

Hibbaq's education has been affected by the drought in Somalia



UNPACKING

**Children's**

# Rights to Education



A CLASSROOM TOOLKIT FOR EDUCATORS

# Toolkit for educators

Every child has the right to an education, yet an estimated **129 million girls** around the world are not in school.

Educating girls helps elevate communities. When girls are formally educated, they are less likely to be forced into marriage, become pregnant as children, or be victims of violence. Education is one of the most powerful tools in breaking the cycle of poverty. It provides girls with the knowledge, skills and opportunities they need to create better, brighter futures for themselves and everyone around them.

This **Educator's Toolkit** is designed to support **educators in Canada** in fostering global citizenship among students. It provides structured resources to help raise awareness about the right to education, encouraging young people to understand, reflect on, and take action on global challenges.

## What's inside the toolkit?

The toolkit is divided into three key sections:

### 1. UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUE:

An overview of the global education landscape, including key challenges and real-world case studies that highlight barriers to education, particularly in emergencies and for marginalized communities.

### 2. CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:

Engaging lesson plans, discussion prompts, and interactive exercises designed to help students critically analyze global education issues and develop advocacy skills.

### 3. TAKING ACTION AS A GLOBAL CITIZEN:

Practical guidance on how students can get involved, from advocacy campaigns to community-based initiatives, fostering a sense of agency and responsibility.

By using this toolkit, educators can help young people develop a deeper understanding of **global education rights, advocacy, and social responsibility**, equipping them to become informed and engaged global citizens.



Diana (left) and her friend have overcome their fear of the classroom in Tanzania



# About Plan International Canada

Plan International Canada is a part of a global organization that strives for a just world that advances children's rights and equality for girls. Plan International has been building powerful partnerships with and for children for over 85 years and is now active in more than 80 countries.

We strive to create a world where children, especially girls, learn, lead, decide, and thrive. We tackle the root causes of gender inequality.

We partner with children, families, supporters, local community-based organizations, and governments to develop long-term, sustainable solutions that help girls and young women step into their full potential.

Plan International Canada works to improve access to **quality education** for children, especially girls, around the world. How will you champion education for every child?

Girls with their new education kits from Plan International in Delhi



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# Understand the terms used to communicate about education

## **CHILD**

The Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as any person under the age of 18, unless relevant laws recognize an earlier age of majority.

## **GENDER EQUALITY**

A state in which persons regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, gender expressions, gender identity, and sex characteristics enjoy the same status in society; have the same entitlement to all human rights; enjoy the same level of respect in the community; can take advantage of the same opportunities to make choices about their lives; and have the same amount of power to shape the outcomes of these choices.

## **LITERACY**

The quality or state of being literate, which refers to the ability to read or write and have an education.

## **LITERACY RATE**

The percentage of people, in a specific age range, that can read and write (e.g., youth literacy rate, ages 15 to 24).

## **NUMERACY**

The quality or state of being numerate, which refers to the ability to reason with numbers and other mathematical concepts, to apply these in a range of contexts, and to solve a variety of problems.

## **OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN (OOSC)**

Children who are not enrolled in either primary or secondary school. The term “out-of-school” encompasses a wide range of realities and refers to children who do not have access to a school in their community, do not enrol despite the availability of a school, enrol but do not attend school, or drop out of the education system completely. Girls, children with disabilities, children living in remote areas, and children affected by conflict and emergencies are the most likely to be OOSC.





## PRIMARY EDUCATION

Programs generally designed to give students a sound basic education in reading, writing, mathematics, history, geography, natural sciences, social sciences, art, and music. Primary education is typically the first stage of compulsory education, placed between early childhood education and secondary education.

## QUALITY EDUCATION

An inclusive and equitable education that promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all. This means access to free and equitable primary and secondary education, leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes, with a focus on developing skills and promoting sustainable development.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

The SDGs are 17 global goals to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030. SDG 4 pertains specifically to education and commits to “ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and [promoting] lifelong learning opportunities for all.”

Schoolmates in  
Tanzania





Reshma, a student in Bangladesh

# Education ignites change

Education is critically important. Every child around the world, regardless of their gender, location, family income, or cultural biases, has the right to go to school to realize their full potential. When you educate a girl, you empower her with the skills, knowledge, and opportunities to create a better world for herself and her community.

To achieve Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations, all children must have access to quality education. Time is running out to achieve this goal by 2030, and hard-earned progress is waning. Progress toward achieving this goal was

already slower than required before the pandemic, but COVID-19 had devastating impacts, causing [learning losses in four out of five of 104 countries studied](#).

Without increased action – such as governments and communities standing up to get back on track – 84 million children and young people will remain out of school by 2030. Education is key to breaking free from the cycle of poverty, but 300 million students will lack basic numeracy and literacy skills.

Layered onto the setbacks caused by the onset of the pandemic in 2020, the

education crisis has been accelerated by extreme violence, war, and unrest. In 2024, [103 million school-aged children in 34 conflict-affected countries were out of school](#).

This is a significant increase from past years, showing the worsening impact of conflict on education.

Despite these unrelenting challenges, we know that continuing to advocate for quality education has never been more important, as it ignites positive change. Quality education helps break the cycle of poverty and promotes equality for girls.



