



Backgrounder: Education for All

GRAN advocates that our government increase Canada's commitment to Education and lifelong learning in sub Saharan Africa.

Education is a fundamental human right that is unrealized in much of the developing world, and particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Sub-Saharan grandmothers have asked for more and better education for their grandchildren. Increased education funding for infrastructure (building of schools and training of teachers) will bring much-needed resources to communities. A school becomes a gathering place in a community, making education a new and important priority. With these resources, grandmothers in sub-Saharan Africa will have access to education in their own communities.



In sub-Saharan Africa:

- 55 million children and youth (ages 6-15) are out of school; 29 million are girls.
- Approximately 23 million out-of-school children are living in fragile and conflict-affected regions.
- 50% of primary classes exceed 50 pupils.
- There are 123 million women of whom 64% are illiterate.
- 17 million teachers will be needed to meet the needs for primary and secondary education by 2030.

Education is key to achieving development, and influences all 17 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Worldwide, education can lead to greater economic prosperity, better health outcomes, and more gender equality. It also reduces exploitation and violence and enables people to reach their full potential.

- If all students in low income countries acquired basic reading skills, millions of people would be lifted out of poverty. [SDG #1 No Poverty]
- A child whose mother can read is 50% more likely to live past age five. [SDG #3 Good Health]
- There would be 64% fewer child marriages with completion of secondary school. [SDG #5 Gender Equality]
- Literate people are more likely to participate in the democratic process and exercise their civil rights. [SDG#16 Peace & Justice]

See more at: <http://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/17-ways-education-influences-new-17-global-goals>

Girls and women face many barriers to access a quality education in sub-Saharan Africa.

1. Poverty and cost of schooling – No money for school fees and uniforms
2. Lack of Infrastructure – Schools are too far away, classrooms are overcrowded, lack of resources
3. Lack of Quality-Trained Teachers
4. Water and Sanitation – No access to toilets or clean water
5. Social and Cultural Norms – Early and Child Marriage, housework, taking care of siblings and fetching water
6. Violence, including exploitation by teachers, unsafe journey to school, gender-based violence in school
7. Hunger and poor nutrition

Girls and women who live in conflict zones or fragile states face even more barriers, as do those with disabilities. See more at:

<http://www.aworldatschool.org/news/entry/10-reasons-why-children-dont-go-to-school-1350>

<https://www.one.org/international/blog/10-legitimate-reasons-for-girls-not-to-do-their-school-work/>

Canada's Role

- In the November 2015 mandate letter from Prime Minister Trudeau to the Minister of International Development, one of the top priorities stated was to “Refocus Canada’s development assistance on helping the poorest and most vulnerable, and supporting fragile states”. Investing in education for all in sub-Saharan Africa aligns with this stated priority. <https://pm.gc.ca/eng/minister-international-development-and-la-francophonie-mandate-letter>
- In June 2017, Canada launched a Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) with a new vision of laying the foundation for positioning Canada as a leader on gender equality in its aid program. Although education is not a pillar of the FIAP, both Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Mme Marie-Claude Bibeau have acknowledged at the UN the underlying importance of education in achieving our development goals. <https://www.international.gc.ca/gac-amc/campaign-campagne/iap-pai/index.aspx?lang=eng>
- Although Canada has recently increased its contributions to the Global Partnership of Education (see below), Canada’s total financial (ODA) support to education in development has dropped from \$656 million in 2010 to \$343 mil in 2014, a drop of almost 50%. In 2016-17, Canada’s contribution was still at an all-time low of \$319 million. Budgets in the last few years have reflected a high value for education in Canada with funds going to Indigenous schools, science and innovation research, skills training and post-secondary grants.
- At the G7 summit in Charlevoix in June of 2017, Canada announced an historic investment of \$400 million toward education for girls and women in crisis and conflict situations. Although we are still waiting for this money to be spent, \$50million has gone to the Education Cannot Wait Fund.

Globally:

- Only 30% of global aid is reaching sub-Saharan Africa, which has nearly 60% of the out-of-school children in the world.
- Only 2% of humanitarian aid is going to education.
- 250 million children are not learning in school and are leaving grade four without basic literacy skills

The Global Partnership for Education

GRAN supports the **Global Partnership for Education (GPE)**. In 2014-15, GRAN was part of a small coalition of Canadian CSO’s who advocated for and were successful in getting Canada to double their commitment to the GPE (from \$15 million/year to \$30million/year for four years 2015-2018). The GPE works in 60 countries and 38 of these countries are located in sub-Saharan Africa. A key objective of the GPE is to ensure that more girls enroll in school and receive a quality education. The GPE fosters an inclusive and participatory approach, bringing all partners at the country level together in a focused and coordinated way, with the goal of strengthening national education systems. In 2016 alone, GPE grants enabled the training of over 240,000 teachers, the distribution of 30 million textbooks, and the building of 3,000 classrooms. Read more about the GPE at <http://www.globalpartnership.org/>

Our Coalition

In 2016, GRAN joined the newly-formed **Canadian International Education Policy Working Group (CIEPWG)** which seeks to influence the Government of Canada’s policy approach to global education, as well as to increase the Government’s financial commitments to improve access to inclusive, safe and quality education. (Sustainable Development Goal #4). Members of this coalition include Plan Canada, UNICEF, Save the Children, World Vision, Right to Play, War Child, WUSC, Global Citizen, CODE, Results Canada, ONE Canada, Aga Khan and the UNESCO Canadian Consulate. Together we were successful in advocating for our government to again double its financial commitment (\$60 million/year) to the Global Partnership for Education for the replenishment period of 2018-2020.

Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education, including lifelong learning, is critical for prosperity, economic growth and achieving a peaceful, stable and secure African continent.