

*improving basic education for the
most vulnerable, especially girls*



learning for all



learning **empowers** me
gives me **hope**
is my **right**

The Basic and Girls' Education team thanks the numerous staff members from across CARE for their valuable contributions to this publication.

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- Tens of millions of children are not in primary school; approximately two-thirds are girls.
- Girls' achievement rates are usually lower than boys' rates; girls are more likely to drop out of school.
- The majority of children out of school are from excluded groups such as ethnic minorities, isolated clans, linguistic minorities and very poor households, even though these groups represent only 20 percent of the world's population.

Source: Center for Global Development

We seek a world of hope, tolerance and social justice, where poverty has been overcome and people live in dignity and security.

– CARE Vision

As one of the world's leading international humanitarian organizations, CARE helps create lasting solutions to poverty and discrimination; provides lifesaving assistance during times of crisis; and advocates for policies that promote the eradication of poverty.

We are deeply committed to promoting **learning for all people – especially for the most vulnerable children** who are the most difficult to reach. We understand that access to a quality basic education is a human right, and that education is fundamental to overcoming poverty and social injustice.

"CARE gives us the opportunity to go on, without putting our dreams on hold."

– Alicia, Ecuador



Alicia studies diligently in a school supported by CARE in Ecuador, thanks to a project dedicated to eradicating child labor on flower plantations. Children like Alicia are often victims of exploitative child labor and child trafficking schemes, forced to leave their families behind, many working under deplorable conditions for years on end with little or no compensation. However, with assistance from CARE and our partners, thousands of young people are given a second chance to learn. Each year, our education interventions help prevent at-risk youth from falling victim to trafficking and exploitation.



**“I very much want to go to school.
It is important to me to learn.”**

– Sopich, Cambodia

Sopich, a member of the Tampuan indigenous ethnic minority, goes to school in one of the most isolated parts of Cambodia. He eagerly learns his lessons in Khmer, the national language of Cambodia, and dreams of someday becoming a police officer. Since most indigenous people do not speak Khmer – the language of instruction in government schools – indigenous children’s enrollment and retention rates are among the lowest in the country and their illiteracy rates are among the highest. This is changing, thanks to a CARE project that is educating children and training teachers in community-run schools across the province where students like Sopich learn in both their own language and Khmer. The proportion of those who know Khmer is progressively increased, so that children can ultimately join the government school system and participate in wider Cambodian life.



**“I want to study,
complete school and
become a nurse.”**

– Beatrice, Zambia

Learning gives hope to Beatrice, a Zambian child orphaned by AIDS. Practically raising herself, she lives with her grandparents and attends a community school sponsored by CARE and local partners. HIV & AIDS have placed increasingly large numbers of children like Beatrice in exceptionally difficult circumstances. CARE focuses on meeting the cognitive and emotional needs of orphans and vulnerable children through quality education, as well as the institutional needs of educational systems coping with teacher and administrator shortages.

“I was never enrolled in school, although I wanted to go.”

– Suzan, Egypt

Learning empowers Suzan, a 14-year-old girl with polio who lives in a rural Egyptian village. Denied years of schooling, Suzan never had the chance to learn until she enrolled in a school supported by CARE’s New Schools Program. In her poor family, her brothers’ education came first. “I assured my father that the school was free, especially opened for poor people,” says Suzan. “I am learning quickly, and my teacher is very proud of me for being one of the best students in the class.” CARE supports governments and communities around the world to ensure that education is joyful and equitable.



learning for all



CARE believes that every child has the right to a quality education, and every government has a responsibility to educate all children – even in the most difficult circumstances, and for the most vulnerable groups.



At CARE, we work to create a world where all people have the opportunity to realize their full potential and find their own voice. Because learning has such a profound impact on both a child's and a society's future, CARE recognizes the essential role of education. CARE formally established the Basic and Girls' Education (BGE) program in 1994. Since then, our donors' generosity has enabled us to rapidly and dramatically expand our education initiatives. Private donations, including the Patsy Collins Trust Fund, have been instrumental in advancing our education program, and in developing new ways to build and share knowledge about girls' education.

How does learning fight poverty?

Learning attacks poverty at its roots. Educated people can make thoughtful and informed decisions that will positively affect their lives, their families, their communities and their world. Mothers are more likely to have healthier children and higher incomes. Girls are better equipped to make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. Education helps prevent the devastation of HIV & AIDS, as individuals and communities learn how to protect themselves from contracting the disease. Basic education is an essential foundation for economic growth and development – women and vulnerable groups who fulfill their right to learn are linked to greater democratic participation, improved social equity, preservation of natural resources and enhanced decision-making power.

