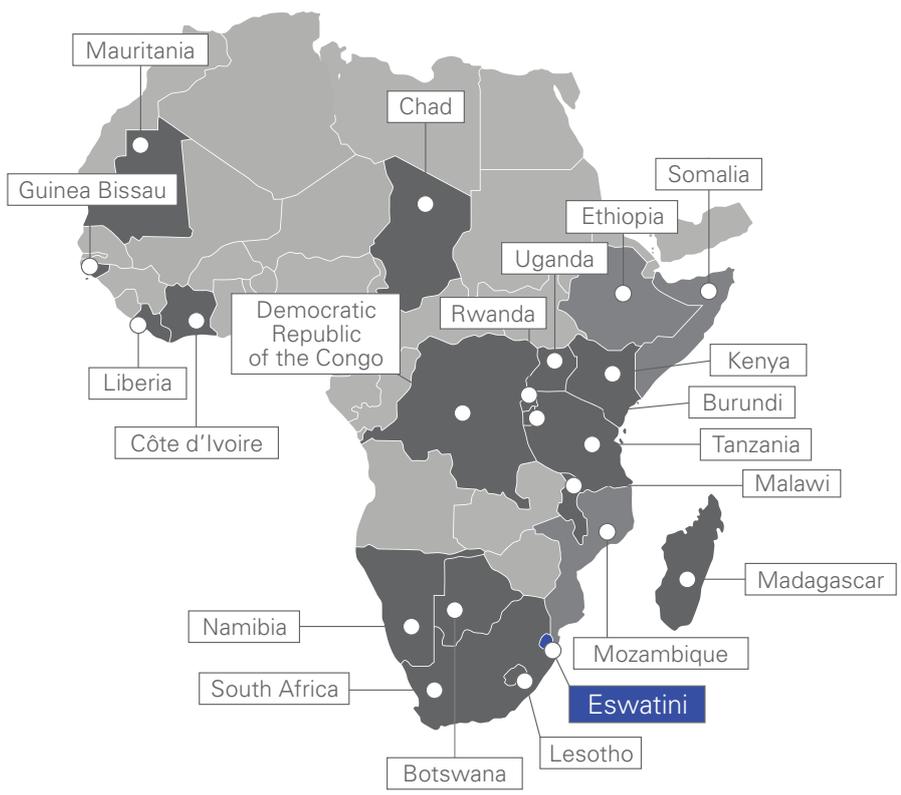




unicef 
for every child

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ESWATINI



The opportunity

Africa is on the move: the continent has some of the fastest-expanding economies in the world with a rapidly growing young population. The landlocked Kingdom of Eswatini, formally known as Swaziland, has a small population of 1.4 million, with 46 per cent under the age of 19 in 2017.¹ While the country experienced sustained, positive economic growth during 2016 and 2017, the government is working to restore long-term stability. The small size of this country and large youth population, combined with consistent economic growth, means it has an excellent opportunity for investment in a demographic dividend. With the right government policies, investments and strong technical support, UNICEF can help to ensure that Eswatini's children and adolescents contribute to a national vision.

Schools for Africa (SFA) is a global initiative which contributes to the achievement of quality education across sub-Saharan Africa, ensuring that all children, including the most remote and marginalized children, are learning and gaining the skills for succeeding in life and work. SFA convenes individuals, businesses and governments and has a proven track record in partnering with the private sector to achieve education results for children.

The challenges

Though it is categorized as a lower-middle income country, Eswatini is characterized by high levels of inequality – 70 per cent of children lives in poverty and the country is deeply burdened by HIV/AIDS. Eswatini has the world's highest HIV prevalence, with 27 per cent of 15- to 49-year-olds infected.² The epidemic has a pronounced impact on children: 24 per cent has lost one parent, and 5 per cent has lost both parents. Children are also affected by broader education challenges that need to be addressed:

- **Early childhood education** – Only 30 per cent of Eswatini's children currently access early childhood education programmes, which are predominantly run by the private sector;³
- **Preschool enrolment** – The preschool net enrolment rate, i.e. the proportion of children participating in formal learning a year before the official primary entry age, is low at 21 per cent;⁴
- **Repetition of school** – Primary school repetition rates are high at 16 per cent⁵ despite retention rates at this level being relatively high, at 74 per cent;
- **Secondary school enrolment** – Secondary school net enrolment is extremely low at 27 per cent;⁶ a variety of factors – school costs, adolescent pregnancy, violence in and around schools, and pressure to perform household work and chores – all keep children, particularly girls, from enrolling;

- **Quality of education** – education quality is poor due to a shortage of qualified teachers, weak governance systems and a lack of basic resources such as water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) supplies and facilities.

