Secretary General's Global Education First Initiative, will take place on 18 September (8.30-10.00 a.m) in the UN building to launch this paper with high level speakers from various development sectors, including Amina Mohammed, Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General on Post-2015 Development Planning, Katja Iversen, CEO of Women Deliver, Thomas Yanga, NY Director at the World Food Programme, Aaron Benavot, Director of the EFA GMR, and Nick Alipui - UNICEF's Director and Senior Adviser on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. . For media interested in taking part, please email k.redman@unesco.org

For interviews, photos, quotes of teachers or children, or for more information, please contact:

- Kate Redman k.redman@unesco.org 0033 602049345
- Sue Williams s.williams@unesco.org 0033 1 45 68 17 06 or 0033 6 15 92 93 62

The booklet and event have been created in support of the Global Education First Initiative, a multi stakeholder advocacy effort and rallying point for partners to make commitments and mobilise resources to support global education efforts.

The **full paper** can be downloaded [here](#).

For **infographics** on the cross-sectoral impact of education, please see: www.education-transforms.org
Click [here](#) to read and sign the new **campaign action**.

Full list of supportive quotes :

Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General: *“Education is a fundamental right and the basis for progress in every country. Parents need information about health and nutrition if they are to give their children the start in life they deserve. Prosperous countries depend on skilled and educated workers. The challenges of conquering poverty, combatting climate change and achieving truly sustainable development in the coming decades compel us to work together. With partnership, leadership and wise investments in education, we can transform individual lives, national economies and our world.”*

Amina Mohammed, Special Advisor to the United Nations Secretary-General on Post 2015: *“The greatest transformations will not be achieved by one person alone, rather by committed leadership and communities standing side by side. This booklet serves as a reminder that only through genuine collaboration will we see real progress in the new global sustainable development goals. Midwives, teachers, politicians, economists and campaigners must find common ground in their quest to achieve groundbreaking and sustainable change.”*

Irina Bokova, Director-General, UNESCO: *“The benefits of education permeate all walks of life right from the moment of birth. If we are to eradicate poverty and hunger, improve health, protect our planet and build more inclusive, resilient and peaceful societies, then every individual must be empowered with access to quality lifelong learning, with special attention to opportunities for girls and women. The evidence is unequivocal: education saves lives and transforms lives, it is the bedrock of sustainability. This is why we must work together across all development areas to make it a universal right.”*

Dr Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank: *“Every child should have the opportunity not only to go to school but to acquire the knowledge and skills she needs to lead a healthy, productive life, care for herself and her family, and become an empowered citizen. At the national level, countries need workforces with the skills and competencies required to keep farms and factories producing, create jobs, fuel innovation and competitiveness, and drive economic growth that benefits everyone.”*

Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of Norway and Graça Machel, President, Foundation for Community Development & Founder, Graça Machel Trust: *Educated girls have children later and smaller families overall. They are less likely to die during pregnancy or birth, and their offspring are more likely to survive past the age of five and go on to thrive at school and in life. Women who attended school are better equipped to protect themselves and their children from malnutrition, deadly diseases, trafficking and sexual exploitation.*

Ted Turner, Founder and Chairman, United Nations Foundation: *“Education is a foundation for sustainable development. Not only does quality education, especially for girls, help to improve health and livelihood outcomes, it also contributes to active and informed global citizens. Educating the next generation of leaders about the importance of protecting our environment and combating climate change is a key investment for a sustainable planet and future for us all.”*

Ertharin Cousin, Executive Director of the World Food Programme: *‘Even the best schools and teachers cannot accomplish their goals if children remain absent or too hungry to learn. School feeding is an essential tool to provide children with the energy they need to learn and concentrate, and to motivate parents to send their children, especially girls, to class. The joint initiative between UNESCO, UNICEF and WFP, entitled Nourishing Bodies, Nourishing Minds, is an excellent example of how we can work holistically together to achieve education for all post 2015’.*

About the Report:

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.

Twitter: [@EFAReport](https://twitter.com/EFAReport)

Web: <http://www.efareport.unesco.org>

World Education Blog: <http://efareport.wordpress.com>

Facebook: facebook.com/efareport