

unicef 
for every child



Schools for Africa

Adolescence for Success



The opportunity

Africa is on the move: The continent has some of the fastest growing economies in the world and is beginning to shape a new future with a growing youth population that is projected to reach half a billion by 2050.¹ A unique opportunity presents itself to leverage the skills, resources and capacities of millions of adolescents, and support even greater progress and new growth opportunities.²

According to a study, an investment of just US\$22 per capita each year in secondary school education can generate economic benefits of about 12 times the costs by 2030.³ And it is clear that investment in life skills helps to improve personal well-being and brings greater social and political inclusion as well as the key economic benefits.

Force for strong social and economic growth

It is estimated that delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will yield over US\$1 trillion by 2030 for the private sector and potentially unlock 85 million jobs across industries.⁴ Investing in adolescents today is the only way to deliver on this return and ensure young people are equipped for major shifts in the labour market.⁵

The next generation will be connected to a combination of opportunities that are online or offline, inside or outside the classroom, globally or locally, which will broaden their horizons and help fulfil their potential. Improved outcomes for adolescents are largely dependent on stronger education and training systems that promote holistic learning and lifelong skills development, through both formal and non-formal pathways.

Adolescents as an opportunity

Adolescents are a major force for positive social and economic change. Adolescence is a time of critical growth during which youth develop their individual identities and also grapple with their place in the world, determining who they want to be and how they want to get there. It is marked by learning, exploration and creativity. When empowered by education and economic growth, adolescents can develop to their full potential.

UNICEF still invests heavily in children in the first decade of life, but this second decade gives partners and investors the chance to still make significant change – before it is too late.



The challenge

There are 1.2 billion adolescents in the world. In sub-Saharan Africa, adolescents make up the greatest proportion of the population, with 23 per cent of the region's population aged 10–19.⁶

Every child has the right to an education and quality learning opportunities from early childhood to adolescence. And yet, a range of factors – including geographic location, economic circumstances, gender, disability, low-quality teaching and schools, disruption from conflicts and other shocks – prevent millions of children from learning. In 2016, 60 million adolescents of lower secondary school age and 142 million adolescents of upper secondary school age lacked access to learning opportunities.⁷

UNICEF is expanding the focus from the 'first decade' to also include the 'second decade' – to ensure greater attention on learning opportunities for adolescents. UNICEF works to make sure every adolescent is learning – in a school or through training pathways – by 2030, achieving literacy/numeracy and acquired skills for employability, and knowledge on human rights, gender equality, non-violence and citizenship.⁸ There are complex challenges in achieving this and must be addressed together.

- **Primary education:** One in four of the poorest adolescents has never attended school, and one in two has either dropped out of primary school or is still in primary school many years after expected completion;⁹
- **Availability and access to secondary school for adolescents is still limited** in most countries in sub-Saharan Africa, cutting young people off from the basic platform for delivering a quality education;
- **Child marriage** significantly impedes girls' potential: One in every four girls worldwide is married before the age of 18.¹⁰ Approximately 39 per cent of girls in sub-Saharan Africa is married before the age of 18. All African countries are faced with the challenge of child marriage, whether they experience high child marriage prevalence, such as Niger (76 per cent) or lower rates like Algeria (3 per cent). Child marriage is widespread in West and Central Africa (42 per cent) as well as Eastern and Southern Africa (36 per cent);¹¹
- Most economies in sub-Saharan Africa are fragile or stagnant, which means that even **those who acquire technical and academic skills may remain unemployed**. They are unable to put these skills to use. In sub-Saharan Africa, young people who complete their tertiary education are three times more likely to be unemployed (21.2 per cent) than those with primary education or less (7.3 per cent).¹² Furthermore, young people who lack life skills and entrepreneurship skills cannot benefit from the prevalent informal employment sector in Africa.



Return on Investment

- An investment of \$22 per capita can generate economic benefits of 12 times the cost.¹³

UNICEF's track record

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. The sustainable systems continuously reach all children, especially those most in need and those that are excluded in other development models.

One major area of significant results is education. This is nowhere more true than in sub-Saharan Africa where the starting point was developing an education system for primary school children. With more primary school children in Africa than ever before, UNICEF has expanded its work to secondary school and, most importantly, to the quality of what children are learning.