## Does education ignite **positive change**?

Yes. It all starts with access to quality education.  
When girls stay in school longer:

- Their future income increases
- Their likelihood of early marriage decreases
- Child survival rates increase
- Countries' gross domestic product's (GDP) increase

When girls have access to quality and inclusive education, it gives them the tools they need to advocate for themselves and lead a better life. Education not only helps individual girls, and their communities thrive; it also has ripple effects on the global economy and leads to more peaceful societies.

## Is access to education more challenging in some countries?

Girls and children in some regions of the world face unique barriers to education, making it more difficult for them to access quality schooling.

In conflict zones, girls are 2.5 times more likely to be out of school compared to girls in areas without conflict. As an example of the catastrophic effects of conflict on education, consider the children in Sudan and Gaza.

In Sudan,  
**19 million children**  
are out of school due  
to ongoing conflict.

Due to a lack of infrastructure, some regions are challenged in providing basic school resources. In the regions of Africa south of the Sahara, for example,

**less than 50%**  
of primary and secondary schools have access to drinking water, electricity, computers, or internet access.

In Gaza,  
**85% of school buildings**  
have been damaged or destroyed, preventing  
**625,000** school-aged children from accessing education.



# Why don't all children go to school?

Children around the world face many barriers that keep them from attending or staying in school. These are some of the main reasons:

## ► POVERTY:

Although primary education is free in most countries, the cost of uniforms, books, or bus fare can be too much for families living in poverty. If families don't earn enough to support their basic needs, children might be forced to drop out of school and work to contribute to the household income.

## ► DISTANCE:

The walk to and from school can be a considerable distance for children in remote rural areas. These journeys can be through extreme weather and take hours. It's particularly dangerous for girls, who are made vulnerable to harassment or danger along the way.

## ► LEARNING QUALITY:

Students can struggle to learn in classrooms that lack space, textbooks, or supplies. In some rural areas, the absence of adequately trained teachers can also pose challenges for learning.

## ► CONFLICT, CRISIS, AND CLIMATE:

During times of conflict, unrest, or extreme-weather events, it may not be safe or considered a priority for children to attend school. More than one in six children worldwide now lives in a conflict zone, facing extreme violence. But going to school can help give them a sense of normalcy.

Group of happy children  
in Indonesia





Girls learning at school  
in Haiti's South-East  
Department



## Why are girls less likely to go to school?

Globally, women and girls face significant barriers to education, since 40% of countries have not achieved gender parity in primary education. These are some of the barriers that prohibit girls from attending, or staying in, school:

### ➤ **GENDER NORMS:**

Some societies value boys' education more than girls', because girls are encouraged to take care of their younger siblings and help with other household chores like cooking and cleaning. When low-income families cannot afford to send all of their children to school, boys' education is often prioritized.

### ➤ **MENSTRUAL HEALTH:**

Without access to a safe, girls-only washroom, girls can't manage their periods at school. They may also not have access to the products they need to comfortably manage their periods. This means they may miss several days each month, and some fall too far behind to catch up.

### ➤ **EARLY MARRIAGE:**

Early marriage and pregnancy are additional barriers that keep girls away from classrooms, since girls who get married in adolescence are up to six times more likely to be out of school. In many communities around the world, girls' value is linked in their role as mothers and home makers, and they may be forced to marry early to alleviate a financial burden on their own family.

### ➤ **VIOLENCE OR DISCRIMINATION:**

Girls are more likely to bear the brunt of gender-based violence or discrimination from teachers and other male students.

Every year,  
**246 million**  
**children**  
experience gender-based  
violence in or around their  
school.



Students in Uganda  
can access clean  
water at their school

# The solutions

## RECRUITING AND TRAINING TEACHERS

For high-quality learning, students require teachers who use effective teaching methods and updated curricula. It is also important for teachers to understand how to promote safety, equality, and respect in their classrooms and schools. Since teachers may have to travel a considerable distance to get to rural schools, they are more likely to accept and keep their jobs if teacher residences are built on school premises.

## RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF GIRLS' EDUCATION

Through community meetings and outreach, traditional beliefs can be challenged and parents can be shown that it is just as valuable for their daughters to go to school as it is for their sons. Even if schools have high-quality classrooms and teachers, girls are unlikely to stay in school if they don't have support from their families.

## PROVIDING PROPER WATER AND SANITATION FACILITIES AND HYGIENE EDUCATION

With functional wells, taps, or rainwater tanks at school, students have clean water to drink and wash their hands, which keeps them hydrated and healthy. Gender-separated latrines are also essential in maintaining students' health and keeping girls in school, especially when they have their periods.







## OFFERING SCHOLARSHIPS

Some programs offer motivated students the extra funds they need for school's "hidden costs," such as books, uniforms, school supplies, and transportation. Scholarship recipients are usually selected by community members and teachers, who know which students have the greatest need and highest potential.

## ESTABLISHING EFFECTIVE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

To offer quality education, schools need to be kept in good condition, and any issues with enrolment, attendance, teaching, or administration need to be addressed. This can be achieved by offering training to school management committees, made up of parents, teachers, and community members. These committees help maintain and monitor their local schools so that they attract and retain students for a long period of time.