UNICEF's response in Eswatini

UNICEF is a trusted partner, national advocate for children, and a leader for education development. The organization began working in Eswatini just after independence in 1968. In the past decade, UNICEF's advocacy and technical assistance has led to increased investment in education, key reforms within the education system, and improved educational metrics. More specifically, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Training, UNICEF has helped raise the national primary education enrolment rate to 97 per cent. The revised Education Sector Policy (2018–2022) is a national commitment outlining a five-year plan to provide quality education along the entire continuum of learning, as well as spotlighting children with disabilities and adolescent girls for further inclusion efforts.

A sustainable approach

UNICEF follows children along their entire educational pathway, identifying three critical junctures, or opportunities, for partner investment. This holistic approach to education begins at **early learning**, the critical preparatory period before primary school begins, then moves to **quality primary education** – the first few grades where children begin accumulating significant skills – and then continues through **adolescence for success**, where the goal is to adequately equip adolescents for adulthood. Schools for Africa also spotlights adolescent girls and children with disabilities, who experience significant barriers to attending and staying in school.

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The following outlines some sustainable interventions in three priority areas: promoting early learning, supporting quality primary education, and gearing adolescents for success.



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Children who receive early learning through pre-primary education have a foundation that sets them up for greater academic achievements and a lifetime of gains. At present, however, only 30 per cent⁷ of Eswatini’s children access early learning. Bottlenecks include a lack of integrated early childhood development policies, parents’ limited awareness regarding the importance of these services, and a dearth of providers who are equipped to support the development of young children, particularly those with disabilities.

UNICEF, in collaboration with the government, is improving access to and quality of early learning by advocating at policy level and budget briefs for publicly funded universal pre-primary education, developing a national framework for early learning that enumerates priorities for teachers, conditions for curricula, the school environment and learning standards. As part of its community awareness initiative, UNICEF provides parents and caregivers with the tools and techniques to become their child’s first educator and lifelong advocate.



Spotlight on children with disabilities

UNICEF believes that schools must be inclusive environments that support children with disabilities. In Eswatini, less than half of the 15- to 29-year-old population with disabilities has received an education.⁸

The most effective interventions for children with disabilities target them during the early learning and primary school years. UNICEF Eswatini partners with the government to strengthen early detection and prevention interventions to help support children with disabilities. More specifically, UNICEF builds capacity among teachers, inspectors, government officials, and parents and caregivers so they can identify a child with special needs. This is supported by an awareness programme for educators and communities about the importance of inclusive education. The aim is to transform all Eswatini public schools – 622 primary and 282 secondary schools – into education institutions that accept and support all students.



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2
Quality
Primary



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Improving the quality of education – meaning that children acquire technical, social and emotional knowledge and transferable skills – is central to a child’s learning. It leads to a better quality of life, particularly regarding income, health and wider economic development.

Eswatini has made significant progress in broadening access to primary education. In 2015, net enrolment reached 94–97 per cent for boys and 95 per cent for girls. But repetition rates remain high at 16 per cent

and repetition is especially common among boys. Overall, the completion rate is at 74 per cent.⁹ In 2018, UNICEF helped the Ministry of Education and Training conduct a study on primary school grade repetition. Diverse causes – lack of parental support, a dearth of qualified teachers, low learner motivation and commitment, poverty, special education needs, outdated curriculum, and large class sizes – all contribute to grade repetition.

3 Adolescence for Success



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Investing in adolescents and young people is critical. Prospects for further education and employment are proven to increase greatly when children receive a strong educational base. This base is also key for creating social cohesion and reducing conflict. Achieving numeracy and literacy is no longer enough to ensure children and young people are successful in life. Transferable skills are now a requirement to ensure that children, adolescents and young people are equipped for success. In Eswatini, net enrolment in lower secondary school is very low at 27 per cent and even lower – 12 per cent – at upper secondary. Low retention rates, particularly for boys, are also extremely problematic.¹⁰

In 2017, UNICEF conducted¹¹ a comprehensive study on secondary education and found that prohibitive costs, health barriers, violence, low education

quality, and pressure to work and perform household chores are all keeping adolescents out of school. In response, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education and Training in developing a national strategy to prevent grade repetition and dropout. UNICEF also advocates for a significant reduction in secondary education costs, and will revise policies to improve targeting of the social assistance programme to include extremely poor children. In partnership with the government, UNICEF offers alternative learning opportunities and catch-up classes, as well as empowering adolescents through technology – the SMS and web-based U-Report/RapidPro platforms that allow adolescents to communicate and strategize about the education issues and challenges they identify.



Spotlight on adolescent girls

Educating girls is critical to ensuring health and economic outcomes for families, communities and entire nations. A number of barriers – pregnancy, violence, lack of appropriate and separate school sanitation facilities, and cultural norms that emphasize marriage, family and domestic duties – all contribute to gender inequality. Forty-two per cent of lower secondary school girls drop out because of pregnancy, and young women are more than twice as likely to contract HIV as their male peers. In response, UNICEF and the Ministry of Education and Training are mainstreaming comprehensive pregnancy prevention and HIV/AIDS education in secondary schools through the 'Life Skills Education Programme'. The programme has already been introduced in 93 per cent of all secondary schools, and UNICEF is working to improve its monitoring and evaluation systems. Lessons learned will enable UNICEF to replicate a similar but age-appropriate programme at the primary level.



