




# INVESTING FOR IMPACT



INVESTING IN GLOBAL LITERACY  
FOR CHILDREN

A young boy with dark hair, wearing a green and white school uniform, is shown in profile, looking down at an open book he is holding. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a school setting with red and green elements. A large red circular graphic element is overlaid on the right side of the image.

**“We must have greater ambition in educating children around the world. We need to get all children into school but we need more than that – we need to make sure they are learning. Addressing this global learning crisis is essential to ending poverty and boosting shared prosperity.”**

**– Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank Group**



# Investing for Impact

## INVITATION TO INVEST IN GLOBAL LITERACY FOR CHILDREN

An investment in global literacy yields remarkable results — not only in the lives of children living in developing countries, but for the future we all share. Reading underpins the entire learning experience for a child and must be the foundation of any education enterprise. The best opportunity to teach reading skills is in the early grades, or even earlier if possible. This investment prospectus lays out the argument for increasing investment in literacy as a gateway to all future learning, and as a powerful way to disrupt intergenerational cycles of poverty. The earlier we invest in helping children learn to read, so they can read to learn, the higher the return on investment for all of us.

### THE CONTEXT FOR GLOBAL LITERACY

Over the past decade, great progress has been made to improve children's access to education. Spurred in part by the UN's Millennium Development Goal (MDG) for universal primary education, governments have increased school access and attendance in many developing countries. In fact, primary school enrollment rates exceed 90 percent worldwide as of 2013, up from 83 percent in 2000.

Yet, over a third of primary school-aged children worldwide are not gaining even basic literacy skills. That translates into more than 250 million children, 5-12 years of age, who are unable to read or write, whether they are in school or not,<sup>1</sup> 130 million of whom cannot read despite completing four years of education.<sup>2</sup> As another startling statistic, there are 124 million children, 6-15 years of age, who are out of school. This figure consists of 59 million children that never started school and 65 million who have dropped out of school.

Many of these children come from excluded groups — children who are not benefiting from access to education services because of a toxic mix of poverty and discrimination. They are children from disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly girls, who live in conflict-afflicted countries, in slums and remote communities, who are from ethnic minority or lower caste families, or who are disabled.

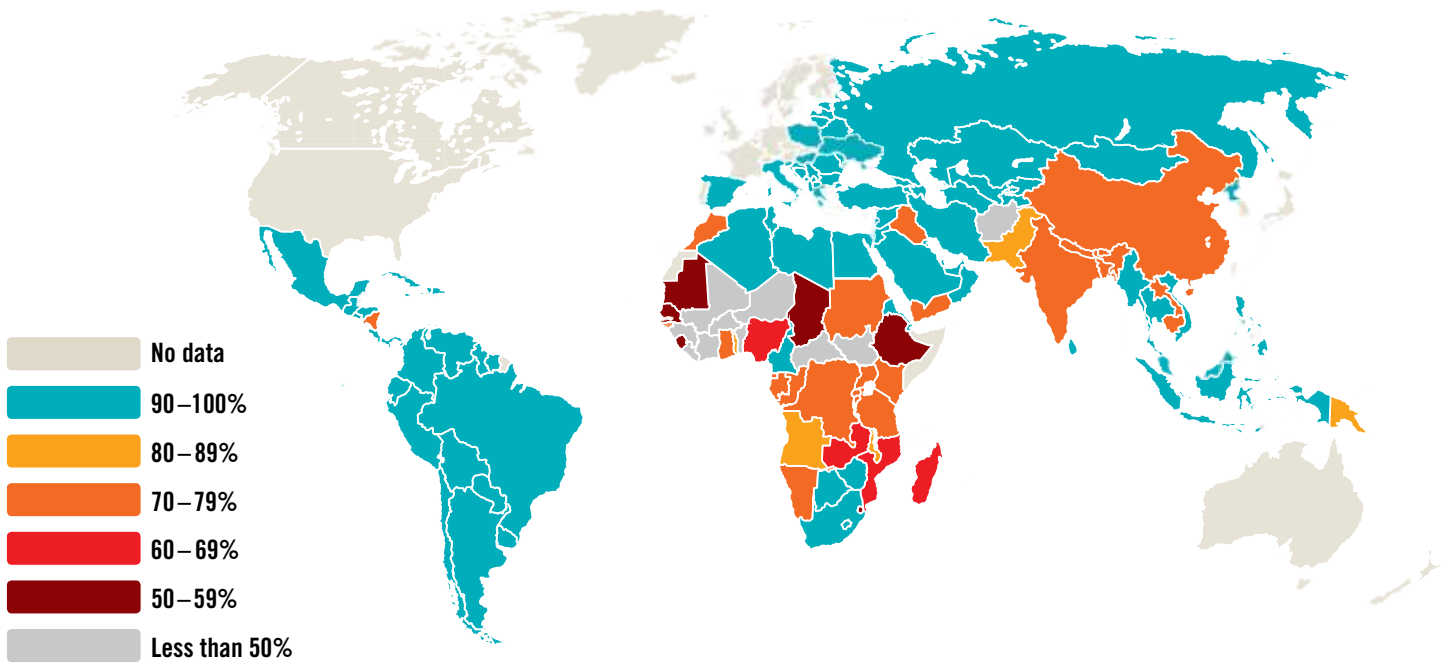
Literacy rates are lowest in South Asia and in West and Central Africa. In some sub-Saharan African countries, children with five years of education have a 40 percent chance of being illiterate.<sup>3</sup> As a result, these children will not be able to escape the gravitational pull of mass poverty.

