

**International Day of Education**  
**24 January (/en/observances/education-day)**



Students at the "25 de Junho" School located in Beira, Mozambique.

**PHOTO:** UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe



“ We must do far more to advance Sustainable Development Goal 4, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.”

– UN Secretary-General António Guterres

(<https://www.un.org/en/observances/education-day/messages>)

## Recover and revitalize education for the COVID-19 generation

The International Education Day occurs in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic that led to a global learning disruption of unprecedented scale and severity. The closure of schools, universities and other learning institutions, as well as the interruption of many literacy and lifelong learning programmes, has affected the lives of 1.6 billion students in over 190 countries. As a new year begins, now is the time to step up collaboration and international solidarity to place education and lifelong learning at the centre of the recovery and the transformation towards more inclusive, safe and sustainable societies.

Capturing the spirit of the International Day of Education, [UNESCO \(United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization\)](https://unesco.org/) and partners have spearheaded the [Learning Planet Festival](https://www.learning-planet.org/en/festival) to celebrate learning in all contexts and share innovations that fulfil the potential of every learner, no matter what their circumstances. The winners of [an essay contest of “Le Petit Prince”](https://www.learning-planet.org/en/prince) will be unveiled as part of the Day’s celebrations.

Conversation with The Little Prince - Writing Contest



## **Education is a human right**

The right to education is enshrined in article 26 of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights/) (<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights/>). The declaration calls for free and compulsory elementary education. The [Convention on the Rights of the Child](https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention) (<https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention>), adopted in 1989, goes further to stipulate that countries shall make higher education accessible to all.

## **Education is key to sustainable development**

When it adopted the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/) (<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>) in September 2015, the international community recognized that education is essential for the success of all 17 of its goals. [Sustainable Development Goal 4](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/) (<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>), in particular, aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030.

## **Challenges to achieving universal education**

Education offers children a ladder out of poverty and a path to a promising future. But about 265 million children and adolescents around the world do not have the opportunity to enter or complete school; 617 million children and adolescents cannot read and do basic math; less than 40% of girls in sub-Saharan Africa complete lower secondary school and some four million children and youth refugees are out of school. Their right to education is being violated and it is unacceptable. >

Without inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong opportunities for all, countries will not succeed in achieving gender equality and breaking the cycle of poverty that is leaving millions of children, youth and adults behind.



(<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>)

#### **SDG 4: Facts and Figures (<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>)**

- Enrolment in primary education in developing countries has reached 91 per cent but 57 million primary age children remain out of school.

- More than half of children that have not enrolled in school live in sub-Saharan Africa.
- An estimated 50 per cent of out-of-school children of primary school age live in conflict-affected areas.



## Related observances

---

- International Literacy Day (8 September) (<https://www.un.org/en/observances/literacy-day>)
- World Teachers Day (5 October) (<https://en.unesco.org/commemorations/worldteachersday>)
- International Day of Women and Girls in Science (11 February) (<http://www.un.org/en/observances/women-and-girls-in-science-day/>)
- World Youth Skills Day (15 July) (<https://www.un.org/en/observances/world-youth-skills-day>)
- International Mother Language Day (21 February) (<http://www.un.org/en/observances/mother-language-day/>)
- International Day of Sign Languages (23 September) (<http://www.un.org/en/observances/sign-languages-day/>)
- World Braille Day (4 January) (<https://www.un.org/en/observances/braille-day/>)



(<https://www.un.org/en/observances>)

**Why do we mark International Days? (<https://www.un.org/en/observances>)**

---



International days and weeks (<https://www.un.org/en/observances/international-days-and-weeks>) are occasions to educate the public on issues of concern, to mobilize political will and resources to address global problems, and to celebrate and reinforce achievements of humanity. The existence of international days predates the establishment of the United Nations, but the UN has embraced them as a powerful advocacy tool. We also mark other UN observances (<https://www.un.org/en/observances>).

(<https://www.addtoany.com/share?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.un.org%2Fen%2Fobservances%2Feducation-day&title=International%20Day%20of%20Education%20%2C%20United%20Nations>)

(/facebook)

(/twitter)

(/email)

(/whatsapp)

---

(<https://www.un.org/en/>)

[DONATE \(/EN/ABOUT-US/HOW-TO-DONATE-TO-THE-UN-SYSTEM\)](/en/about-us/how-to-donate-to-the-un-system)

---

[A-Z SITE INDEX \(HTTPS://WWW.UN.ORG/EN/SITE-INDEX\)](https://www.un.org/en/site-index) | [CONTACT \(HTTPS://WWW.UN.ORG/EN/CONTACT-US-0\)](https://www.un.org/en/contact-us-0) | [COPYRIGHT \(HTTPS://WWW.UN.ORG/EN/ABOUT-US/COPYRIGHT\)](https://www.un.org/en/about-us/copyright) | [FAQ \(HTTPS://WWW.UN.ORG/EN/ABOUT-US/FREQUENTLY-ASKED-QUESTIONS\)](https://www.un.org/en/about-us/frequently-asked-questions) | [FRAUD ALERT \(HTTPS://WWW.UN.ORG/EN/ABOUT-US/FRAUD-ALERT\)](https://www.un.org/en/about-us/fraud-alert) | [PRIVACY NOTICE \(HTTPS://WWW.UN.ORG/EN/ABOUT-US/PRIVACY-NOTICE\)](https://www.un.org/en/about-us/privacy-notice) | [TERMS OF USE \(HTTPS://WWW.UN.ORG/EN/ABOUT-US/TERMS-OF-USE\)](https://www.un.org/en/about-us/terms-of-use)