



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.