## IMPROVING PARENTS' INCOMES

Parents who have access to loans that can improve their livelihoods, can increase their incomes. For example, if a father wants to grow and sell more crops, he might need extra money to purchase better farming tools and seeds. Since people in poorer communities often don't have enough money to open a bank account, they can join a community group called a village savings and loan association. In these groups, each member contributes a small amount of money to create a collective fund. Members can then borrow money from this fund to support their farming or business activities. The fund grows as members repay their loans with a small amount of interest (an additional amount of money charged for taking out the loan).



Michael, 41, is a  
schoolteacher in  
Ghana

Tanyaradzwa is  
now a university  
student in  
Zimbabwe

# How Plan International Canada supports girls' education

## Project spotlight: Education in emergencies

Plan International Canada is working to make education more accessible for girls, including those living in especially challenging circumstances.

Plan International's education in emergencies programs provide inclusive education that caters to the unique needs of children caught in the chaos of a humanitarian or climate crisis. These education programs are designed to help reduce disruptions to a child's education caused by these crises. They also provide safe spaces for children to play, process, and heal after experiencing trauma.

Education-in-emergencies programs ensure that all children can continue their learning, exercising their right to education despite the circumstances. It is also critical for:

### ► PROTECTION:

School gives children a safe place where they are protected from physical harm, early marriage, and exploitation.

### ► SURVIVAL SKILLS:

Children learn life-saving skills such as disease prevention, healthy eating, and where to seek help in an emergency.

### ► LIFE SKILLS AND RIGHTS AWARENESS:

Beyond basic education, children learn essential skills such as confidence building and conflict resolution. They also learn about their rights, gender equality, environmental sustainability, and how to respond to emergencies like climate disasters.

### ► MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING:

Education in emergencies can stabilize children's mental health and promote socio-emotional well-being.



# The Refugee Education and Development (READ) project

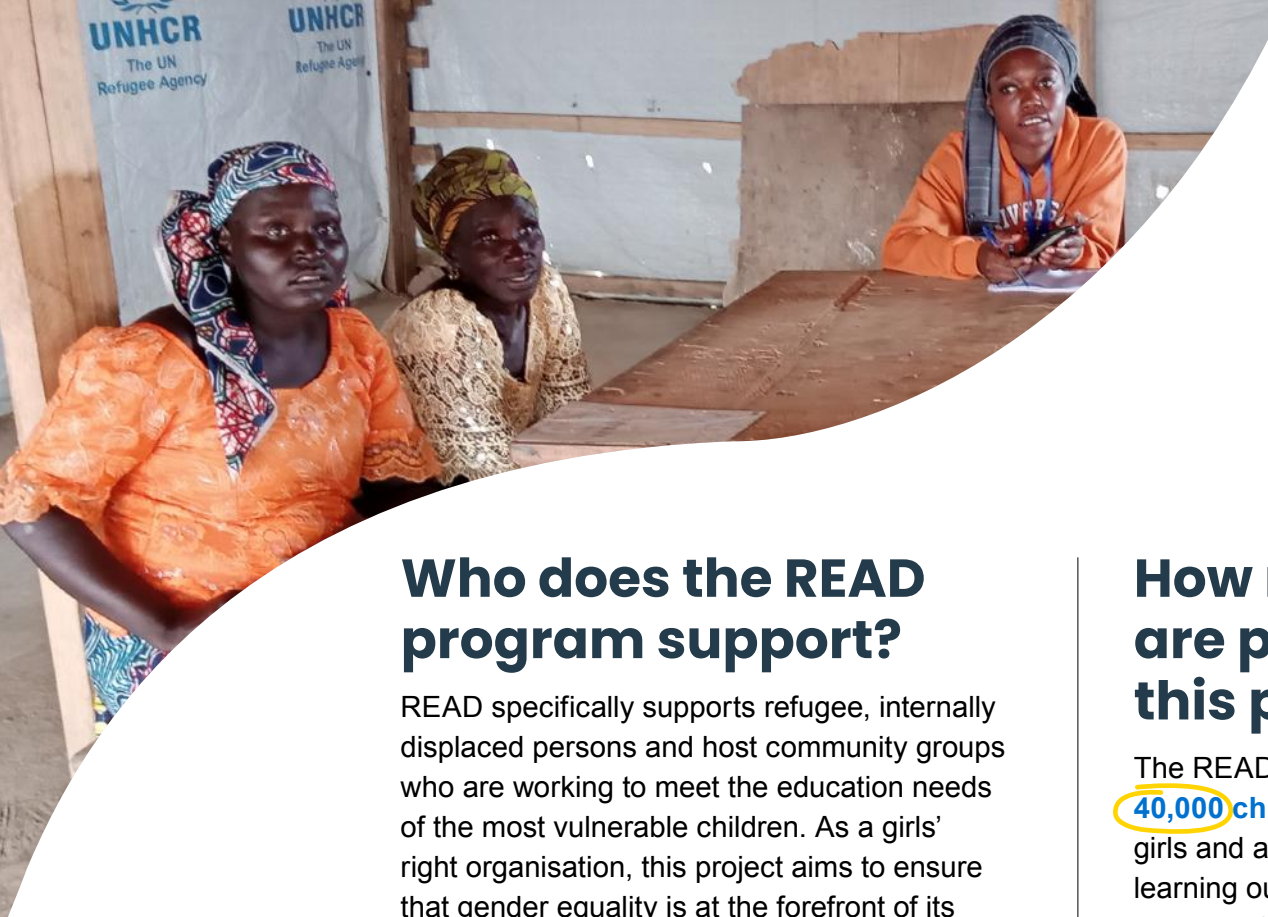
Plan International's Refugee Education and Development (READ) project in Cameroon and Niger focuses on supporting local organizations led by refugees and internally displaced people that provide access to quality, safe, inclusive, conflict-sensitive education through organizational capacity building and direct funding to address the specific education needs facing refugee and host community children.