Given changing requirements in the skills needed for today's knowledge-based economies, this low level of learning has the added consequence of widening the knowledge gap between developing and developed countries, with major economic and employment consequences.<sup>4</sup>

**250 million children are unable to read or write and 124 million children are out of school.**



# Youth Literacy Rates Worldwide



Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators 2017

**“Targeted interventions are needed to reach the most marginalized children and youth who are out of school today, including those with disabilities; from ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities; and children affected by armed conflict.”**

— UNESCO, 2015



Photo: Jonathan Hyams

## BARRIERS TO LEARNING

Going to school has not necessarily translated into learning in school and too many children still drop out before completing the primary level.<sup>5</sup> Partial results from an ongoing global assessment of reading deficits in 42 poor countries indicate an alarming number of children do not know how to read even a single word in a simple paragraph by the end of grade two or three.<sup>6</sup> Between 25 to 75 percent of children in the more deprived regions of poor countries cannot read a single word even after several years in school.<sup>7</sup> How can so many children have spent at least two years in school without learning to read a single word?

The scale of the learning crisis points to problems with schools, classrooms and teachers. Around the world, there is an urgent need for reforms across education systems.

### Challenges in Inadequate Teaching

In one-third of all surveyed countries, less than 75 percent of teachers were trained according to national standards.<sup>8</sup> Studies show that in several countries, the average teacher does not perform significantly better on reading tests than the highest performing sixth grade students.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, universal primary education expansion has pushed some systems to the brink in terms of teacher supply. In sub-Saharan Africa, pupil-teacher ratios exceeded 40:1 in primary schools as of 2012, with the highest ratio in the Central African Republic at 80:1.<sup>10</sup> The inadequate supply of teachers has resulted in recruiting and hiring uncertified teachers in many countries.

### Challenges in National Language Instruction

220 million children worldwide are taught to read in a language that is not their mother tongue, and not the language used in their day-to-day lives.<sup>11</sup> There may be resistance to using a mother tongue because it is stigmatized or because parents believe it denies their children access to a language of power used in government and business.<sup>12</sup> This language disconnect makes it difficult for teachers, parents and communities to support children's literacy skills development.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, many students repeat grades or drop out of school.<sup>14</sup>

### Challenges in Use of Classroom Time

There is also considerable wasted instructional time in poor countries due to informal school closures, teacher and student absenteeism, and poor use of classroom time, all of which decrease students' opportunity to learn. For example, schools were found to be open 70 percent of the official time in Mali<sup>15</sup> and teacher absenteeism was as much as 30 percent in Senegal. In addition, classroom overcrowding is at its worst in the early grades – and the most qualified teachers are typically deployed to teach in the higher grades. When overcrowded classes are split in two, the result is a 40 percent loss in instructional time and reduced learning outcomes.<sup>16</sup>

Research has shown that students in many countries have only 2.5 hours a day of “on-task” time, where the student and teacher are present and focused on learning, for six months out of the year.<sup>17</sup>

### Challenge in Supplying School Materials

Another large barrier to learning is the lack of books in households and schools. In Mali, for example, a recent survey revealed that 75 percent of students in grade two did not have textbooks and students did not have supplementary reading books at school – a situation common in the developing world.<sup>18</sup> The scarcity of books is due in large part to weaknesses throughout the book supply chain, from publisher to child. Small national publishing companies lack the skills to tailor reading materials for different age groups and different languages. Interestingly, USAID found that across 11 countries, NGOs were the leading producers of children's books.<sup>19</sup>

### Challenges With Illiterate Home Environments

Finally, when children come from homes where parents are illiterate, they face additional struggles. The vast majority of the 48 million children entering Africa's schools over the past decade come from illiterate home environments.<sup>20</sup> These children struggle to make the transition to school – while their parents struggle to provide support on homework assignments, perpetuating a lifelong cycle of diminished learning outcomes.

### Challenges in National Education Reform

Clearly, education reform is long overdue in many developing countries. However, many national education systems lack policies and programs that seek to ensure every last child reads by the end of primary school. Few low-income countries systematically assess reading proficiency, which is necessary to overcome reading deficits in the early grades.







Photo: Jonas Gratzner

## PROVEN BENEFITS OF BOOSTING LITERACY

Reading enables children to fulfill their potential at school and throughout their lives. The basic reading skills necessary to become “literate” do not develop naturally; we have to learn to adapt the part of our brain that recognizes images to be able to recognize written letters and words.<sup>21</sup>

In addition, learning must be encouraged early and continuously, both within and outside of the formal schooling system. A five-year longitudinal study looking at children’s reading achievement underscores the finding that reading ability at the end of first grade predicts reading ability in third grade.<sup>22</sup> It is at this point in schooling that children transition from learning to read to reading to learn. If children can’t read by third or fourth grade, they may never catch up. They struggle to keep pace with their peers and are limited in their ability to access a wider curriculum. Research shows that after grade four, special catch-up reading classes are only successful with about 13 percent of struggling students. Once students fall behind in learning, they are more likely to drop out of school altogether.<sup>23</sup>

What are the lifelong consequences when kids fall behind in literacy by the end of primary school? If a child does not learn how to read, his or her ability to learn and progress at school becomes far more limited, which in turn increases the risk of growing up to become an adult living in poverty.


