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# ALL CHILDREN READING:

## A GRAND CHALLENGE FOR DEVELOPMENT

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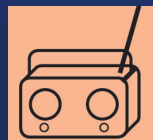
“We had to leave behind all of our possessions. The only thing we could bring with us is what we have in our heads, what we have been taught — our education. Education is the only thing that cannot be taken from us.” — Woman who fled from Darfur to Chad, 2004 (Women’s Refugee Commission)

 **793 million adults worldwide—1 out of 4 people cannot read these words**

 64% of them are women

 Just 10 countries account for 72% of the total number of illiterate adults

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*A Global Competition for Innovative Solutions to Advance Reading and Literacy*



# LITERACY DRIVES SUCCESS

## LITERACY CHALLENGES

- Recent studies show that for many students in low-income countries, very little learning is occurring in the classroom. For example, in Mali, Pakistan, and Peru more than 70% of children in primary grades could not read at grade level.
- 21 developing countries are currently spending more on arms than on primary schools; if they were to cut military spending by 10%, they could put an additional 9.5 million children in school.
- In 41 countries, women are twice as likely as men to be illiterate.
- The vast majority of illiterate adults (73%) live in South and West Asia and sub-Saharan Africa; although the Arab States also registered high levels of adult illiteracy.
- 61 million primary school-age children are out of school.
- Children in low-income countries are completing primary school at only 67% of the rate of high-income countries.

## LITERACY ENABLES PROGRESS

- Reading skills build the foundation for all future learning. And yet, in some sub-Saharan African countries, children with five years of education have a 40% chance of being illiterate.
- Early grade reading competency is critical for continued retention and success in future grades.

## LITERACY BRINGS FINANCIAL STABILITY

- Scarce available data on student performance in low-income countries reveal that many students are not mastering the basic skills of reading, thus undercutting economic productivity.
- Educated women are less likely to marry early and more likely to have smaller and healthier families. They are also more likely to get a job and earn a higher wage.

## LITERACY SAVES LIVES

- A child born to a mother who can read is 50% more likely to survive past the age of 5.
- According to a recent analysis, half the reduction in child mortality over the past 40 years can be directly attributed to better education for women.
- Educated women are more likely to send their children to school and better able to protect their children from malnutrition, HIV infection, trafficking, and sexual exploitation.

## LITERACY EXPANDS ECONOMIES

- 171 million people could be lifted out of poverty if all students in low-income countries left school with basic reading skills – that is equivalent to a 12% drop in the number of people living on less than \$1.25 a day.
- Research has found that countries that have experienced surges in literacy rates by 20-30% have seen simultaneous increases in GDP of 8-16%.
- Every additional year of schooling has been estimated to increase income per worker by an average of 8.3%.
- No country achieved rapid economic growth without investing in education and reaching an adult literacy rate of at least 40%.

## LITERACY AT HOME MATTERS

- A study in Ethiopia found that having a textbook boosted children's oral reading fluency by 9.6 words per minute, and having other books at home boosted their fluency by 8.3 words per minute.

Visit [www.AllChildrenReading.org](http://www.AllChildrenReading.org) to learn more, offer and share ideas, and be part of the solution. Together, let's get All Children Reading.



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