The READ project supports community-led organizations in Niger and Cameroon in providing access to education for children







## Who does the READ program support?

READ specifically supports refugee, internally displaced persons and host community groups who are working to meet the education needs of the most vulnerable children. As a girls' right organisation, this project aims to ensure that gender equality is at the forefront of its programming and that activities are developed to specifically address barriers to girls' accessing quality education. It's designed to support particularly vulnerable groups such as girls, young adolescents, and children living with disabilities, who often face the greatest barriers to education by reinforcing a gender-sensitive and inclusive approach.

## How many children are participating in this program?

The READ project will enable more than **40,000 children** (ages 5–18), particularly girls and adolescent women, to achieve basic learning outcomes (such as literacy and numeracy) at the primary and post-primary levels between 2022 and 2027.



## How does Plan International Canada ensure the READ project include local perspectives?

The READ project places organizations led by refugees and internally displaced people at its heart. These organizations are deeply involved in every stage of the project, from design and implementation to prioritizing activities and allocating resources. Their leadership and active participation ensure that the project effectively addresses the needs and aspirations of vulnerable host and refugee communities in Niger and Cameroon.

## How does READ promote the participation of girls in decision making and leadership?

### ► ENCOURAGING GIRLS' PARTICIPATION:

READ helps girls get involved in decision making and leadership by providing grants for creative, girl-led education projects, offering skills training, and providing mentorship.

### ► EMPOWERING GIRLS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE:

By working with local partners, READ helps girls take on leadership roles, making sure their voices are heard and their impact on refugee education is maximized.

### ► SUPPORTING ADVOCACY FOR EDUCATION:

READ supports girls and women, and existing advocacy networks in advocating for quality education for refugee and displaced children, helping them use evidence and coordinated efforts in their quest for change.

Happy students  
in class at school  
in Geita region,  
Tanzania

# Go deeper

through focused activities that unpack the issues in more depth

Welcome to the Activities Section of the Educator's Toolkit, designed to empower Canadian primary and secondary educators in raising awareness about children's right to education worldwide. This section offers a variety of activities tailored to different age groups, each crafted to engage students and deepen their understanding of global education issues.

## How to use these activities:

### ► STANDALONE IMPLEMENTATION:

Each activity is designed to function independently, allowing you to select and integrate them into your existing curriculum.

### ► SEQUENTIAL LEARNING:

Alternatively, the activities can be used in succession, building upon each other to provide a comprehensive exploration of the topics.

## Age-group suitability:

### ► PRIMARY EDUCATORS:

You'll find activities that introduce young learners to global education concepts through interactive and age-appropriate methods.

### ► SECONDARY EDUCATORS:

For older students, activities delve deeper into the complexities of educational rights, encouraging critical thinking and active participation.





# Activity 1:

## Find Someone Who

### Purpose

- To **introduce** group members to one another and to network
- To **have a shared understanding** between group members of the terms “education” and “advocacy”

### Learning outcomes

- Foster connections and networking among participants.
- Foster connections and networking among participants.
- Define and discuss key terms such as “**education**” and “**advocacy**.”
- Recognize the diverse experiences, skills, and perspectives within the group.
- Encourage active listening and communication skills.
- Develop an understanding that concepts like education and advocacy can have different meanings for different people.

### Preparation

Participants receive a printed sheet with nine questions. Participants should find an answer to all the questions on the sheet from people at the workshop. They should not answer any of the questions themselves.

**Note:** This activity may need to be adapted if the group has members who have different learning abilities. The facilitator should adapt or change questions on the question sheet depending on the group you are working with and the topic you wish to cover during the workshop.

 **20 mins**

### NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

For 20-45 participants, 10 to 12 to take part in the activity and for the rest to reflect and respond

### RECOMMENDED AGE GROUP

Between Grade 3 and 6

### MATERIALS

- Quiz sheet (see suggested handout on page 20)
- Pens



# Activity 1:

## Find Someone Who

### Instructions

1. Explain the purpose of this activity with the group and that everyone will have to use other people's knowledge to answer questions and win this game.
2. Hand out one quiz sheet and one pen to each participant.
3. Share with the group: *"Working as individuals, you have ten minutes to go around the room and find out the answers to the questions on their sheet."*
4. There are three rules:
  - Find an answer to all the questions on the sheet.
  - Do not answer any of the questions yourself.
  - Each question must be answered by a different person.
5. Participants should walk around with their quiz sheet and write down the answers and the name of the person they spoke with.
6. The first person to answer all of the questions should shout *"Complete!"*
7. Once everyone has finished, come back together as a group to debrief.

### Debrief

- Go through each question and ask a member of the group to give the answer and the name of the person who gave it.
- This activity is a good way for the group to meet each other and learn each other's names. Some of the questions also help to begin the process of exploring key terms such as **"advocacy"** or **"education"** and some skills, attitudes, and networks that exist within the group.
- Debrief what the words **"advocacy"** or **"education"** mean at the end. Share with the group that there is no single definition of what these words mean and that by listening to the different perspectives, we can begin to develop a deeper understanding of the different ways these terms are understood.