The impact on poverty is compelling. According to UNESCO, if all students in low-income countries left school with basic reading skills, 171 million people could be lifted out of poverty, which would be equivalent to a 12 percent decrease in world poverty.<sup>24</sup>

An important way education reduces poverty is by increasing people’s income. Globally, one year of school increases earnings by 10 percent, on average. And when girls are educated, they are more likely to send their own children to school allowing families to continue to break out of the cycle of poverty.<sup>25</sup> Reading empowers people, helps them gain decent work, raises their income, and generates productivity that fuels economic growth.<sup>26</sup>

Education is also one of the most powerful ways to improve people’s health and save lives. In Africa, the mortality rates of adult women with primary education are 14 percent lower than for women with less than primary education.<sup>27</sup> In developing countries outside Africa, mortality rates for women with at least primary education are 36 percent lower than for women with less than primary education. In developing countries, women with primary education have 7 fewer births than women with no education,<sup>28</sup> with subsequent lower fertility rates and reduced infant mortality rates.<sup>29</sup>

In addition, voters with at least a primary education are 1.5 times as likely to support democracy.<sup>30</sup> Education can also help address the inequalities that generate conflict. It is central to identity formation, promotes inclusion and contributes to state building. Most importantly, equity in education leads to conflict risk-reduction. The probability of conflict more than doubled from 3.8 percent to 9.5 percent in 55 low- and middle-income countries between 1986 and 2003 where the level of education inequality (as measured by access and quality) doubled.<sup>31</sup>



A young girl with dark hair, wearing a light blue long-sleeved button-down shirt and a dark blue pleated skirt, is smiling warmly at the camera. She is holding a stack of colorful books under her left arm. The background is a bright, outdoor setting with a dirt path and some blurred structures, suggesting a school or community area.

**“The impact on poverty is compelling. According to UNESCO, if all students in low-income countries left school with basic reading skills, 171 million people could be lifted out of poverty, which would be equivalent to a 12 percent decrease in world poverty.”**

**– UNESCO**

**Girls and children with disabilities are even further marginalized. Of the estimated 59 million primary school-aged children out of school, over half are girls.<sup>32</sup> In Africa, an estimated 90 percent of children with disabilities are out of school.<sup>33</sup>**



## THE RETURN ON INVESTMENT IN LITERACY PROGRAMS

There is consensus that returns on investments in primary education are very high when compared to investments in secondary or higher education. Globally, the average return on investment in one additional year of primary education generated 10 percent increase in income, according to computations from more than 800 surveys in 139 countries. The returns are generally higher in low- or middle-income countries than in high-income countries, and higher for girls than boys.<sup>34</sup>

Conversely, when children, especially girls, fail to learn, they are more likely to drop out early, leading to a negative impact on economic growth. In 2007, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cameroon and Nigeria lost \$301 million, \$974 million and \$1,662 million respectively in economic growth by failing to educate girls to the same standards as boys.<sup>35</sup>

Furthermore, the cost implications are serious when children in primary school don't learn: when a child repeats a grade, the government pays double or more what it would cost if there were no repetition. According to the EFA Global Monitoring Report, the global learning crisis among primary-aged children is costing \$129 billion a year.

## YET, UNEQUAL ACCESS CONTINUES

The Education for All movement and MDG call for universal primary education emphasized the need to invest in free primary education of good quality. For most developing countries, the benchmark was set at devoting 20 percent of their budget to education, and within that, the rationale was strong for spending more on primary education – the level most likely to be accessed by children from poorer households. Many developing countries, however, have fallen short of the target, contributing an average of 16 percent of their budgets to education.<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore, the education progress that has been made has not been equitable: the most disadvantaged children are still left behind. Stark disparities in enrollment between urban and rural areas, the wealthy and the poor, and marginalized religious and ethnic groups within nations remain.

Marginalized children often suffer from multiple disadvantages that are mutually reinforcing, leading to acute education deprivation. If current trends continue, around 43 percent of the 59 million children who have yet to start school – or about 15 million girls and 10 million boys – will probably never set foot in a classroom.<sup>37</sup> For these disadvantaged children, the future is grim. Low incomes, high fertility rates and poor care for their own children will perpetuate the intergenerational transmission of poverty.



## GLOBAL GOALS FOR LITERACY

The tide is beginning to shift. Today, we have an unprecedented mandate to take action on literacy. The new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out clear targets for quality and equity in education. This signifies a shift away from a simple focus on universal primary school access, to a focus on addressing the barriers to learning and equity gaps in education. SDG 4 promises to deliver access to quality education, as well as ensure the most disadvantaged children have equal opportunity to learn to read.

Within the broader framework of the 2030 development agenda, UNICEF and the World Bank will collaborate to advance progress on SDG 4.2 and catalyze efforts to bring together governments and partners with complementary assets and a common commitment to scale up effective literacy programs. Save the Children is proud to be a part of these efforts.

**“The pain and cost of child marriage cannot only be seen at the individual child level but also has its implications on national development. Child marriage robs children and women’s immense potential to support political, economic and social advancement of a nation.”**

**– John Graham, Country Director, Save the Children in Ethiopia for Education and Equity**

## WHY IT'S CRITICAL TO INVEST IN GIRLS' EDUCATION

A good-quality education is every girl's right. Keeping girls in school is key to enabling them to realize their potential, including their future economic opportunities, and supporting girls' confidence and influence in public decision-making.

