



Education: the catalyst for an equitable & transformative G7

Recommendations from the
Civil Society Education
Working Group

Improving the Quality of Basic Education in Least Developed Countries to fight inequalities

The G7 countries have a fundamental role to play in promoting education as a central goal for achieving the other SDGs.

Education is a catalyst for sustainable development, and supports the promotion of gender equality, inclusive health, peaceful societies, climate change action, and the protection of children.

By leading the way on free, inclusive, quality, universal basic education, the G7 leaders can guarantee the youngest,

most vulnerable and most marginalised girls and boys a better future. But change needs to happen now.

This is a transformative moment.

By prioritising resources toward basic education needs, G7 leaders can increase the focus on quality, free, basic education, and ensure sustainable investment for years to come.

“Investing in education is the most cost-effective way to drive economic development, improve skills and opportunities for young women and men, and unlock progress on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Financing education is indeed the best investment we can make.”

- António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General

We welcome the G7's education and development agenda and its prioritisation of gender equality in education, as well as highlighting the importance of technical and vocational education and training in sub-Saharan Africa countries to better fight inequality.

However, to achieve SDG4 and to fulfil the international promise of education for all without discrimination, the G7 countries must urgently tackle the barriers to achieving inclusive, quality universal education. This should happen through stronger political, technical and financial support to basic quality education, targeting the poorest, the most vulnerable, and those living in countries affected by fragility and conflict.

We ask the G7 countries to address quality basic education in all Least Developed Countries (LDCs), where education needs are the most acute. This includes at least a year of pre-primary, and full primary and lower secondary education.¹

In line with SDG4 and the principle of leaving-no-one-behind we ask for this goal to be reflected in the final G7 political declaration and for concrete steps to be taken to increase the provision of quality, equitable, and inclusive basic education for all.

All states are obligated “to ensure access to and completion of quality education for all children and youth to at least 12 years of free, publicly funded, inclusive and equitable quality primary and secondary education”.²
As well as a basic human right, education is one of the strongest tools to reduce inequality and boost economic growth.

The state of education today

While great progress has been made towards SDG4, too many children and youth, especially adolescent girls, still face multiple and intersecting barriers to accessing inclusive quality education and remaining in school, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. All these barriers are exacerbated by conflict and crises.

Intersecting obstacles to inclusive quality education include, but are not limited to:

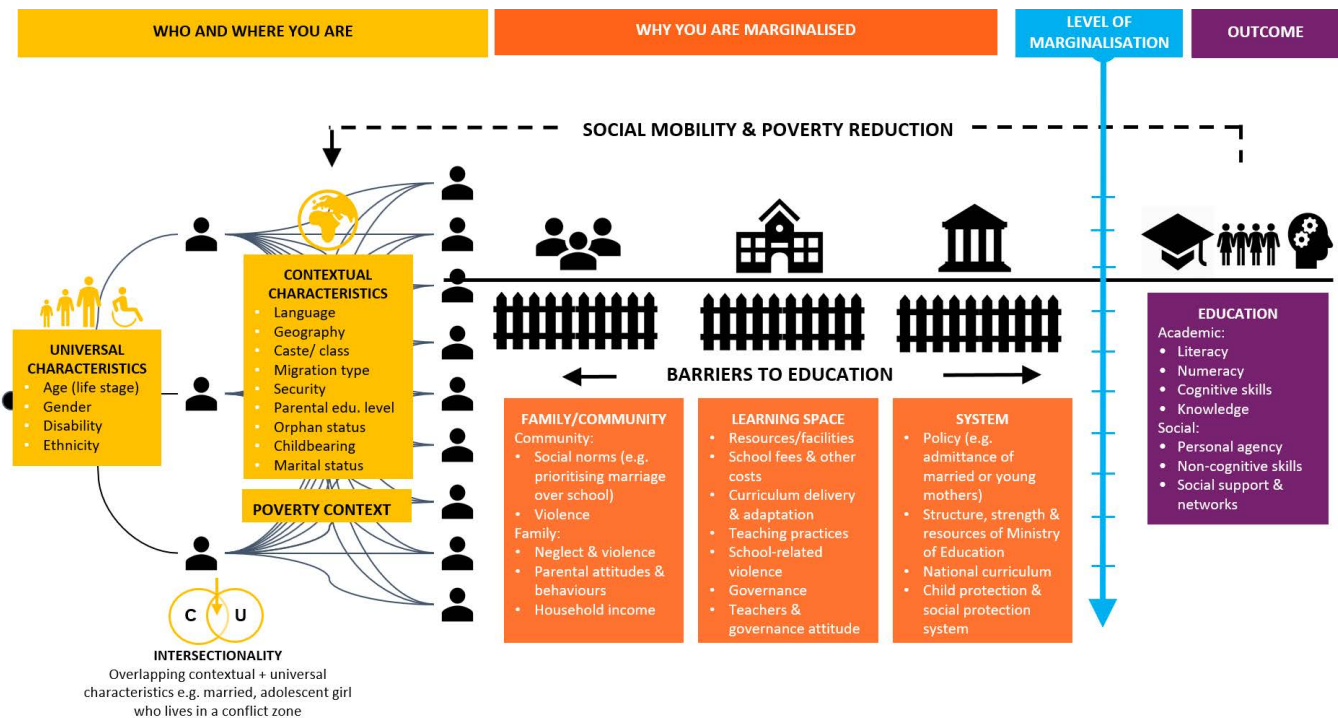


Fig 1: DFID Girls Education Challenge (2018) Thematic Review Understanding and Addressing Educational Marginalisation: Part 1: A new Conceptual Framework for educational marginalisation³

Not enough children are going to school, and not enough are learning while they are there. An estimated 274 million primary school children worldwide are not learning the basic foundational skills necessary to lead productive and healthy lives.⁴

Sub-Saharan Africa has the greatest needs. Of the more than 72 million girls and boys currently out of primary school, 50 percent are living in this region.

Inequality within these countries is also a chronic barrier, with only 65 of the poorest children for every 100 of the richest going to primary school.

Across sub-Saharan Africa, only **64% of primary school teachers are trained.**⁵

Because of inaccessibility of quality education, **around 130 million children of primary school age in Sub-Saharan Africa lack basic literacy and numeracy.**⁶

To achieve universal secondary school completion by 2030, all children should have enrolled in primary school in 2018, yet the intake rate in low income countries was 73% in 2016.⁷

According to UNESCO, **current aid to education needs to be multiplied by 6 to achieve the targets of SDG 4**. In 2016, aid to education represented only 7.6% of total development aid compared with 10% in 2009, with only 24% of this aid being allocated to basic education in sub-Saharan Africa. The share of humanitarian aid allocated to education, was only 2.1% in 2017.⁸