# Activity 1:

## Find Someone Who

Activity  
table

FIND SOMEONE WHO...	NAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Takes part in arts/theatre or music</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Knows what the word <b>"advocacy"</b> means <i>What does it mean?</i></li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Has made a speech to a large group of people</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Enjoys/enjoyed school</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Thinks their education could be/could have been better</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Has been part of a campaign before</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Has signed/liked an online petition</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Knows what the word <b>"education"</b> means <i>What does it mean?</i></li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Has met with a decision maker</li> </ul>	



# Activity 2:

## Making the Grade

### Purpose

To simulate inequities in children's access to education, as well as inequities in the quality of education they receive.

### Learning outcomes

- Understand **inequities in access to education** globally.
- Identify **barriers to education**, particularly in marginalized and crisis-affected communities.
- Experience a **simulation of educational disparity** and reflect on the emotional and systemic impact.
- Discuss how **limited educational opportunities affect individuals and communities** over time.
- Critically assess the role of **privilege and systemic inequalities** in global education.
- Explore the **broader implications of education rights on other fundamental human rights** (e.g., economic security, gender equality)

### Preparation

Mark off a square on the floor with masking tape that is roughly one quarter of the room.

Move the desks so that one quarter of them are in the small marked off area, while three quarters of them are in the larger surrounding area.

Collect one pencil and one sheet of paper per participant. Organize them into two piles: one with one quarter of supplies and the other with three quarters of supplies.

 **45 mins**

### NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

For groups 3-5, for a total of 20 to 40 participants.

### RECOMMENDED AGE GROUP

Between Grade 4 and 8

### MATERIALS

- 1 desk
- Pencil and sheet of paper per participant
- Masking tape
- Blue paper and green paper



Pre-primary students  
in Tanzania

## Activity 2: Making the Grade

### Instructions

1. Begin by organizing participants into two groups: one group has one quarter of the participants, the other has three quarters. Invite the small group to sit in the large area, and the large group to sit in the small marked-off area.
2. The participants will ask questions and have concerns about the distribution of the desks. Just move on with the instructions.
3. Explain that they will be taking a spelling test and that a mark of 80% or greater is a pass. Ask the participants not to talk during the test. Distribute the pencils and paper: the small pile of supplies to the large group, and the large pile of supplies to the small group.
4. Dictate a set of 10 suitable words quickly, but at a pace the small group can handle. The large group may experience frustration given they do not have enough supplies. Just continue on with the dictation advising them to do the best with what they have.
5. When you have finished the dictation, have the participants switch their test with someone else. Spell each word out loud, so that participants can mark the tests themselves. Collect the tests and determine who passed.
6. Acknowledge the emotions and frustration in the room. Facilitate a discussion using the questions below as a guide.
7. Explain to participants that they have taken part in a simulation meant to illustrate that there are inequities in access to and quality of education around the world. The fractions used were significant: three-quarters of the entire population of primary school-aged children who are out-of-school live in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia. The remaining one-quarter of out-of-school children live in all the other regions of the world. Children living in sub-Saharan Africa are the most vulnerable in the world in terms of receiving a primary school education.



# Activity 2:

## Making the Grade

### Debrief

Here are a few questions for the participants to reflect on.

- Overall, how did this exercise make you feel?
- **For members of the large group:**  
How did it feel to have limited supplies and space?
- **For members of the small group:**  
How did it feel to have extra supplies and space? Did anyone try to balance the situation? If so, what effect did it have? Why might those in the large group not have attempted to remediate the situation, and how does it reflect on our society?
- How would your learning be affected, in both short and long term, if you had poor access to schools, teachers or enough school supplies?
- How would your community be affected, if children had poor access to schools, teachers or enough school supplies?
- Education is a universal human and children's right, but all children do not have equal access to it. What other children's rights could be affected for children who do not receive an education?

Adapted from: Fountain, S. (1993). "The Test". It's Only Right! A Practical Guide to Learning About the Convention on the Rights of the Child. New York: UNICEF, pp 31-33.

Moreen, 19, in her school's library in Uganda



# Activity 3:

## Power Walk, Gender & Access to Education

### Purpose

- To get participants to engage in discussions on intersection of gender, power and privilege.
- To **spark discussions on systemic inequalities** in education access and quality.

### Learning outcomes

- Recognize how **gender, power, and privilege** impact access to education.
- Identify **intersectional barriers** (e.g., poverty, disability, ethnicity) that contribute to exclusion from education.
- Develop **empathy and critical thinking** by stepping into the lived experiences of different identities.
- Understand how **gender inequality intersects with other forms of discrimination**, creating compounding disadvantages.
- Reflect on how social structures influence opportunities and life outcomes.

 **45 mins**

### NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

For 20-45 participants, 10 to 12 to take part in the activity and for the rest to reflect and respond.

### RECOMMENDED AGE GROUP

Between Grade 9 and 13

### MATERIALS

- Paper for character slips
- Open space for the power walk



## Activity 3:

# Power Walk, Gender & Access to Education

## Instructions

1. Tell participants that they will be asked to explore what impact these power dynamics have through an activity called the “**power walk**.”