Quality education and learning also helps prevent child marriage. Research in a number of countries shows that girls doing poorly in school, not learning well and falling behind, are more likely to be pulled out of school by their parents in order to marry.

The ability to read and write is strongly correlated with reduced child marriage. Only 4 percent of literate girls in sub-Saharan Africa and 8 percent of literate girls in South and West Asia are married as children compared with

20 percent of illiterate girls in sub-Saharan Africa and almost 25 percent of illiterate girls in South and West Asia. Evidence suggests that a high-quality education empowers girls to make decisions about whether, when and whom to marry by providing them with knowledge, networks and confidence.

Ensuring that adolescent girls stay in school, return to school or receive vocational training not only improves their life chances but also has wider societal benefits. UNESCO predicts that providing all girls with primary education in low and middle income countries will reduce child malnutrition by 1.7 million. Healthy and well-nourished girls become stronger and more productive adults, improving their own prospects and those of their children.



# Our Response to Global Literacy

Save the Children's response to the global learning crisis is Literacy Boost, our innovative program that aims to ensure children leave primary school with strong reading skills.

We have invested more than \$150 million in Literacy Boost programs across 36 countries, benefitting more than 3 million children ages 5-12 (see map).

Save the Children designed Literacy Boost as a simple, replicable model to support children in the early grades of primary school. Literacy Boost can be adapted to fit the national curriculum as well as local languages, context and culture. Literacy Boost fosters children's mastery of key reading skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension and expands opportunities to practice reading both inside and outside the classroom.

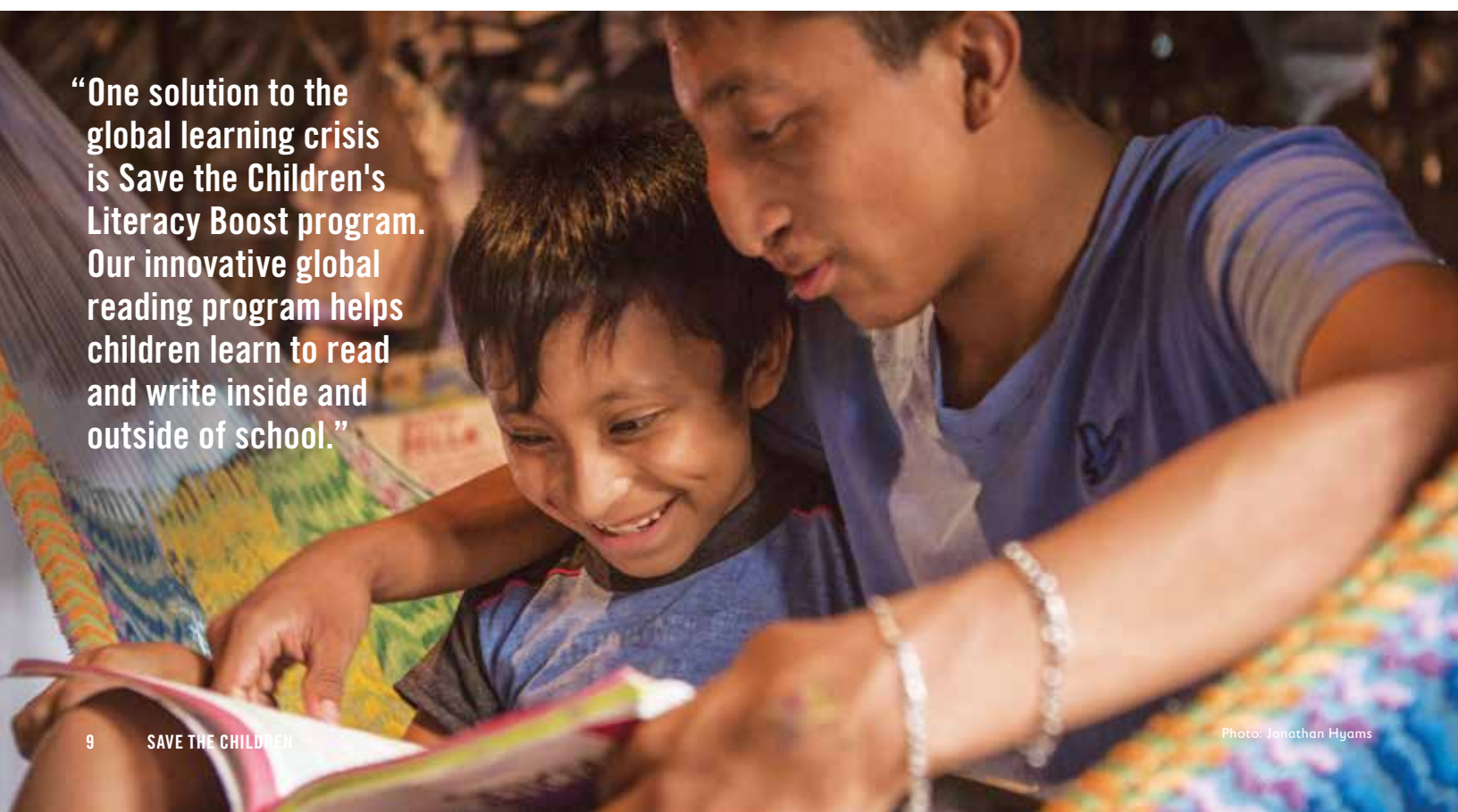
Since students sometimes spend as little as 11 percent of their waking time in a classroom, only a small portion of that in-school time is devoted to learning reading and writing skills.<sup>38</sup> That is why Literacy Boost expands the "opportunity to learn" to include time outside of school, both at home and in the community. We refer to this as "life-wide learning."<sup>39</sup> This means focusing on the opportunity to learn throughout a child's day. It means that parents, siblings and community members are recast as critical individuals who can aid children in their learning trajectory. It also means emphasizing the potential for learning inherent in daily activities in every child's life – to create a culture of literacy that extends beyond school walls.