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Impact and results

Building on its long track record designing and implementing impactful education programmes, UNICEF Eswatini is now focused on emerging areas of work. Investment in Schools for Africa will enable the following results to be achieved by 2020:

- Support 340,000 school-going children so they gain technical and life skills critical to personal success, and contribute to future economic growth;
- Through holistic programmes, reduce by 50 per cent the number of new HIV cases in adolescent girls and young women, and reduce teen pregnancies by 75 per cent;
- Train 75 per cent of education officials on inclusive education standards; supporting the national education system to promote inclusiveness and equity;
- Improve learning outcomes at Form 3 level from 80 per cent to 83 per cent.

Why partner with UNICEF?

UNICEF has more than 70 years of experience ensuring the health, nutrition, education and protection of more of the world's children than any other organization. UNICEF works in the most challenging and least accessible places, reaching children, including adolescents, in both emergency and development contexts. UNICEF's unique qualifications – a strong presence in over 190 countries, close working relationships with local and national governments, a child participation model, and firm commitment to community engagement and buy-in – enable the organization to develop sustainable systems at scale. These continuously reach all children, especially those most in need and those that are excluded in other development models.

Building on UNICEF's successful history in Eswatini since 1969, Schools for Africa will elevate education outcomes for all children. Together with partners, UNICEF will scale successful education programmes, mobilizing partnerships at the country level to ensure that all children and adolescents have equal access to inclusive, quality education.

¹ Eswatini Population Census 2017 – Prelim Results; Central Statistics Office

² Swaziland HIV Measurement Incidence Survey (SHMIS II) 2016, Ministry of Health/CDC

³ Multiple Cluster Indicator Survey 2014, Central Statistics Office

⁴ Eswatini Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2016/17 Key Findings Report; Central Statistics Office

⁵ According to the Education Policy the maximum repetition rate is 5 per cent

⁶ Annual Education Census, 2015, Ministry of Education & Training (EMIS)

⁷ Multiple Cluster Indicator Survey 2014, Central Statistics Office

⁸ <<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0026/002653/265353E.pdf>>

⁹ Annual Education Census, 2015, Ministry of Education & Training (EMIS)

¹⁰ Annual Education Census, 2015, Ministry of Education & Training (EMIS)

¹¹ A report on Out of School Children in Eswatini (2018), Ministry of Education & Training



How you can invest

UNICEF believes that the private sector isn't a postscript; it must be part of solutions to the world's gravest challenges. A broad range of partners – philanthropists, foundations, business and individuals – can make investments at the global, regional and country level,

catalysing sustainable solutions and systemic change that will create a more equitable planet for all. More specifically, private sector partners can work with UNICEF in Eswatini to achieve results for children and adolescents through:

| CATEGORY | HOW CAN PARTNERS HELP? |
|--|---|
| <i>Innovation and technology</i> | <p>UNICEF has a strong track record for investing in innovation and technology. Technology helps to accelerate results achievement, and UNICEF is looking for innovative solutions to maximize impact.</p> <p><i>Key areas for partnership:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce and implement technological platforms such as radio, television and mobile phones; these can promote behaviour change, combat harmful social norms and promote school attendance. |
| <i>Financing</i> | <p>UNICEF needs financial contributions to ensure that programmes can be implemented. UNICEF will leverage existing resources to catalyse significant learnings and results.</p> <p><i>Key areas for partnership:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide financial support to pilot, test, validate and scale up teacher training and innovative assessment learning programmes. • Support curriculum reforms for age-appropriate quality teaching. • Rehabilitate school buildings, provide gender-appropriate toilet facilities and materials for children affected by emergencies. |
| <i>Advocacy, communication and influence</i> | <p>UNICEF looks at the reach of partners, whether through products and services or communication and advocacy platforms, to influence, reinforce and advance key messages and priorities with a joint voice.</p> <p><i>Key areas for partnership:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propose new and engaging ways to connect with young people and increase their access to information and feedback mechanisms. • Support community campaigns to highlight the value of education, particularly for marginalized populations. • Support and develop innovative communication interventions to address harmful social norms and support adolescent girls' school progression and completion, especially at the secondary level. |
| <i>Expertise</i> | <p>Partners from a range of fields, sectors and industries are needed to contribute novel approaches and fresh perspectives, fill knowledge gaps and mobilize important stakeholders to deliver solutions to adolescents' most pressing needs.</p> <p><i>Key areas for partnership:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand and improve mobile learning, such as innovative mobile technology solutions. |

Schools for Africa

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