➤ The focus will be on how power in decision-making and access to education can put some people in a position of privilege, and some at a disadvantage.

➤ Facilitators should keep emphasizing this point throughout the activity.

2. Clear a large space for participants where they can form a straight **line** across the space.

3. Provide each participant with a slip of paper that includes a brief description of a person or “character” (found after instructions).

**Note:** Facilitators should have prepared these cut slips before the session.

4. Instruct the participants to keep their identity a secret from other participants.

5. Explain to participants that you will read out a series of statements (after instructions).

➤ If the statement is likely to be true to their “character,” they should take a step forward.

➤ If the statement is likely to be false to their “character,” they should take a step back.

➤ If they are not sure, they should stay in place.

➤ Ensure that each participant carefully considers whether their character truly has the power to make decisions or access resources.

### TIP FOR FACILITATORS

If your group is very large, ask for 10-12 volunteers for the powerwalk while the rest of the group observes and discusses. For those participants who are sitting at their desk (not walking the line) can be encouraged to participate based on their own identity. You can give them a grid paper and have them move up/down the grid based on how they would respond to the questions. This can show the different in privilege between them and others in the world of the same age.

### TIP FOR FACILITATORS

Facilitators should remember that after all the statements, most of the “girl” characters will be way back, and most of the “boy” characters will be ahead. Do take time after the exercise to check in on the young people and make sure that they are feeling okay.



## Activity 3:

# Power Walk, Gender & Access to Education

6. After the first statement, ask each participant to read out their character.

- Discuss why they moved the way they did and ask if everyone agrees.

- Read out all statements, pausing after each one to allow participants to reflect on their choices.

7. After all statements have been read, note that those furthest ahead had the greatest access to education.

- **Ask:** Are participants surprised by where each “character” ended up?

- Allow the group to discuss how they responded to different statements.

- Most importantly, encourage the group to consider how gender impacted the level of power each character had in accessing education.

- **Ask:** What other factors can exclude children from education? (e.g., disability, poverty, ethnicity, language, HIV/AIDS orphan status, etc.)

- **Explain:** Gender inequality interacts with other forms of exclusion, often making it worse for girls and women.

8. Close the session by revisiting key messages and inviting comments or questions.

- Unequal power relations determine who gets access to education and development opportunities.

- Gender inequality is a key factor influencing school access and success for boys and girls.

- Gender inequality interacts with all forms of exclusion, making it worse for marginalized groups, particularly girls and women.



Young women in a classroom  
in Bangladesh



# Activity 3:

## Power Walk, Gender & Access to Education

### Character slips



Cut these character descriptions into strips and give one each to participants... or make your own!

1. Girl in a wheel chair, from a rural family, age 8	6. Girl from a middle-class family, age 16	11. Primary school girl, age 10	16. Male village health worker in a clinic without minimum sanitation standards	21. Female Minister of Education
2. Boy with a hearing impairment, from a poor urban family, age 13	7. Ethnic minority girl from a poor family, age 12	12. Ethnic minority girl, age 4	17. Female traditional birth attendant from an ethnic minority	22. Female local journalist, age 26
3. Girl from a poor rural family, age 15, married to a 33-year-old widower with three children	8. Unemployed boy, age 17	13. Ethnic minority boy, age 3	18. Male youth union leader from an ethnic minority	23. Male director of a media institute, age 47
4. An orphaned boy living on the streets, age 11	9. Girl looking after her parents who are unwell, and her younger siblings, age 12	14. Male commune chief from a rural area	19. Male Minister of Planning and Investment	24. Chair, Provincial Women's Union
5. Primary school boy whose parents own a shop in an urban area, age 11	10. Boy who is HIV positive, living in a slum without health facilities, age 16	15. Female farmer from an ethnic minority	20. Gay male youth forced to leave his family home, age 17	25. Ethnic minority male in jail accused of a crime, who does not speak the national language, age 22

## Activity 3:

# Power Walk, Gender & Access to Education

## Statements for character slips

Sample statements (you can choose which of these you would like to read out loud)

1. I feel safe in my community.
2. I have spare time to watch movies and spend with my friends.
3. I can vote.
4. I can afford a foreign holiday.
5. I never go hungry.
6. I believe my children will be better off than I am.
7. I am confident I can get a job.
8. I get to see and talk to my parents.
9. I get a say in local decisions.

10. I can pay for hospital treatment.
11. I can express my opinions in public.
12. I am not in danger of being beaten up.
13. When I go to the doctor, I can speak for myself.
14. I can provide a child with what they need.
15. I have a good income.
16. I will be consulted on issues that affect my life.
17. I feel that I am a valued member of my community.
18. I eat at least two full meals a day in all seasons.

19. I expect to finish secondary school (or I did finish secondary school).
20. I am not expected to do household work every day.
21. The school curriculum shows that people like me can achieve anything they want.
22. I can decide to see my friends or travel to visit relatives without asking for permission.
23. My family and I are not vulnerable to climate disasters.
24. I am comfortable talking in public and expressing my views.
25. I do not face discrimination or stigma when using public services.

26. I feel very safe at home and in my community, and I do not worry about being sexually harassed or abused.
27. I earn more than the minimum wage.
28. I have time and resources to spend time with my friends, play sports, or take part in other recreation.
29. I have control over decisions about my body, including when to have children and how many.
30. I can get information in the language that I use.
31. I have a say in whom I marry and when.

