FOCUS ON SOMALIA

EDUCATION

How can a country with limited resources provide education to all children?
**THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION**

Could you imagine not being able to read this page?

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**DID YOU KNOW?**

- 171 million people could be lifted out of poverty if all students in low-income countries left school with basic reading and writing skills
- Children of mothers who have been to school are healthier and more likely to attend and succeed in school
- Education is one of the most effective weapons against AIDS and other diseases because it teaches prevention and treatment methods

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**Millions of children around the world cannot read or write their own names.**

| Approximately 61 million children never get the chance to go to school, and 1 in 4 of them are unable to attend due to conflict. Millions more are taught by untrained and underpaid teachers in overcrowded, unhealthy and poorly equipped classrooms, and many drop out before they can read or write. In some communities, it is not unusual to be taught in a class with 70 other students, in a classroom with no electricity, books, desks or chairs. Can you imagine trying to learn under these conditions? |

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**WHY IS EDUCATION IMPORTANT?**

Education is a human right and a key to reducing poverty and inequality. It empowers people to transform their lives and the societies in which they live. Education enables people to read, earn better wages, care for their health and have a voice in their communities. It also makes people aware of their rights and opportunities.

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**WHY DON’T CHILDREN GO TO SCHOOL?**

There are many reasons why children around the world are not in school. Here are some examples:

- **Poverty:** Primary school is free in the United States, but at least 86 countries are still charging fees for primary education. In many poor countries it can cost a month’s wages or more to send one child to school. Even those who are able to attend often cannot afford the required uniforms or books.

- **Child Labor:** Many children are forced to work to provide additional income for their families instead of going to school. In some cases, children spend their days at tedious and unhealthy jobs such as making bricks, collecting scrap metal, sewing footballs or begging in the streets.

- **HIV and AIDS:** In Africa and parts of Asia, thousands of school teachers have died from AIDS. The disease has created many orphans and children often leave school because of illness, to care for sick relatives, or to work to supplement family income.

- **Location:** For many children, the closest school may be miles away, forcing students to walk for hours each morning and afternoon—even during the hottest months.

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**CHECK IT OUT**

Learn more about education in the developing world: [www.unicef.org/education](http://www.unicef.org/education)

Read about gender disparities in education: [www.unfpa.org/rights/gender.htm](http://www.unfpa.org/rights/gender.htm)

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All children, young people and adults have the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term, an education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together, and to be.

—World Education Forum, April 2000
**EDUCATION AROUND THE WORLD**

*Why are some countries failing to educate their children?*

There are more than 121 million children and adolescents around the world who are not in school.

While some countries are making notable progress, there is still a great deal of work that can—and must—be done to ensure that all children have access to education.

**EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES**

A significant proportion of children and youth who are out-of-school live in countries affected by conflict and natural disasters. Even in emergencies, children still have the right to an education. Education is being recognized as a crucial part of humanitarian disaster response because it saves and sustains lives by offering protection for children, reducing post-traumatic stress, and offsetting the long-term consequences of gaps in education.

**EDUCATION AROUND THE WORLD**

Although the United States has over a 95 percent elementary school enrollment rate, 80 percent of 4th graders in low-income communities read below grade level.

More than half of all out-of-school children are girls. When families cannot afford to send all their children to school, they often choose to send the boys, believing that it is a better long-term investment and the girls can then help with the family chores at home. Early marriage and pregnancy can also prevent girls from attending school, and some countries even have laws that prohibit pregnant girls from attending school or returning to school after their child is born. Safety and security is also a concern for some families, and parents may be less likely to allow their daughters to travel long distances to school.

To promote girls’ education in rural areas, the government of Yemen created a program that recruits female high school graduates to teach lower grades in their local schools.

In Bangladesh the Food for Education Program, which gives poor families a monthly ration of food if their child attends primary school, has increased enrollment and improved test performance.

Sub-Saharan Africa will need double the current number of teachers to achieve universal primary education.

There was a 29 percent increase in school enrollment when the government of Tanzania abolished school fees.

Through a program called Bolsa Familia, the government of Brazil pays poor families a monthly stipend to send their children to school, providing access to education for over 11 million children.

There are more than 300,000 children in Haiti who do not attend school.