Save the Children's results from our Literacy Boost interventions – from urban Indonesia to rural Ethiopia – demonstrate that children who participate in more out-of-school reading activities have higher reading scores.

In 2015, Save the Children created partnerships to expand Literacy Boost outside our global program footprint. By leveraging program learnings with a broad range of public and private partners, we have expanded the reach of our literacy work to more than 20 million children around the world.

How have we accomplished this multiplier effect? In an unprecedented 20 countries, governments have integrated Literacy Boost core concepts into their education programs. In Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Pakistan and South Africa, Literacy Boost has been scaled to a regional or provincial level, while in El Salvador, it has been scaled to a national level.

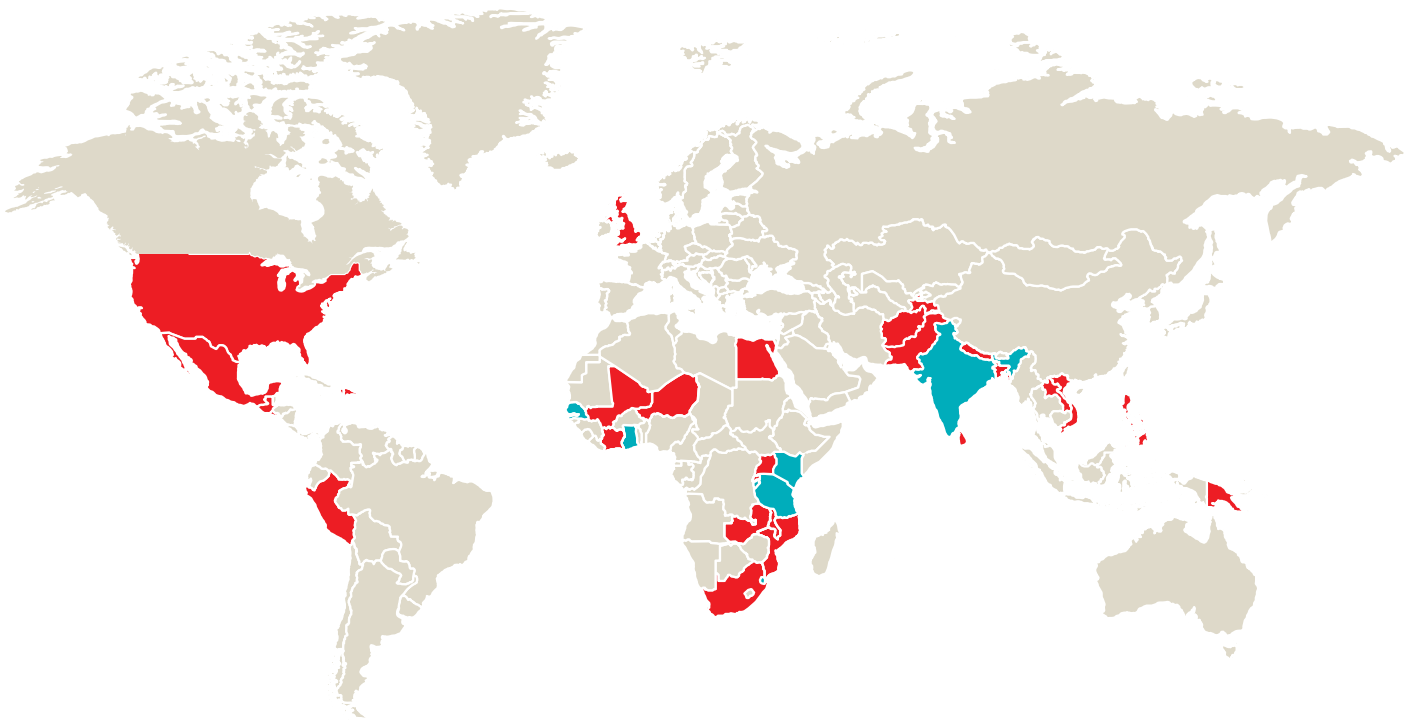
Beyond government, other NGOs have adopted Literacy Boost. For example, World Vision has contracted Save the Children for the past four years to train its global teams in the Literacy Boost approach, reaching 1 million children in multiple countries. In addition, we partner with The Basic Education Coalition – which unites policymakers, partner organizations and the public in increasing funding for quality basic education around the world.