# Activity 4:

## World Café

### Purpose

- To **encourage learning and sharing** amongst the group
- To **gather ideas** about the causes of the problem as well as solutions and advocacy activities.

### Learning outcomes

- Facilitate **collaborative learning and knowledge sharing** among participants.
- Develop **critical thinking** by exploring multiple perspectives on an issue.
- Generate **creative solutions and advocacy** ideas related to education challenges.
- Enhance **communication and active listening skills** through discussions.
- Recognize the **diverse factors influencing access to quality education**.
- Strengthen **group cohesion** by engaging in dynamic, peer-led conversations.

### Preparation

Make sure each table has 2 flipchart papers, pens and a designated notetaker. The room should be set up like a café with different tables and chairs around each table. Providing refreshments can also help to create a good atmosphere for sharing.

### 2 hours

#### NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

For 4 groups, with 20-40 participants, with at least 5 participants at each table


#### RECOMMENDED AGE GROUP

Between Grade 5 and 13

#### MATERIALS

- Tables
- Chairs
- Flipcharts
- Pens





Students in an  
eighth-grade class in  
Kilifi County, Kenya

## Activity 4: World Café

### Instructions

**1.** Introduce the process to the participants: *“We will shortly place a different question in the center of each table. You will be invited to sit at a table where the topic interests you and discuss the question with others for 25 minutes. Each table will have a note taker who will capture the key points from the conversation. After 25 minutes, everyone except the note taker will be asked to move to a different table. You will have the opportunity to visit three tables. If a table looks busy, please wait until the next round. At the end, we will hear from the note-takers about the key points raised.”*

**2.** Agree on the discussion questions. The group now needs to agree on the questions. To choose questions, you can:

- A)** Work with the group to find the questions they want to discuss.
  - Invite suggestions and reword them if appropriate, ensuring they reflect the original intent.
  - Ask the group to vote for their favourite questions (each person can vote twice).
  - Encourage questions that reflect the objectives of the workshop.
  - Be aware this process could take up to an hour.

**B)** Prepare a set of questions in advance.

- Ask the group if they would like to discuss any additional topics.
- Write these up as questions and invite a vote (each person can vote twice).

Try to ensure that each question identified has at least five people interested in discussing it. See some education-focused example questions below.



# Activity 4:

## World Café



Two adolescent girls participate in Plan programs in Niger

**3.** Identify note-takers for each question.

- ▶ The note-taker could be a participant or a member of the group/organization.

- ▶ The role of the note-taker is to capture key discussion points.

- ▶ The note-taker does not change tables—after each round, they should give the new group a summary of previous conversations before inviting them to continue the discussion.

**4. World Café Rotations:**

After 25 minutes of discussion, invite all the

participants except the note taker to move to a different table.

**5. Presentation:** At the end of the World Café Rotations, it's usually a good idea to have a short break, allowing the note-takers to prepare a 5-minute presentation on the outcomes of the conversation at their table. Invite the note-taker to deliver a brief presentation of the discussions and invite comments from the group.

- ▶ The group should not seek to achieve consensus (everyone agreeing on the same thing).

- ▶ Different perspectives should be acknowledged.

- ▶ Try encouraging the participants to take a 2 minute break between the presentations before diving back in.

## Debrief

- ▶ Were there any similarities, differences, or common themes between groups?

- ▶ Are there any outstanding issues the group feels they would like to discuss in more detail as we move forward?

## EXAMPLE EDUCATION-THEMED QUESTIONS FOR A WORLD CAFÉ

- ▶ Why are a high percentage of children in community 'X' unable to read and write basic sentences by the time they join secondary school?

- ▶ How can we best ensure that young people have access to fun and inspiring out-of-school learning activities?

- ▶ How can we encourage parents to send their children to school in community 'X'?

- ▶ How can we improve the quality of sexual health education in community 'X'?

# Activity 5:

## Key Messages

### Purpose

- **To agree** a short, clear, and compelling description of your advocacy campaign
- **To develop** communication skills

### Learning outcomes

- Develop **clear and concise advocacy messaging** for different audiences.
- Strengthen **public speaking and persuasive communication skills**.
- Learn how to **structure an effective advocacy pitch** using key components (issue, evidence, real example, ask).
- Adapt messages to **different time constraints** (e.g., 60-second vs. 20-second pitches).
- Build **confidence in speaking about advocacy efforts** in various settings.
- Practice **giving and receiving constructive feedback** to improve messaging strategies.



**45 mins**

### NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

For 10-15 participants.

### RECOMMENDED AGE GROUP

Between Grade 5 and 13

### MATERIALS

- Flipchart
- Pen





Girls learning at school in Burkina Faso

# Activity 5: Key Messages

## Instructions

**1.** Tell the group to imagine the scenario... *“You step into an elevator and find yourself with someone who could help you in your advocacy goals. The person presses the sixtieth-floor button, and you know you now have only 60 seconds to get their interest. What would you say?”*

➤ Explain that this short, 60-second description is often called an ‘elevator pitch’, and that it is important to be able to communicate such a pitch effectively to different audiences, even when unprepared.