G7 Donors Funding to Education, 2016

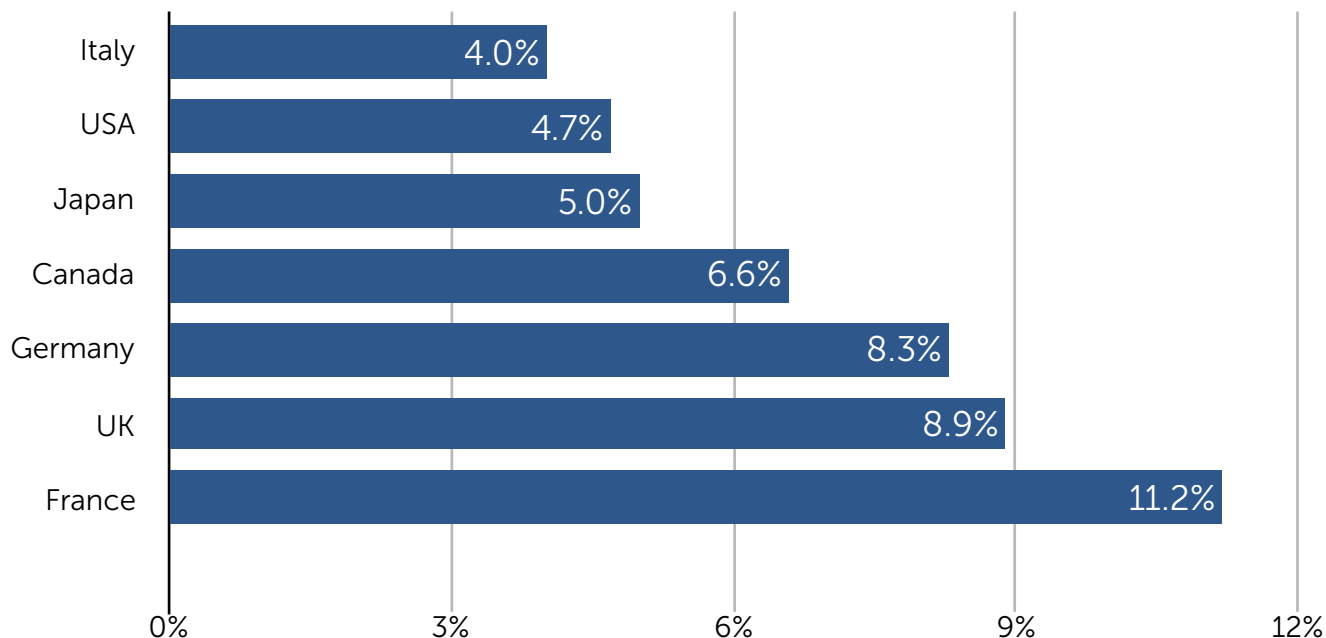


Fig 2: Education ODA as % of total ODA. OECD CRS (including scholarships) and imputed multilateral contributions to the education sector (DAC secretariat estimates)⁹

G7 Bilateral Education ODA to Basic Education, 2017

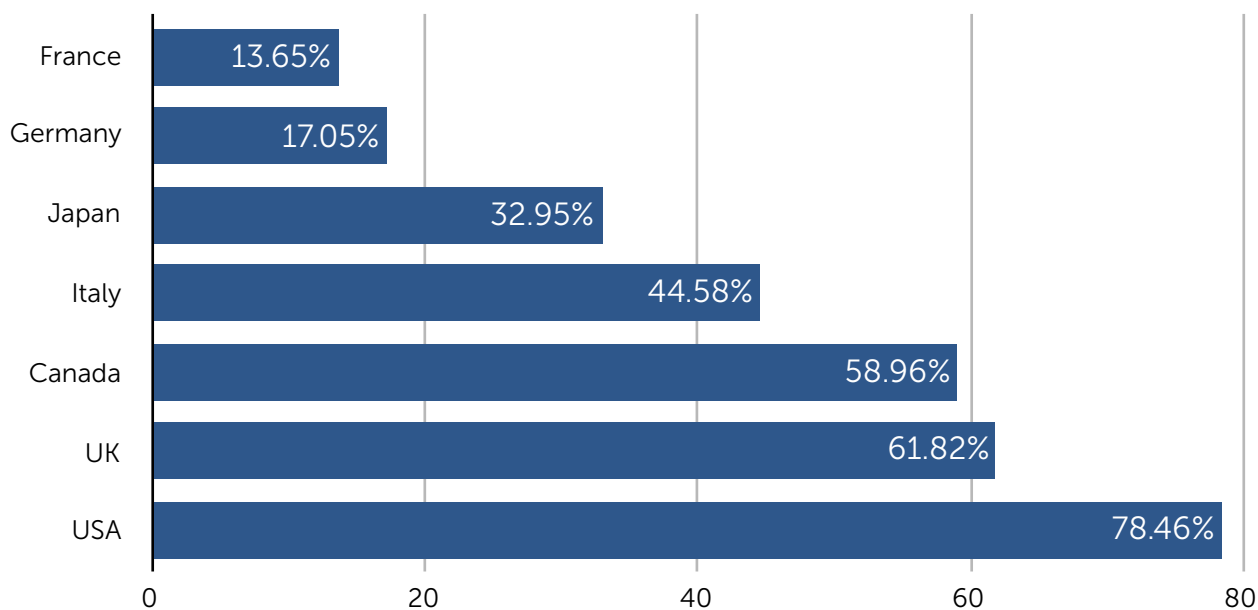


Fig 3: % of Total Bilateral Education ODA; Gross Disbursements in constant prices (OECD CRS)¹⁰