**“One solution to the global learning crisis is Save the Children's Literacy Boost program. Our innovative global reading program helps children learn to read and write inside and outside of school.”**



# Where We Work in Literacy Boost



## COUNTRIES WHERE SAVE THE CHILDREN IS IMPLEMENTING LITERACY BOOST

United States	South Africa	Bangladesh
United Kingdom	Uganda	Laos
Cote d'Ivoire	Zambia	Nepal
Egypt	Dominican Republic	Papua New Guinea
Ethiopia	El Salvador	Pakistan
Malawi	Guatemala	Philippines
Mali	Haiti	Sri Lanka
Mozambique	Mexico	Tajikistan
Niger	Peru	Vietnam
Rwanda	Afghanistan	

## COUNTRIES WHERE SAVE THE CHILDREN'S PARTNERS HAVE IMPLEMENTED LITERACY BOOST

Burundi	Swaziland
Ghana	Tanzania
Kenya	India
Senegal	

## FIVE CORE READING SKILLS:

- 1. Letter knowledge:** Recognition of the letters of the alphabet.
- 2. Phonological awareness:** The ability to recognize and manipulate sounds in a language, including phonemes.
- 3. Fluency:** The ability to read accurately, quickly, and with the correct intonation, rhythm and appropriate phrasing.
- 4. Vocabulary:** The comprehension of a sufficient number of words to be able to understand text.
- 5. Comprehension:** The process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with the written language.



Photo: Minzajar Oo



## LATEST LITERACY BOOST STUDY

A 2016 Stanford University study in Gicumbi, a rural area in northern Rwanda, shows that the average Literacy Boost student read more fluently and scored higher in reading comprehension than over 60 percent of the students who did not participate in the program. Save the Children's program in Rwanda combines teacher training, assessments, community action, innovative classroom designs, and support for the publishing of children's books in order to increase literacy. (More study details are available).

## TRANSFORMING YOUNG LIVES THROUGH LITERACY BOOST

Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Indonesia are showing significant improvements in comprehension just one year after our Literacy Boost program was introduced. In Bangladesh, students with a low baseline of 10 percent comprehension showed an almost five-fold increase in comprehension to 49 percent. Indonesian students recorded a three-fold increase from 19 to 67 percent comprehension and children in Ethiopia recorded a doubling of comprehension from a baseline of 32 to 64 percent (see results in chart below).

### PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN WHO UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY ARE READING BEFORE AND AFTER ONE YEAR OF LITERACY BOOST

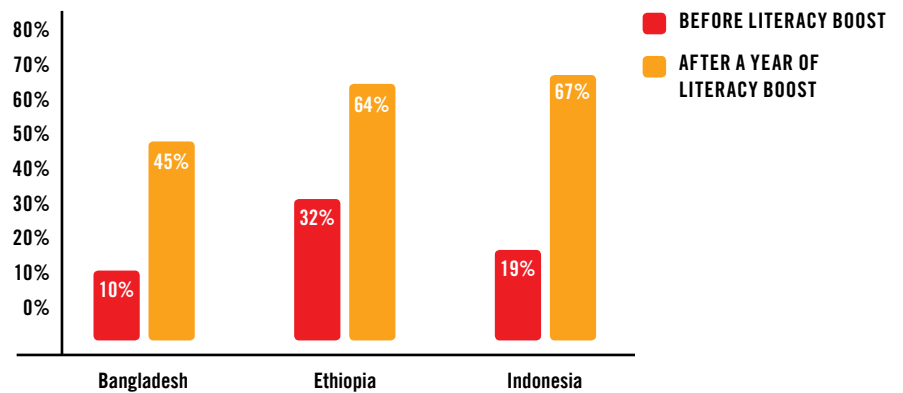






Photo: GMB Akash

## Save the Children's Distinctive Approach

Eight principles define our distinctive approach to Literacy Boost, that reflect a combination of in-school activities, parent involvement and community engagement to improve children's literacy skills.

- **We start early** – to reach children from birth to school entry. Young children need print rich environments and supportive language interactions to develop a solid foundation for learning to read when they get to primary school. We partner with parents at every level of literacy to put in place home and community-based activities and environments, which enable children to develop a solid foundation for reading and learning before they go to primary school.
- **We provide more and better books** – to develop a culture of reading. Children need a variety of age- and context-appropriate reading materials that spark their imagination and build on their existing language skills. By taking a “whole chain” approach to book supply, we partner with publishers to increase the quality of materials and ensure their effective dissemination and use. We also support teachers, parents and communities to develop their own local language reading materials and obtain books from national library services.
- **We mobilize parents and communities** – to develop a reading culture. We provide parent education workshops that offer concrete strategies that literate and illiterate parents can incorporate into their daily lives to support their children's language and reading development.
- **We train teachers** – using the five component skills of early reading such as oral language and vocabulary. Teachers learn instructional content and pedagogic practices that are integrated with the existing national curricula where they work.
- **We teach in a language children understand** – to make sure children are able to learn to read and write, and parents and communities are able to support their children's literacy skills development. In countries where students are required to learn in a second (or third) language, we help teachers use strategies that take into consideration the children's first language to inform how they teach in the second language.
- **We provide opportunities to practice** – to build children's literacy confidence. Children need ample opportunities to practice their reading and writing skills, both inside and outside of school. This can be achieved by advocating for daily reading practice time to be included into the school curriculum; investing in reading clubs, book banks and reading buddies to engage children; and training teachers and parents to provide reading practice opportunities for children outside of school.
- **We assess and track progress** – to ensure that education stakeholders at all levels have access to timely literacy assessment results to gauge the system's success in ensuring all children are learning to read and write. We use a variety of tools including Save the Children's Literacy Boost assessment tool to collect detailed student performance data to inform evidence-based programming.
- **We advocate for policy change** – to ensure that government creates an enabling environment to support and sustain teachers, communities and parents, providing opportunities for every last child to read by the end of primary school.