Yet literacy is denied to almost one out of every five people, a disproportionate number of whom are women. Millions of children are not in school, the largest number of whom are girls. Many children do not complete primary school, and many more suffer in poor learning environments. Girls' achievement rates often fall below those of their male classmates. Without attention and support, these children may be left out of the increasingly global economy and find themselves trapped in cycles of poverty.

What differentiates CARE's work in education?

CARE's global reach, experience and extensive education portfolio have taught us how to develop **innovative learning solutions** that reach the world's most vulnerable people, and support **educational systems** to help people succeed over the long term.

We understand that learning is complex and multi-faceted. Even as international attention and funding for education are on the rise, national educational plans in developing countries don't always address the poorest people who live on the fringes of society. Plans to include these individuals in formal systems are frequently dismissed as too costly, and without political benefit.

Often, the world's most marginalized people are caught in systems that consistently do not meet their special needs.

"Learning for all" translates into broad, long-term





investments for entire educational systems. When systems are improved to accommodate the most vulnerable, all learners reap the benefits of quality learning environments that fulfill their right to learn. CARE works at many levels with individuals, families, educators, communities, governments, local partners and advocacy groups to create powerful education initiatives that are crucial to fighting poverty.

All of our programming focuses on basic education **attainment**, improved **gender equality**, and enhanced **quality**. Quality is especially critical, because simply enrolling children in schools doesn't necessarily mean they will achieve their fullest potential. CARE helps schools engage students by training educators, developing supplemental teaching and learning materials, and working with community groups to monitor and evaluate attendance and the instructional environment.

One of the cornerstones of our work in education is promoting equity for all learners. We target children who are in school and out of school, as well as illiterate adults, with an urgent focus on the world's most vulnerable children affected by:

- **Child labor**
- **HIV & AIDS**
- **Gender disparity**
- **Emergencies and conflict**

Children learning in such conditions face complex issues that do not exist in isolation. Because of the cross-sectoral nature of our work, we are uniquely able to address root causes of poverty that are often interconnected. For example, efforts to increase access to water mean girls can attend school rather than hauling water. And lessons in math and science can promote overcoming causes of poverty such as economic injustice and limited natural resources.

Experience shows that there is no quick fix for learning. It takes time, commitment, rigorous measurement and monitoring, and a familiarity with local needs and contexts to shape education outcomes and environments. Our strategies to ensure "learning for all" include:

- **Engaging communities to create shared responsibility for student and school success.** Community-based approaches drive our work in education as we help schools improve their relevance, quality, management, accountability, attendance and equity. For example, in Bangladesh we have revitalized local school boards to help monitor teacher attendance, maintain school buildings and help enroll out-of-school children.

- **Establishing the value of our innovative programs,** through sound, proven approaches. Our work goes far beyond the realm of the classroom, reaching deep into communities to address the root causes of poverty and enhance the efficiency of entire education systems. In Honduras, for example,



At CARE we work to create a world where all people have the opportunity to realize their full potential and find their own voice. Because in the end, that's the key to ending injustice and poverty.



Leila plays, eats nutritious meals, and learns colors, stories and songs in a CARE pre-school center in her refugee camp in Chad. Leila's pre-school routine not only helps her learn practical lessons about how to get along with others and stay healthy, but also offers her stability and support during a time in her life marked by deep uncertainty and conflict. CARE was among the first humanitarian agencies to respond to the sudden influx of refugees who fled to Chad from Darfur, offering families quality learning opportunities along with food, water, shelter and health services. Through early childhood development programs, CARE works with parents, teachers, community leaders, social workers and government officials to better meet the developmental needs of children ages 3 to 6.

“...Even as poor as we are and as difficult as our lives may be, we too have hopes for our children’s future.

We too have dreams.”

– Esther, Zambia, who buried three children with AIDS before knowing she had contracted HIV

a CARE partnership aimed at children in rural areas has led to significant, measurable results for students in primary schools. Recognized by the Ministry of Education as a model of success, the project has boosted the quality of basic education for thousands of the country’s most vulnerable students.

■ **Advocating to change** how education policies are formed and funds are distributed, in collaboration with education professionals and vulnerable populations. One example is a project in Peru that was instrumental in establishing a national coalition that successfully influenced legislation to improve rural girls’ educational opportunities.

■ **Strengthening systems and promoting best practices** among other groups that affect learning, such as local nongovernmental organizations, health professionals, governments and communities. In Benin, for instance, a CARE program that promotes best practices for quality learning is empowering the Ministry of Education to address the daunting impact of HIV & AIDS on teachers, administrators and vulnerable students.