In the Sahel region in particular, 3 million children still do not have access to primary school, and only 3 out of 10 children acquire the minimum competencies expected at the end of the primary level. Entrenched gender inequalities remain at the secondary level.¹¹

G7 Bilateral Basic Education ODA to G5 Sahel, 2017

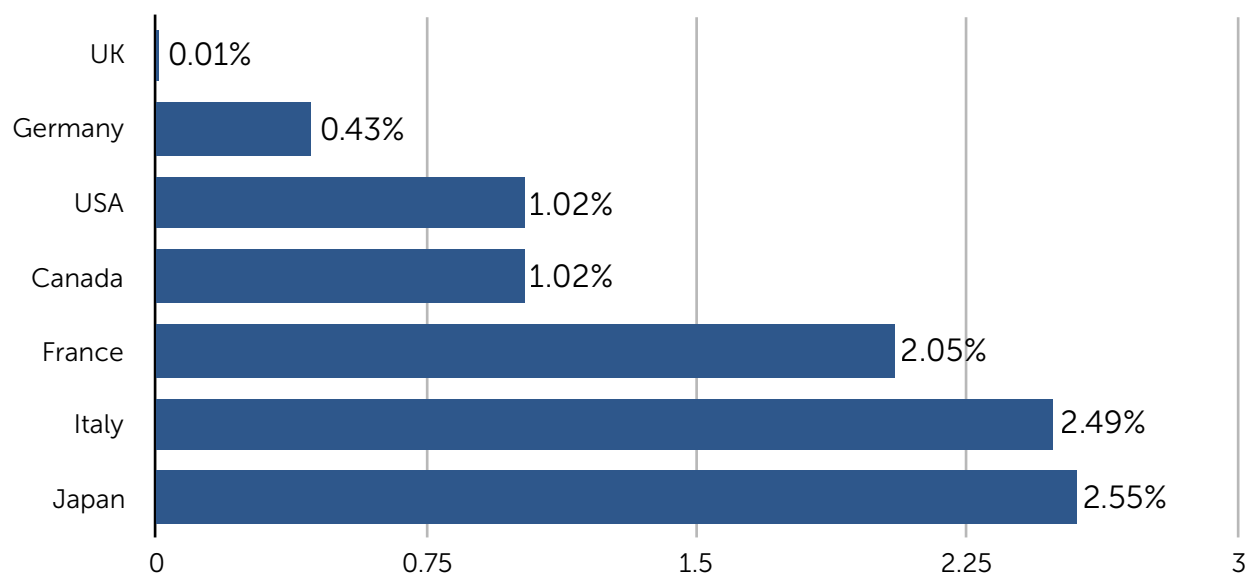


Fig 4: % of total Bilateral Education ODA to G5 Sahel; Gross Disbursements in constant prices (OECD CRS)¹²

The situation in the Sahel is exacerbated by a rapid demographic expansion and the worsening security crisis in the region, with more than 2000 schools closed due to violence in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger in the past two years¹³.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Dr. Koumbou Boly Barry, has expressed alarm at:

*“the persistent underfunding of public education and the rapid growth of the involvement of private, in particular commercial, actors in education, which threaten the implementation of the right to education for all and Sustainable Development Goal 4”.*¹⁴

Recommendations

1. Ensuring quality basic education for all as a catalyst for eradicating inequalities in LDCs, with a focus on Sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel, must be a priority.