## Strong Literacy Boost Results

### LITERACY BOOST CONTINUES TO DELIVER IMPROVEMENTS IN PAKISTAN

During 2014, our signature Literacy Boost program in Pakistan reached nearly 200,000 children. Many children in Pakistan face the challenge of having to learn at school in a different language than the one they speak at home. Our Literacy Boost results show significant progress in core reading skills across both languages. The average ability to understand an Urdu language passage increased from 18-54 percent comprehension after Literacy Boost and from 10-30 percent in the Pashto language. This progress gives children a real benefit both at school and at home.

### READING TOGETHER AND LEARNING TOGETHER IN PERU AND GUATEMALA

With support from USAID, our “Reading Together, Learning Together” program reached nearly 6,000 children in the Apurimac region of Peru and 10,000 children in the Quiché department of Guatemala. In both countries, the program helped to strengthen children’s reading skills in both school and the community through reading camps, reading banks, storytelling and workshops with parents. As one success measure, 70 percent of children participated in reading buddy camps by the end of the project.



Photo: Martin Kharumwa



### SOCIAL BEHAVIOR CHANGE COMMUNICATION (SBCC)

Literacy-focused SBCC efforts occur largely within the Community Action component of Literacy Boost targeting parents, but these efforts are not cohesive or systematic, and are often not based on the latest research in the field. We intend to research and apply more and better SBCC approaches in this strategy. During this period, we will develop a cohesive SBCC approach related to literacy. As a first step, the priority is to develop a set of guidelines for SBCC initiatives with a focus on language and literacy, particularly changing caregiver and parent behavior to better support language and literacy skills in young children.



# The Case for Investment

In recent years, the world has made enormous progress for children. A future where every last child learns to read is within our grasp. While disadvantaged children and families in developing countries benefit directly from investments in Literacy Boost, these interventions are also powerful tools that address poverty and inequality, and create a better world. Your investment in Save the Children's Literacy Boost program can transform the future for us all.

## IMPACT OPPORTUNITY

### Promote Literacy Boost on the National Agenda:

- **\$10 million** – will enable Save the Children to expand Literacy Boost in countries where we have made great progress such as Bangladesh, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, Indonesia, Malawi, Mozambique and Nepal. In these countries, Save the Children has implemented Literacy Boost in multiple sites. Your investment will allow us to scale Literacy Boost approaches with governments as part of national policy. For example, in Bangladesh and Ethiopia, Save the Children has worked with regional or provincial education officials to train teachers on Literacy Boost and integrate the model with the local curricula. Expanding the scope of these projects could help more children access these interventions. In El Salvador, Literacy Boost has been scaled to a national level. Strengthening the program there could help us ensure that is fully integrated with the national system, as well as test innovative changes to the program, including incorporating more explicit content to include children with disabilities and adding a focus on socio-emotional learning and well-being.
- **\$150,000-\$175,000 per year, per project** – will enable Save the Children to scale up our Literacy Boost program in 25-40 schools per project. Based on a 40-school project, we could reach approximately 5,000 to 6,000 students and 100 to 120 teachers, depending on project location.
- **\$50,000 per year, per location** – will enable Save the Children to bring Literacy Boost to national scale in three to five countries.



## WHY SHOULD THE PRIVATE SECTOR INVEST IN CHILD LITERACY?

According to ReadyNation, "Businesses must understand that education is not only a key piece of the puzzle for poverty eradication. It also is crucial to develop the future workforce, foster innovation and generate stable and more prosperous societies. [Businesses] need to take proactive roles in education, using their expert skills and interest in innovation to create shared value. In practice, this means raising educational performance levels, shaping aspirations and creating a productive workforce."



Photo: Matthew Morrison

## IMPACT OPPORTUNITY

### Ensuring Literacy Boost Remains A State-of-the-Art Resource:

- **\$10 million** – will enable Save the Children to create a Center for Applied Research and Practice in Education (CARPE) focused on generating evidence of what works to best support children’s learning and development. The Center will 1) leverage technology to improve data collection; 2) create formal systems to disseminate data within Save the Children and among global education practitioners; 3) develop assessment tools to improve global literacy programming; and 4) contribute applied research in partnership with leading universities to inform the larger international development community on ways to improve literacy in low income countries.
- **\$1 million** – will enable Save the Children to create a learning materials development system to simultaneously promote literacy and subject matter content. The materials development system will 1) provide guidance on integrating key literacy competencies (such as alphabetic, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) and subject matter content (such as numeracy, science and health); 2) develop a technology-based system to train country-based educators, authors and publishers to conceive, write and illustrate high-quality learning materials; and 3) support country-based activities to improve sustainable and local learning material development systems.
- **\$500,000** – will enable Save the Children to build on its pilot mBoost program, which sends SMS and audio messages to the mobile phones of parents and community members through a full-fledged Literacy Boost App. Teachers use the Literacy Boost App to plan lessons, share a video or experiences with a colleague or a supervisor. For children, the app functions as a digital library plus activity bank. Families, parents and caregivers use the app to listen to and discuss stories together, even when family members are not literate themselves.
- **\$150,000 per year, per location** – will enable Save the Children to test and implement its Special Needs Action Pack (SNAP) to reach children with learning difficulties. SNAP is a set of tools designed to help teachers more effectively teach struggling learners. The tools include key guidance for identifying external causes for a child’s difficulties (such as lack of support for learning at home and poor attendance).
- **\$60,000 per year, per topic area** – to help Save the Children create a Literacy Boost Innovation Fund that will ensure Literacy Boost remains a cutting edge, state-of-the-art resource to practitioners within Save the Children and outside of the organization. As a result, we will be better able to



Photo: Save the Children

constantly revise, adapt and expand Literacy Boost to better address the wide variety of literacy learning needs in global contexts.

