

# Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All



## What is Goal 4?

The right to an education is a fundamental human right that many children around the world still do not enjoy. Today, more than 57 million children are not enrolled in primary school and over 759 million adults are illiterate. There are many reasons why primary school-age children do not have access to or are not enrolled in school by their parents, including poverty & inequality, the financial deficit of developing states, and conflict within their home country. Many children unfortunately who live in poverty with parents who themselves are uneducated and illiterate are unaware of the lifelong benefits of a good education. In order to develop properly, children need not only a quality education, but also sufficient nutrition and a safe and nurturing home life. Without these factors, children will follow the path of their parents and have limited opportunities in life. Goal 4 strives to provide safe, equal, and quality education for all children throughout the world, and attempts to break down all barriers preventing students from receiving this basic human right.

When children are able to receive an education, not only are they able to increase their human capital, but they also have the opportunity to learn about many other factors that affect sustainable development including the importance of taking care of our planet. Increasing education levels can help build resilient and informed societies that later can enhance the economy and improve a sense of well-being among its inhabitants. Goal 4 also expresses the importance of giving girls and women equal access to education compared to boys and men, an area of great disparities in many developing countries. Creating a safe, quality learning environment where children are able to receive free primary and secondary schooling will not only increase the human capacity of these children, but also will improve the social, environmental and economic development of states where they live and work in the future.

## **What are the Targets?**

- By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes
- By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education
- By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
- By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
- By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations
- By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy
- By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

## **Means of Implementation**

- Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all
- By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrollment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programs, in developed countries and other developing countries
- By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States



### **Is this Possible?**

In order for Goal 4 to be reachable by Year 2030, all states will need to improve educational opportunities for all within areas or cities where schools are not equal. In addition, many developed states will need to share their resources with states that have low enrollment and literacy rates. Many developing countries do not have the financial resources needed to build schools, provide schooling materials, and train teachers. Despite increasing financial assistance from developed states, it is not enough to help emerging countries create a quality education system for all children. States will need to train or bring in teachers who are capable and motivated to help students who are in dire need and are perhaps lagging in achievements compared to students their age in developed nations. States will also need to create institutions where parents are taught to be aware of the importance of their child's receiving an education, how it will positively impact the child's development and future, and how the family will benefit in the long term. This is important to ensure that a child enrolled in school stays in school and finishes an education, rather than dropping out to help provide for the family. States will also need to ensure that girls are receiving an education equal to that of boys, an incredibly important factor when overcoming gender inequality around the world. Education for all is a reachable goal given political will and increased demands from parents and all stakeholders.

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