To that end, we ask the G7 countries to:

- 1.1. **Ensure that all children and youth have opportunities to complete quality basic education for at least 12 years, to meet their basic learning needs.** This includes for the G7 countries to prioritise within their development aid policies the provision of at least 1 year of pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education for every child, in accordance with SDG 4.2 and 4.1, the UNESCO definition of basic education, and the G20's Initiative for 15 Early Childhood Education.
- 1.2. **Ensure that children and youth in crisis and conflict-affected situations are in safe and protective learning environments.** This requires all G7 countries to adopt¹⁶ and support partner countries in endorsing and implementing the Safe Schools Declaration¹⁷ in conflict affected areas to ensure the continuity of quality and inclusive education service.
- 1.3. **Ensure that all girls and boys complete free basic education by 2030.** This includes supporting partner states to publicly regulate private education providers and to support quality public education system-strengthening. The G7 should take a leading role in spearheading the implementation of the Abidjan Principles¹⁸ on the human rights obligations of States to provide public education and to regulate private involvement in education, as recommended by the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education.¹⁹
- 1.4. **Ensure an inclusive and gender transformative education to improve learning outcomes and ensure socio-economic empowerment of both boys and girls.** This entails providing the necessary technical and financial support to partner states wishing to implement a sectoral education plan that promotes, through formal and non-formal education, inclusion of the most vulnerable (girls and female adolescents, people with disabilities, children and youth affected by crises, refugees, children from marginalised social groups, rural and ethnic minorities) and gender equality. This also includes community support strengthening for inclusive quality education, considering the needs of the most marginalised.

1.5. **Promote the central role of teacher training and professional development, which are essential for quality inclusive education.** This includes encouraging partner countries to provide teachers, educators, and social and cultural workers with recognized status, with decent working conditions and adequate and quality training and incentives.

1.6. Encourage a **multi-sector approach that promotes collaboration and coordination between and across sectors** (e.g. ministries of health, social affairs, family, gender, education, justice, etc.) as well as a multi-stakeholder approach (including donors, governments, CSOs, communities, religious leaders and youth led organisations, at local, national and international levels) within the education sector and across relevant sectors. Donors should strengthen and mobilize existing coordination mechanisms, especially Local Education Groups (LEGs) and Education Clusters. Local, national and international CSOs, especially youth led organizations, should be better included, in all their diversity, in policy decision-making processes in order to ensure that education policies are responsive to the diverse lived experiences and education needs of children.

2. Invest more for delivering free, quality, inclusive basic education for all in LDCs, reinforcing the focus on Sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel as the main priority.

To that end, we ask the G7 countries to:

2.1. **Publicly commit in the G7 communique to meet the internationally recognised targets of 15% of total official development assistance (ODA) and at least 4%²⁰ of humanitarian aid²¹ to the education sector.²²** Focus investment on sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel (including via the Alliance Sahel) and target the most vulnerable and marginalised children and youth. ODA data should be disaggregated to show impact on marginalised communities and specific programmes funded to redress exclusion. All investments should be gender sensitive, and screened via the OECD gender marker.²³

- 2.2. Meet the internationally recognised target of **50% of total education ODA to basic education**.²⁴
- 2.3. Encourage national governments to **invest 20% of domestic budgets into their own education sector strategy plans**, in line with the internationally agreed target.²⁵
- 2.4. Meet the internationally recognised target of **10% of total education ODA to Early Childhood Education**,²⁶ to narrow the gap in learning and development that currently exists between the richest and poorest children when they arrive at Primary School.
- 2.5. **Allocate at least 30% of education aid to multilateral funds** (including GPE and ECW) to ensure complementarity between bilateral and multilateral aid mechanisms and the strengthening of the humanitarian and development nexus, which is essential to ensuring sustainable and quality education for crisis and conflict affected persons.
- 2.6. **Commit to the provision of free access to basic education and ensure no ODA is directed to profit-making or fee-charging schools or companies.** As recommended by the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education²⁷ and the European Union Parliament Resolution 2018/2081²⁸ “exclusively use [aid] to build and strengthen free, quality and inclusive public education systems, in consultation with the rights holders concerned and in partnership with the recipient country”.
- 2.7. Ensure all investments in education are **predictable, multi-year and flexible**.
- 2.8. Ensure that national and international development and humanitarian stakeholders have **the capacity to efficiently manage and implement aid to education**.