■ **Delivering alternative, cost-effective solutions** for reaching the most marginalized people, such as accelerated learning opportunities, bilingual education, community schools and extracurricular support programs. An initiative in India that began as a learning program for out-of-school adolescent girls has grown dramatically to help girls of all ages access formal and alternative education.

What barriers prevent children from learning?

The right to a quality education is denied for a variety of reasons:

■ Families in developing countries often rely on their daughters to be caregivers, homemakers and laborers. There may be little time left for learning.

■ Girls may not be safe or secure at school, and families fear for their welfare.

■ Educational systems can be biased, rewarding boys and children with higher social status, while marginalizing girls, lower castes, children with disabilities and other vulnerable people.

■ Poor families struggle to prioritize their meager resources to pay for books, uniforms, supplies and school fees.

■ Schools may be too far away, or lack supplies and resources. When teachers are inadequately trained or frequently absent, there is little incentive for parents to send their children to school.

■ Civil conflicts, natural disasters and chronic diseases like HIV & AIDS force families to shift their focus from learning to more urgent, basic needs like food and shelter.

■ Young mothers stay home and care for their children instead of going to school, and the children of these young mothers are also less likely to learn.





- People who suffer poor health and exploitation, as well as those who are physically and socially isolated, often miss out on the education they need and deserve.
- Poor quality, limited community involvement and inadequate reward systems for teachers and other school professionals can affect the learning environment. When people aren't learning, they simply drop out.

What is the Patsy Collins Trust Fund Initiative?

The Patsy Collins Trust Fund Initiative (PCTFI) is a multi-million dollar, 20-year initiative that emphasizes new approaches to education for marginalized girls. The fund offers CARE an unprecedented opportunity to test and measure learning innovations across contexts over time, furthering our position as a champion for the rights of girls and vulnerable populations.

Through the initiative, CARE aims to make a difference for vulnerable girls by ensuring their rights to appropriate education and development, supporting their positive participation in communities and societies and empowering them to fulfill their greatest potential. The fund accelerates our work, enabling us to contribute significantly to understanding how the most vulnerable girls become marginalized – and how best to address the conditions that deny girls their rights. It also helps us build coalitions to advocate for education for very vulnerable girls.

Who are the world's most marginalized children?

For millions of children in the developing world, especially girls, the benefits of learning are unrealized for a variety of reasons:

Physical Isolation People living in remote or poorly served areas, or living with limiting disabilities;

Social Isolation Children who are excluded from society, including minorities, those with low social status and the poorest of the poor;

High Workloads Girls with high domestic workloads and child laborers;

Chronic Insecurities Families living amid conflict, acute natural disasters and food shortages;

Early Motherhood Children of young mothers, as well as young mothers themselves; and

Poor Health and Exploitation Individuals who are more susceptible to abuse, disease and exploitation.

“...We work with both sides of the equation of gender inequity: Helping women to develop new aspirations and the capacity to pursue them, and helping men to imagine a world where their partnership with women is founded on equality, not domination.”

– Helene Gayle, MD, MPH, President and CEO, CARE



learning empowers me

girls' education



What keeps girls out of school, or pushes them to drop out? How can schools support girls' positive self-esteem and help them gain skills to succeed in the world? These are the types of questions that drive our work with vulnerable girls – girls who are systematically denied their rights to healthy development and learning.

CARE understands the special needs of marginalized girls who may be living and working in abusive conditions, at risk of being trafficked, or denied their childhood through early marriages and young motherhood. Many girls are living with HIV or AIDS or caring for those with the disease. Others are orphaned, disabled or shunned. Together with our partners and supporters, CARE's holistic, cross-cutting program approaches to girls' education seek to:

Improve the quality of learning through teacher training, updated and relevant curriculums, active student learning methodologies and improved classrooms and teaching materials.

Remove barriers by offering conveniently located schools, flexible hours, fast-track curricula and bilingual education, and by collaborating with others to overcome

obstacles such as limited access to water, poor nutrition and lack of economic opportunity.

Engage communities by finding ways to empower women such as mothers' groups, as well as re-engaging and strengthening parent/teacher associations and other education committees, developing education networks across communities, strengthening local organizations through management and financial training, and establishing coalitions to monitor government policy.

Advocate for government investment by influencing local and national policy to direct resources toward girls and uphold their rights, working with ministry officials, and seeking increased financial support for formal and non-formal education.

The particular gains of educating girls are well documented. An educated girl is less likely to become infected with HIV. She is more likely to have fewer children later in life, to participate in political processes, to earn more, and to raise healthier, educated children. CARE empowers families, communities and education systems to help them better understand and address gender inequities, and the improvements benefit all students.