Schools for Africa (SFA) is a global initiative convened by UNICEF that offers an unrivalled opportunity for partners to contribute to and co-create solutions in one or more of five interrelated action areas to achieve quality learning. One such area is dedicated to working with and for adolescents to build the future social and economic prospects of the continent.



A sustainable approach

UNICEF, in collaboration with its partners and through governments, is seeking to reap the benefits of the demographic dividend in sub-Saharan Africa.

It can't be done alone, and the private sector is a key partner in ensuring success.

UNICEF's partnership model aims to achieve longer-term programmatic value for children. Opportunities abound for a broad range of partners, philanthropists and foundations

at different levels – at a continental level for a systematic change, at a regional level to achieve cross-cutting results across a sector, or at a country level for sustainable solutions in targeted areas or sectors.

UNICEF seeks to leverage both financial and non-financial support, such as technical resources, expertise, influence, reach and innovation to transform the quality of education at scale. UNICEF's focus is on outcomes and maximizing the social impact of every dollar invested.



To achieve sustainable impact, UNICEF is working on solutions that span three critical areas: providing quality secondary education; ensuring all adolescents, irrespective of their prior schooling, have basic numeracy

and literacy; and providing skills for active citizenship, further education and employability. UNICEF’s strategy for each area provides key opportunities for the private sector to engage.

PROGRAMME AREA	ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES
<p><i>Providing quality secondary education and learning</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure curriculum reform and development include gender-sensitive pedagogies and integration of life skills. • Improve learning environments and ensure there are gender-sensitive supplies and facilities for girls. • Support the most disadvantaged adolescents to access learning opportunities and to prepare for life and work. • Enhance teachers’ capacity and provide professional development on gender-sensitive policies and practices, including to prevent school-related violence. • Improve national policies, budgeting, financing, teacher training, technology, incentives, mentoring, or support systems on STEM for girls.
<p><i>Ensuring all adolescents have basic literacy, numeracy and life skills</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide accelerated learning programmes – ‘catch-up’ classes – and non-formal learning opportunities for children and adolescents out of school. • Ensure the design and pilot of innovations for non-formal learning provide quality education outside of the classroom. • Provide extra-curricular activities such as youth advisory councils and volunteerism, girls’ clubs, peace clubs and sports. • Increase access to knowledge on sexual and reproductive health.
<p><i>Providing skills for active citizenship, further education and employability</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure access to skills development through apprenticeships, internships and job shadowing with companies and individuals. • Identify and incentivize pan-African companies to offer entry-level innovative opportunities and vocational training for young people. • Ensure partnerships generate country market analyses to recognize the demand side of employment. • Conduct advocacy on youth skills to enhance the private sector and national economies.



Impact and results

Education is a universal human right. It is critical to reducing poverty, improving health and fostering strong societies and civic engagement.

The fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG4) acknowledges this and states that all children will complete a full cycle of primary and secondary education and develop the knowledge and skills needed for life and work.

The Schools for Africa initiative progresses significant outcomes for adolescents that lead to sustainable impact. These outcomes vary by country, starting from the baseline and context in which they operate. Broadly, your investment can contribute significantly to outcomes in the following categories:

- Improved access to quality education;
- Better education systems that improve learning outcomes;
- Skills for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employability.



Changing lives

Learning for Peace in Somalia:¹⁴

Seventeen-year-old Osob Abdullahi Mohamed's story shows how UNICEF can help change lives. Osob was forced to flee conflict and now lives in a camp for displaced people in South Central Somalia. She is attending school for the first time thanks to the UNICEF-supported Learning for Peace Programme, which offers vocational skills as well as basic literacy and numeracy. The programme targets 2,150 boys and girls aged 14–24 years. After training, students get help to find internships and jobs or start their own businesses.