➤ Explain that the elevator pitch should include:

- **A clear statement** of the issue and why it matters
- **How you know** – your evidence
- **A real example**
- **What you want**, and why it is important

**2.** Ask the group to get together and prepare an elevator pitch. If the group is large, you can break them up, and they can prepare and deliver in smaller groups. They should have up to ten minutes to prepare.

**3.** You start the activity with an easier pitch that resonates with the participants. For example *“why school should start at 10am or why the*

*cafeteria should have taco Tuesdays”*. Once the young people get the hang of the activity, ask them to do a pitch on **why education for all children globally matters or why we need to invest in education of girls**, etc.

**4.** Give each person/group 60 seconds to make the pitch and stop them exactly as their time is up.

**5.** Lead a mini-debrief asking the group to share feedback on what was good and what could be improved in the pitches. Note down the feedback on a flipchart.



## Activity 5:

# Key Messages

6. Tell the story again, but this time, explain that the person in the elevator presses the button for floor 20, and that they now only have 20 seconds to explain their campaign!

➤ Ask them to return to their small group and work together on a 20-second pitch.

➤ Explain that they must decide on the most important parts of their 60-second pitch and how to convey this in even less time.

7. After five minutes, bring the whole group together and listen to each pitch.

➤ **Remember to time the pitches at just 20 seconds.**

### Debrief

➤ Discuss as a group the **key messages** and what makes the pitches effective.

➤ End by highlighting that **working on key messages takes time**.

➤ To get really clear and simple, **practice sharing it with others** until you feel really confident.

**Note:** Instead of an elevator, you can use the scenario of sitting next to someone on a **bus**, or other situations that are relevant to you and your group.



Grace, 14, learning in class in South Sudan

# Plan for change

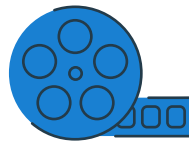
## and take action to help out-of-school children.

Now that your class has gained an understanding of the barriers to education, it's time to encourage them to take action! Learning about global education inequities is just the first step: Advocacy is about using your voice, your resources, and your community to make a difference.

Here are a few different ways they can take action!

## Awareness-building activities

These activities focus on educating and engaging people about the importance of education and global citizenship.



### ORGANIZE A FILM FESTIVAL:

Host a screening event with student-made films or existing documentaries on education access. Lead a discussion on how to advocate for universal education.



### START A BOOK CLUB ON GLOBAL ISSUES:

Read books that explore education and global development. Discuss how these issues impact different communities and what can be done to help.



### INVITE AN EXPERT SPEAKER:

Bring in an educator, humanitarian, or policy expert to speak on the challenges of education worldwide.



### TEACH YOUR FAMILIES:

Host an evening presentation or discussion to educate parents, neighbours, and the community about education inequalities.



### ENGAGE IN LOCAL ADVOCACY:

Write letters to policy makers, start petitions, or participate in campaigns that advocate for policies that support global education.





## Fundraising activities

These initiatives help raise money to support educational programs and provide resources for children in need.



Girls read aloud in class in Haiti's South-East Department



### HOST A "LUNCH MONEY MATTERS" FUNDRAISER:

Start your own fundraiser with ideas and resources available on our [website](#).



### GIVE THE GIFT OF EDUCATION:

Donate to Plan Canada's Gifts of Hope, which provides school supplies, builds safe latrines, and improves educational infrastructure. [Learn more](#).



### SELL BOOKS TO BUY BOOKS:

Collect used books, host a book sale, and donate the proceeds to support education programs.



### HOST A BOOK SWAP FOR A CAUSE:

Encourage classmates to swap books and donate to educational initiatives. [Use the Book Swap Toolkit](#).



### ENGAGE IN A READ-A-THON:

Challenge students to read as many books as possible, collect pledges from sponsors, and donate funds raised to support access to education.



# Looking for more ways to get involved?

Plan International Canada offers a variety of youth programs designed to empower young individuals ages 10–24 to become leaders and advocates for global change: [plancanada.ca](https://plancanada.ca)

## Explore our youth programs

### ► THE POWER WITHIN:

Develop strong body confidence and self-esteem through activities, workshops, and resources created by experts and youth.

### ► GIRLS BELONG HERE:

For self-identifying girls, young women, and gender-diverse youth ages 14–24, this program offers opportunities to step into leadership roles across various sectors, challenging gender norms and promoting equality.

### ► YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL:

Engage directly with Plan International Canada by providing recommendations, advising on youth integration, and assisting in the implementation of youth projects and activities.

Children carry bags provided by  
Plan International at school in Haiti







## Three ways you can support our education work

### 1. UNTIL WE ARE ALL EQUAL:

Whether it's a one-time contribution or an ongoing monthly donation, your support helps us address the greatest needs facing children, especially girls, today.

### 2. GIFTS OF HOPE:

Provide school supplies for one student or an entire classroom. Explore the many ways you can support girls' education through our Gifts of Hope.

### 3. CHILDREN IN CRISIS RESPONSE FUND:

The best time to address an emergency is before it happens. We'll be ready to act immediately to protect children's education when crises strike thanks to your contribution to our Children in Crisis Response Fund.

[plancanada.ca/our-work/education](https://plancanada.ca/our-work/education)





Schoolchildren  
in Indonesia

# Thank you!



Learn more and get involved at [plancanada.ca](https://plancanada.ca)



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