**GENDER AND EDUCATION**

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**CHECK IT OUT**


Find out school enrollment rates in the US: [https://www.census.gov/topics/education/school-enrollment.html](https://www.census.gov/topics/education/school-enrollment.html)
Somalia gained its independence in 1960 when two former British and Italian colonies merged.

### CIVIL WAR

In 1991, a civil war broke out in Somalia and many different groups competed for control of the government. After 14 years of civil war, the various Somali clans agreed to a transitional parliament and held elections in 2005. In December 2006, war broke out again and recently the crisis has further deteriorated. Approximately 1.4 million people have been displaced from their homes due to years of conflict and instability. Hundreds of thousands more people were forced to flee when famine struck the country in the summer of 2011.

Many of the basic services in Somalia were heavily damaged or destroyed during the war. These include school systems, roads, bridges, water sources, markets, and health facilities. Today, Somalia is one of the poorest countries in the world and still does not have an effective central government.

**Can you imagine living in a country with no functioning government?**

**Do you think the lack of government makes it easier or more difficult for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to help people in need?**

### DID YOU KNOW?

- The people of Somalia share the same language, religion and culture, but they are divided into many clans and sub-clans. The five central clans are Darod, Dir, Hawiye, Isaaq, and Rahanweyn.

- The Laas Geel cave paintings, which date back to 9,000 B.C., are some of the earliest known examples of art in Africa.

- Camels are a source of wealth in Somalia, where they are used for transportation, milk, and meat.

- Somalia is home to elephants, gazelles, cheetahs and lions.

- Somalia and the United States are the only countries in the world that never ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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**Somalia Country Information**

**LOCATION:** East Africa  
**CAPITAL:** Mogadishu  
**POPULATION:** 10.8 million  
**SIZE:** Slightly smaller than Texas  
**LANGUAGES:** Somali, Arabic  
**RELIGIONS:** Islam  
**LIFE EXPECTANCY:** 52 years  
**CHILD MORTALITY RATE:** 137 deaths / 1,000 live births  
**ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER:** 32 percent  
**LITERACY RATE:** n/a  
**PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE:** Males 19 percent, females 15 percent  
**POPULATION LIVING ON LESS THAN $2/DAY:** n/a  
Sources: CIA World Factbook, 2016 & UNICEF, 2015

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**CHECK IT OUT**


Somalia’s education system was severely under-funded even before the civil war broke out in 1991.

Education then became one of the major casualties of war. The decline of the economy due to the cost of war left little money for social programs and schools. Many schools were completely destroyed during the civil war, and even today Somalia’s education system remains largely in ruins.

Somalia has one of the lowest school enrollment rates in Africa—only 30 percent of children are in school. Without a national Department of Education, it has become the responsibility of parents and community members to provide education for their families. Education is primarily provided by Koranic and community-managed schools. Many schools don’t have buildings and classes are often held outdoors or in temporary shelters.
How do you think a country with limited resources can provide education for all children?

**POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

Below are some possible solutions to ensure that all children have access to a quality education.

**Can you think of the benefits and potential issues for each solution?**

**What do you think the best strategy is for a country with limited resources to provide education for all children?**

**Investing in Teacher Training**

Because many developing countries have a shortage of qualified teachers, training teachers, especially in rural areas, enables more children to go to school and makes class sizes smaller, ensuring they all receive a higher quality education.

**Improving Curriculum**

For many children in the world's least developed countries, even if they are enrolled in school they receive low quality education. For example, in some places, more than half of third graders are reading below their grade level due, in part, to outdated or ineffective learning materials. Therefore, helping teachers and Ministries of Education develop more updated and effective curricula ensures that students have access to a quality education and enables them to achieve grade-level reading and numeracy skills.

**Eliminating School Fees**

Some developing countries still charge school fees for children to attend school—primary through secondary. By advocating for governments to put greater funding into education and to abolish school fees for communities, more students, especially those who are impoverished, will be able to attend school.

**Creating School Feeding Programs**

Many developing countries not only face the problem of low school enrollment rates, but also the problem of hunger and malnutrition. Providing at least one, locally-produced meal to students at school not only increases school enrollment rates but students who are well fed are able to concentrate and do better in school.