CARE recognizes that HIV & AIDS is much more than a health problem. It touches on all aspects of a family's life, including education. Throughout sub-Saharan Africa, HIV & AIDS is thinning the ranks of teachers, severely disrupting educational systems, and leaving behind hundreds of thousands of orphans and vulnerable children with bleak prospects for a basic education. Millions of children in the region have lost one or both parents to HIV & AIDS. Many are forced to leave school and their childhood behind, heading up households and caring for others affected by the epidemic.

To address these critical challenges, we have intensified our efforts to diminish the effects of the epidemic on learning. We focus on providing care and support to orphans and vulnerable children, as well as on overcoming the obstacles posed to teachers, educational planners and caregivers because of HIV & AIDS.

Schools and other education settings offer an unparalleled opportunity to help people learn how to slow and prevent the spread of HIV. We join forces with communities to reduce discrimination against people living with HIV & AIDS, and promote access to support services such as voluntary testing and counseling. CARE programs offer

young people important life skills like leadership, negotiation and critical thinking to help them resist peer pressure, avoid high-risk behavior and cope with their surroundings.

CARE's four-pronged strategy tackles the daunting impact of HIV & AIDS on educational systems, aiming to:

Remove barriers to education through programs that reach vulnerable children during their early years.

Improve the quality of education with updated, relevant curriculums, active student learning, improved classroom and teacher materials and involved communities.

Prevent the further spread of HIV by empowering women and girls through measures such as peer support programs, literacy and life-skills programs, curricular interventions and capacity-building of civil society organizations.

Mitigate the impact of HIV & AIDS on education by training teachers, defining HIV & AIDS curricular approaches and content, developing models for filling teaching gaps and helping governments increase their capacity.

“Without education, AIDS will continue its rampant spread. With
AIDS out of control, education will be out of reach.”

– Peter Piot, Education Director, UNAIDS



learning gives me **hope**

education and HIV & AIDS

“Children are the hope of our society. If we allow children to work in hazardous conditions, who will be our future? Child labor affects the physical and intellectual development of the child and robs us of our childhood.”

– Joan Ranoy, youth advocate and former child laborer, the Philippines



learning is my **right**

education and child labor



Every child deserves the right to learn.

Yet according to the International Labor Organization, millions of children worldwide are engaged in some form of economic activity every day. In some cases, a child's work can build character, teach important life lessons and contribute to a family's income. However, work is considered hazardous child labor when it interferes with a child's health, safety and moral development and prevents her from going to school. For many poor people, children provide income families desperately need to survive – even though it means denying them their childhood and their education.

CARE's official Organizational Policy Regarding Working Children and Hazardous Child Labor demonstrates our unparalleled commitment to fight exploitative child labor. We work closely with communities to prevent child labor and to reintegrate child laborers into quality education programs.

We know from experience that educating children in formal and non-formal settings and involving parents and community leaders is key to sustaining lasting change. CARE's program approaches in child labor situations seek to:

Influence public policies and policy reform at the local, national, regional and international levels. By

arming lawmakers with information about the hazards associated with child labor, CARE promotes child-centered policies that target the specific needs of all at-risk youth.

Build public sentiment through advocacy on child labor abuses and the denial of basic human rights to children. CARE recognizes that increasing community accountability and awareness are major steps toward preventing child labor and realizing positive change.

Promote economic alternatives to the worst forms of child labor for families and children. CARE's programs help children develop vocational skills from the onset, offering sustainable solutions to ensure that they don't re-enter the labor market.

Enhance education quality and relevance of formal and non-formal educational programs. These programs focus on enrolling more vulnerable children in school, as well as ensuring that children stay in school to complete programs that will empower them and lead to social change.

Increase the capacity of our partners at all levels to protect children from exploitative labor that denies them the right to an education.



Millions of marginalized people are living in the midst of devastating emergencies such as natural disasters, armed conflicts and civil instability. In these settings, education can be a lifesaving resource that can reestablish a vulnerable child's sense of normalcy – and build self-esteem and hope for the future.

Increasingly, there is an imperative to provide education to school-aged children in settings where the education system is destabilized or destroyed. International conventions assert the right of children to education, even during crisis. Many experts consider education to be an essential humanitarian response to complex emergencies, closely following food, water and shelter.

With a rich history of helping to rebuild education infrastructures, CARE's program approaches in emergency situations seek to:

Support community efforts to build and sustain schools and link schools to formal education structures. Community ownership and processes for governing schools are a high priority, as is integrating vulnerable students into formal education systems. In addition to partnering with communities, CARE works to support and rebuild government systems during reconstruction periods.

