

Improving Education

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Education is one of the best development investments. It is transformational for individuals, families and societies. Education is critical to the achievement of all and other development outcomes.

Education enables people to participate actively in their societies, increases access to employment and other sources of income and opens up opportunities. Education also delivers benefits in health, governance, productivity, gender equality and nation-building.

The Challenge

Achieving universal primary education and gender parity at all levels of education are Millennium Development Goals. While there has been some progress towards meeting these goals, worldwide at least 67 million children remain out of primary school and 250 million out of secondary school.

Globally there has been an improvement in gender parity yet inequality for girls remains an issue—of the 27 million children out of primary school in Asia and the Pacific, 16 million are girls.

Getting girls and boys to attend school is only part of the challenge. There is growing evidence that, even where enrolment targets are being met, children are not acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills. The poor quality of basic education affects students by reducing their capacity to succeed in further education or employment.

The Priorities

The priorities of the UCD aid program are to:

- improve the functioning of national education systems to enable more girls and boys to complete primary school and progress to higher levels of education
- improve the relevance and quality of education, including in vocational and technical education, so students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for life and productive employment.