**Providing Classroom Materials**

In countries even where there are no school fees, some children do not have enough money to pay for basic school supplies like books, paper, and pencils, making it difficult for them to learn properly. Helping communities provide basic supplies and renovating classrooms creates an environment that is more conducive to learning. Using local resources and laborers...
SPEAK OUT! HOW CAN WE BEST SOLVE THIS CRISIS?

from the community is also helpful in building local capacity, which helps improve the local economy and is more sustainable than using supplies and labor from outside the country.

Ending Child Labor
Many children are unable to go to school because they are forced to go to work. By pressuring governments and communities to enact or enforce laws restricting child labor, more students will be free to attend school and gain access to the education they deserve. In addition, providing livelihoods trainings for parents, ensuring life skills and vocational training are available in secondary schools, and educating the community about investing in education can decrease child labor and increase income later in life.

Increasing Girls’ Access to Education
More than half of all children who are currently not enrolled in school are girls. Something as simple as making sure there are separate latrines for boys and girls can keep young girls who reach puberty age in school. Also, ensuring that schools are a safe space for girls, free from discrimination and gender-based violence, is a crucial component to making sure all children have access to education.

Forming Parent-Teacher Committees
Forming parent-teacher committees encourages community involvement in the education system. If parents learn the importance of education, they are more likely to invest in their children’s schooling, and be advocates in their community for children staying in school.

Promoting HIV and AIDS Education
HIV and AIDS have led to teacher shortages and millions of children being orphaned in Africa alone. Therefore, it is important to teach young people about what HIV and AIDS is, how it spreads, and why it is important to get tested. Incorporating these lessons in schools is important in saving lives and building resiliency in communities to care for orphans and children with sick parents.

CHECK IT OUT!
Watch our student-narrated “Education: Focus on Somalia” video:
cac.concernusa.org/resources

ACCESS TO A BASIC EDUCATION IS A WORLDWIDE PRIORITY

- The Universal Declaration on Human Rights recognizes education as a fundamental right. It states that education must be free, at least in the elementary stages.
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights says that “primary education shall be compulsory and available free for all.”
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child obliges governments to “make primary education compulsory and available free for all.”
- At the World Education Forum in 2000, 181 countries committed to achieve quality basic education for all.
- The Fourth United Nations Sustainable Development Goal is dedicated to “ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote life long learning” by 2030.
- Education For All is a commitment taken on by the international community to achieve education for every citizen in every society.

“We came from Kismaya three years ago because there was fighting and it was too dangerous. Here it is safer and the parents got together to open a school for the children. My mother makes sure that I go to school every day.”
—Hasan, 13, Somalia

“There are more than 10 girls like me in our village who dropped out of school for various family reasons. Girls are not encouraged to leave and work outside of the home, because the local people believe that they will become corrupt and have a difficult time finding a husband. As a result, girls in their late teens just stay at home, waiting for a matchmaker to find them a husband.”
—Wang Xiaoli, 18, China

“I love going to classes. There used to be no girls allowed in school. When the school for girls first opened, 50 girls attended on the first day and 83 attended on the second day. Now I want to be a teacher when I grow up!”
—Hazara, 9, Pakistan

“Education is the key to life, it opens the door to success.”
—Freddy James, 17, Kenya

“The biggest message that students in the U.S. and around the world can benefit from is that education is an essential element in the fight against poverty and the key to brighter futures for all.”
—Brett, 16, United States
REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

EDUCATION
UNESCO
www.unesco.org/education
UNICEF
www.unicef.org/girlseducation/
United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative
www.ungei.org/
United Nations SDG Education
https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg4

DOCUMENTS
Convention on the Rights of the Child
http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx
World Declaration on Education for All
www.un-documents.net/jomtien.htm
State of the World’s Children
https://www.unicef.org/sowc/

SOMALIA
Amnesty International
BBC News
IRIN Humanitarian News Analysis
https://www.irinnews.org/africa/east-africa/somalia
Human Rights Watch
www.hrw.org/africa/somalia.php
The World Bank
www.worldbank.org/somalia

CAMPAIGNS
Global Campaign for Education
www.campaignforeducationusa.org
ONE Campaign
https://www.one.org/us/

Right to Education Project
www.right-to-education.org

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