Intervene with learning about appropriate topics. In times of crisis, programs that promote survival skills such as landmine awareness and prevention of HIV are critical. School-based trauma healing and counseling services, programs that support peace building, and training in health and hygiene help people rebuild their lives – and their world.

Improve the quality of learning environments. In emergency settings, teachers and education professionals need training and support, schools must be rehabilitated and constructed, and there are opportunities to provide and enrich instructional materials. In addition to immediately improving learning access and quality, these activities lay the foundation for strengthening educational systems over the long term.

Strengthen local organizations to better address the educational needs of their communities. In the past, education was considered the sole province of governments, while the role of communities was to build schools, provide uniforms and support teachers. Today local organizations are urged to build capacity so they can take ownership of learning and sustain gains made by emergency response initiatives.

“Education in emergencies, and during chronic crises and early reconstruction efforts, can be both life saving and life sustaining.”

– Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies



learning **saves my life**

education in emergencies

"When I look at my little granddaughter, I know I want to send her to school so she will be wise and her advice sought by people all over the country."

– Mariama, Niger



learning changes my world

regional priorities



CARE's reach and experience in the education sector make a tremendous difference in the fight to end poverty and defend human dignity. With local and global connections, and a wealth of technical resources, our educational programming affects all of the world's developing regions. The communities where we work have diverse needs and priorities, and we are committed to addressing each region's pressing challenges and goals.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Despite extreme poverty, the highest HIV infection rates in the world and harsh conditions, sub-Saharan Africa is making remarkable progress in ensuring equal access to quality education for all children and youth. Governments throughout the continent have expressed serious interest in investing in educational reforms, public demand for education is on the rise, and a wave of free primary education has swept through much of sub-Saharan Africa. CARE's approach includes engaging communities, training teachers, strengthening government institutions and nongovernmental organizations and advocating for children's legal protection from abuse and exploitation.

Asia

Asia has highly diverse development issues and learning needs, with a particularly urgent focus on basic education among vulnerable groups in society. Yet there are promising signs of support for education across the continent, including growing corporate involvement, improving economic growth in much of Asia, and higher education attainment in many Asian countries. Complex barriers to girls' education range from the social caste system in India to ethnic minority language and cultural barriers in Bangladesh and Cambodia, and long-term conflict and cultural issues that affect learning for girls in Afghanistan and Central Asia. CARE helps overcome these challenges through initiatives such as bilingual education for linguistic minorities and accelerated learning for older girls.

Latin America and the Caribbean

In Latin America and the Caribbean, education has long been considered one of the key factors in eradicating poverty. While educational attainment rates are improving, there is a widening gap between the rich and the poor. Ethnic minorities, child laborers and young mothers are at particular risk.



CARE's priority areas for education include quality in rural education, providing bilingual education and eradicating child labor, with a strong commitment to enhancing learning for vulnerable people. Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean are also increasingly involving parents and students in curriculum and school governance. CARE is involving governments too, as we lead non-governmental organizations to engage policymakers in important education issues that affect marginalized groups.

Middle East and Eastern Europe

While countries across Eastern Europe and the Middle East are characterized by higher educational attainment than other regions, learning opportunities remain out of grasp for large numbers of rural and excluded poor. CARE's diverse education programs in Europe and the Middle East promote peace and stability, provide relevant educational content, and focus strongly on the learning needs of adolescent youth. We partner with government institutions to improve learning quality and access, and work to engage the private sector in education. We are also experimenting with innovative ways to promote technology, deliver messages about HIV & AIDS, and build foundations for life-long learning.

CARE knows that learning for all is possible, but we must work together toward a world where everyone has the opportunity and the right to learn. That is why we lead and participate in advocacy efforts and coalitions that fight for international support for basic education and contribute to the Millennium Development Goals and the Dakar Education for All 2015 framework. Our contributions to prominent coalitions and partnerships leverage our field experience and advance our poverty-fighting mission by:

Raising awareness of basic education as a fundamental human right.

Increasing funding and political support from developing country governments, donor governments in North America, Europe and the Pacific, corporations and the international community.

Involving local organizations and community groups in developing responsive, accountable educational systems.

Demanding that vulnerable groups are included in international and national education plans and local decisions.

“If my daughter can read and write, she can never be cheated or taken advantage of. She will be better prepared to earn an income and help others in the community.”

– Mother, Ghana village



learning deserves
our support



For many children – particularly girls – the right to learn is consistently denied, and the cycle of poverty devastates one generation after another. Together, through CARE’s life-changing education programs, partnerships and advocacy, we have the opportunity to make a profound difference in the lives of millions of marginalized children, families and communities around the world.





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