EDUCATION: A PATH TO A PEACEFUL FUTURE

Inclusive, quality education promotes understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence among individuals and communities. Education holds the potential to reduce the likelihood of conflicts by fostering critical thinking, encouraging open dialogue and creating economic growth opportunities. The world urgently needs to recognize the role of education in fostering more peaceful societies and vastly increase its support to education systems.

THE CHALLENGE

- Violence and conflict **disrupt learning for millions of children each year**. Education can also be part of the solution.
- Education is a vital strategy for building lasting peace. Yet **a quarter of a billion children in lower-income countries are out of school**.
- The **relationship between the contributions of education to more peaceful societies is grossly under-investigated**, providing only a partial picture for governments and donors when making critical investment decisions.

DURATION, QUALITY AND INCLUSION: HOW EDUCATION SUPPORTS PEACE

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) have collaborated on research that affirms the potential for education to build peaceful societies.[1] The detrimental effects of conflicts and protracted crises on education are well known, but this study aims to delve into **the relationship between education as a driver and pillar of peaceful societies**, based on exploratory research that examines significant correlations between the two.

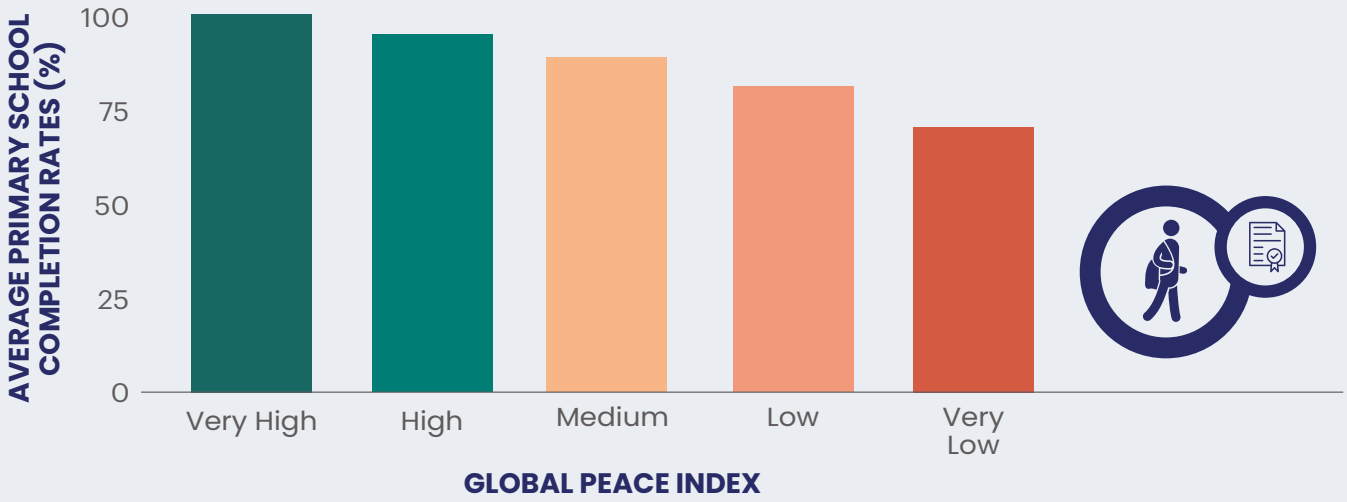
While the results of this exploratory study cannot be interpreted causally, there are a number of **statistically significant correlations** that associate quality education with more peaceful and stable societies:

- Countries where more children finish school have fewer conflicts. This is especially true when more children graduate from secondary education.
- Countries with **higher rates of female school completion**, particularly at the primary level, tend to experience less conflicts.
- Higher completion rates in both primary and lower-secondary school are positively correlated with factors that contribute to and sustain higher levels of peace in societies.
- Improving the **quality of education can decrease conflict risk** by fostering economic development and social equality. **Quality education** is also linked to **shorter conflicts**. On average, countries that have higher secondary school completion rates have higher peace levels.
- The **number of years learning in school is the strongest correlation** on reducing various forms of violence.

1 For more details on the study, see: https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/building-more-peaceful-future-through-education.

Countries with higher average primary school completion rates have higher peace levels on average.

Average primary school completion rates by peace levels globally



Source: IEP

EDUCATION AND PATHWAYS TO PEACE

Timor-Leste transitioned from conflict to stability, culminating in the withdrawal of UN peacekeepers in late 2012, successful elections and peaceful transfers of power most recently in 2022. Concurrently, school completion rates for lower secondary education rose significantly from 67% (2010-2015) to 91% (2017-2022). This progress, supported by over US$32 million from GPE since 2006, suggests a parallel between educational achievement and peace stabilization.

Nepal approved a new constitution in 2015, establishing a democracy after a civil war between 1996-2000. Over the past two decades, Nepal has more than doubled its education spending per capita, focusing on improving learning outcomes and equitable access. In tandem with higher secondary school completion rates that more than doubled, Nepal gained 30 places in the global peace rankings since 2008 and improved its ongoing conflict score in the Global Peace Index by 15.3%. Investments in education, including GPE support of $236 million since 2009, have likely contributed to Nepal's easing of internal conflict and increased peace over time.