These Recommendations are endorsed by 58 Civil Society Organisations:



Also endorsed by:

- ALCADOM (Délégation des régions des outre-mers et de la zone Amérique Latine Caraïbes)
- Carrefour de la famille marocaine
- Centre d'encadrement des personnes opprimées CEPO / Kasal central -KANANGA/ RD Congo
- Club Unesco Savoir et Développement Durable
- RED-CNI Niger
- SOLIDARITE-UNAFETPCI (Union Nationale des Formateurs de l'Enseignement Technique et Professionnel de Côte d'Ivoire)
- SYPROS - Syndicat des Professeurs du Sénégal

Endnotes:

- By 'least developed countries' we refer to the [UN CDP list](#) of December 2018
- UN Secretary General António Guterres quoted from [Remarks on Financing the Future: Education For All](#), September 2017

¹ Aid to education reached an all-time high in 2016, GEM Report

² [UN CRPD Committee's General comment No. 4 on the right to inclusive education, page 12, November 25, 2016](#), which refers to the immediate obligation already enshrined in the UN Convention on Economic Cultural and Social Rights.

³ Fig 1: [Thematic Review : Understanding and Addressing Educational Marginalisation](#), UKaid, March 2018

⁴ [Teaching and learning](#), GPE

⁵ [World Teachers' Day: Quality education requires well-trained teachers](#), UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education, October 2018

⁶ [The State of the World's Children](#), UNICEF, 2016

⁷ [Global education monitoring report, 2019: Migration, displacement and education: building bridges, not walls](#), p 122, UNESCO

⁸ [Aid to education falls for the sixth consecutive year](#), UNESCO, June 2017

⁹ Fig 2: [Donor Tracker](#), Education

¹⁰ Fig 3: This graph is based on OECD data, but on the basis of a calculation coinciding with UNESCO's definition of basic education, as well as by the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs. The total amount of basic education is calculated as follows: total aid to pre-primary and primary education, 50% of the aid allocated to secondary education, and 75% of aid to level unspecified education (which includes teacher training or the construction of infrastructure).

¹¹ [OECD, Sahel and West Africa Club](#), OECD

¹² <https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1>

¹³ [School closures in the Sahel double in the last two years due to growing insecurity](#) – UNICEF, February 2019

¹⁴ [Right to education: the implementation of the right to education and Sustainable Development Goal 4 in the context of the growth of private actors in education](#), HRC, June 2019

¹⁵ [Aid to education reached an all-time high in 2016](#), GEM Report

¹⁶ [Safe Schools Declaration Endorsements](#), GCPEA

¹⁷ [Safe Schools Declaration](#)

¹⁸ [The Abidjan Principles](#)

¹⁹ [Right to education: the implementation of the right to education and Sustainable Development Goal 4 in the context of the growth of private actors in education](#), HRC, June 2019

²⁰ Send My Friend to School, the UK coalition on global education, has asked the UK government to commit at least 6% from its humanitarian budget to education in emergencies and protracted crises

²¹ [In 2019, 10% of the European Union humanitarian budget will go to education in emergencies](#), European Commission, January 2019

²² [Financing matters: a toolkit on domestic financing for education](#), Global Campaign for Education, September 2016

²³ [The DAC gender equality policy marker](#), OECD

²⁴ [Financing matters: a toolkit on domestic financing for education](#), Global Campaign for Education, September 2016

²⁵ [Financing matters: a toolkit on domestic financing for education](#), Global Campaign for Education, September 2016

²⁶ [Theirworld and UNICEF call for action now to get all children in pre-primary education](#), Theirworld, April 2019

²⁷ [Right to education: the implementation of the right to education and Sustainable Development Goal 4 in the context of the growth of private actors in education](#), HRC, June 2019

²⁸ [European Parliament resolution of 13 November 2018 on EU development assistance in the field of education \(2018/2081\(INI\)\)](#), European Parliament, November 2018