Osob notes that: *"I would still be at home doing domestic work or probably married if I hadn't joined this school. Now I'm learning tailoring, Somali, English, Mathematics and business management and hope to start my own business once I complete the training."*



Uganda's Youth Opportunities Programme:

Two decades of insurgency and conflict led to high rates of poverty in northern Uganda. By 2005, a measure of peace and stability had returned. The government launched the Youth Opportunities Programme to stimulate income generation and employment among youth aged 16 to 35. The programme provided cash grants for vocational training and business materials to groups of around 22 participants. After two years, it had improved skills and participation in skilled work, resulting in greater incomes and higher savings. Grantees were 9 per cent more likely to be community mobilizers than before and reported receiving more social support from their family and the community. Men who received grants reported a 31 per cent decline in aggressive behaviour relative to the control group (which is consistent with theories that link aggression to stress levels, low social standing and perceived injustice).¹⁵

How you can invest

Partners can support the three categories listed on the previous page in the following ways:

1. **Innovation and technology:** UNICEF has a strong track record for investing in innovation and technology. Technology helps to accelerate the achievement of results, and UNICEF is continually looking at new solutions and products to achieve more and expand in development contexts.
2. **Financing:** UNICEF requires financial contributions to ensure programmes can be implemented. Where possible, UNICEF will leverage existing resources to catalyse significant learning and results and complement other initiatives.
3. **Expertise:** 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 girls' most pressing needs.
4. **Data and evidence generation:** UNICEF understands that data collection, evidence generation and learning are central to programmatic success, and looks to partners for support.
5. **Advocacy, communication, and influence:** UNICEF looks at the reach of partners, whether through their products and services or communication and advocacy platforms to influence, reinforce and advance key messages and priorities with a joint voice.

Why partner with UNICEF through Schools for Africa?

- **Impact:** When you support UNICEF, you are empowering millions of vulnerable children. UNICEF's reach across the continent and close collaboration with governments, civil society and the private sector means the organization's impact has a multiplier effect; this allows UNICEF to leverage investments for solutions at scale.
- **Influence:** UNICEF actively engages with and convenes government and other partners on initiatives for adolescent education, protection, health, nutrition and civic engagement. UNICEF provides networking opportunities with other global leaders during international advocacy meetings, conferences and special high-level events. This includes the recently launched *Generation Unlimited*.
- **Visibility:** Recognition opportunities – including on social media – enable supporters to publicize their partnership with UNICEF and showcase their commitment to children and adolescents.
- **Opportunities for co-creation:** UNICEF is seeking global strategic partners to achieve impact at scale, leveraging the power of the private sector's innovation and financial resources to respond to the immense challenges in economic mobility and equitable opportunity that have significant impact for children.

This is a pivotal moment to transform the lives of millions of children and young people across the African continent and contribute to more equitable, inclusive and sustainable prosperity.

¹ United Nations Children's Fund, *Generation 2030 | Africa: Child demographics in Africa*, UNICEF, New York, August 2014, p.18.
² Annex 1 on adolescents; Adolescents are defined by the United Nations as aged 10–19 years and young people as aged 15–24 years.
³ Lancet Commission on Adolescent Health and Wellbeing, 2016; Peter Sheehan et al., "Building the foundations for sustainable development: a case for global investment in the capabilities of adolescents," *The Lancet* 390, no. 10104 (2017): 1792–1806
⁴ Sustainable Development Commission. *Better Business, Better World: Sustainable Business Opportunities in Africa*.
⁵ United Nations Children's Fund, *Generation 2030 | Africa: Child demographics in Africa*, UNICEF, New York, August 2014.
⁶ <<https://data.unicef.org/topic/adolescents/demographics>>
⁷ <https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF_Strategic_Plan_2018-2021.pdf>
⁸ Young Peoples Agenda key messages

⁹ See presentation of Professor Pauline Rose, Research for Equitable Access and Learning (REAL) Centre, University of Cambridge, at UNICEF Global Education Network Meeting, 2017
¹⁰ <<https://www.girlsnotbrides.org>>
¹¹ <<https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/region/sub-saharan-africa>>
¹² *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2015*
¹³ Sheehan, Peter, et al., 'Building the Foundations for Sustainable Development: A Case for Global Investment in the Capabilities of Adolescents', *Lancet*, vol. no. 10104, 14 October 2017, p. 1793.
¹⁴ <https://www.unicef.org/somalia/education_16379.html>
¹⁵ Blattman, Fiala, and Martinez, 2011, quoted in ODI, *Investing in Youth in International Development Policy: Making the case, 2013* – see also <<https://www.poverty-action.org/study/northern-uganda-social-action-fund-%E2%80%93-youth-opportunities-program>>

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