- **\$50,000 per year** – to create nimble, technology-based personalized assessment systems that will help teachers monitor student progress, identify learning gaps, and adjust their instruction to respond to individual student needs.





Photo: Victoria Zegler

Reading empowers people, helps them gain decent work, raises their incomes, and generates productivity that fuels economic growth.<sup>40</sup>

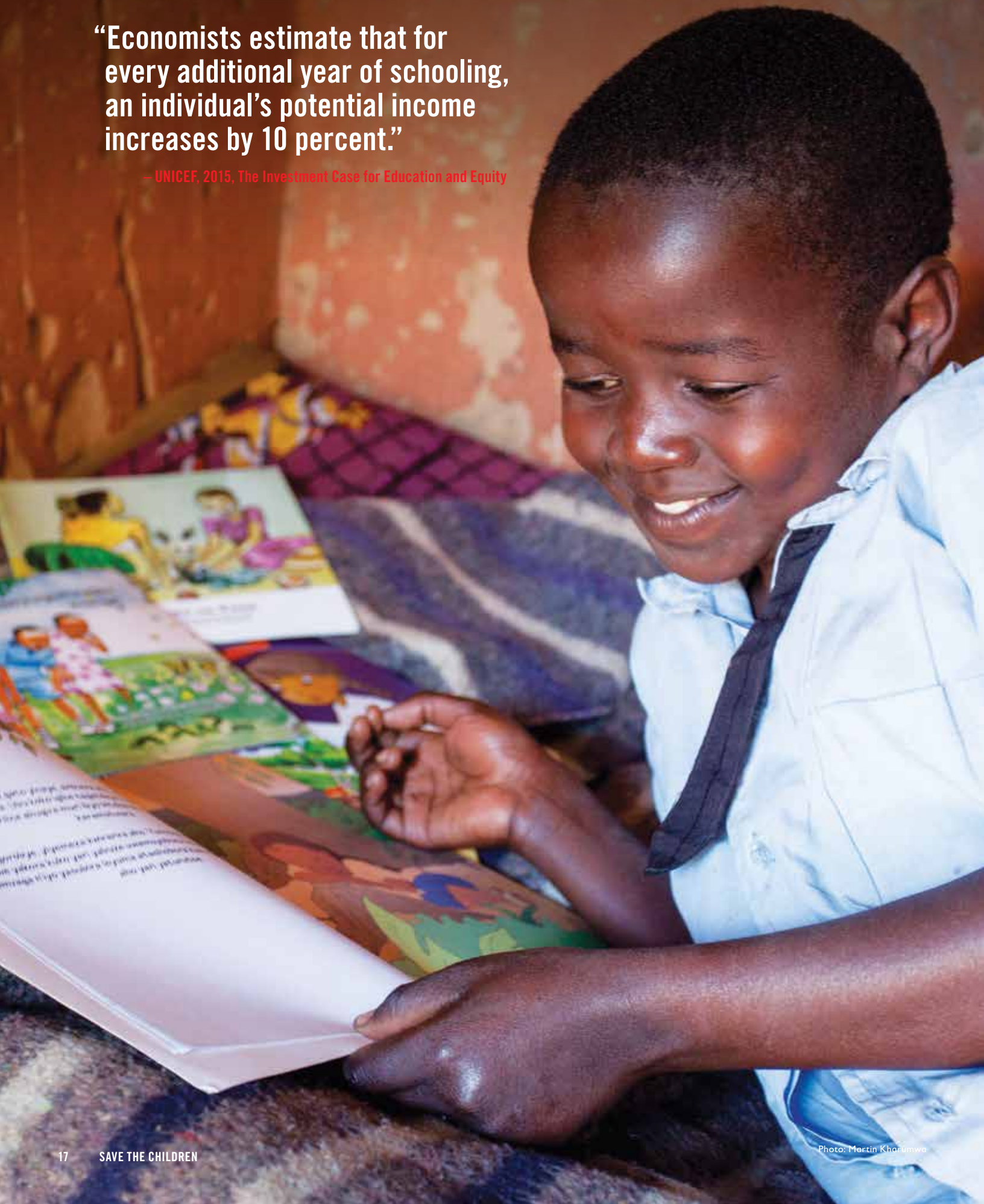
## Conclusion: Invest in Literacy Boost

An investment in Save the Children’s Literacy Boost program yields powerful returns. Your investment can ensure that children progress in school, achieve academic success, transition into a productive form of employment and contribute to their national economies — which will in turn enable governments of developing nations to reduce reliance on aid and bring about better outcomes for those who are most disadvantaged. Your investment will play a vital role in achieving change for the world’s youngest and most marginalized girls and boys. This is an investment with the power and potential to yield transformative results for children — changing the course of their futures and ours.



**“Economists estimate that for every additional year of schooling, an individual’s potential income increases by 10 percent.”**

– UNICEF, 2015, *The Investment Case for Education and Equity*





# Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Education.
- <sup>2</sup> *Investment Case for Education and Equity*, UNICEF 2015.
- <sup>3</sup> Verger, A., C. Lubienski, G. Steiner-Khamsi, *World Yearbook of Education 2016: The Global Education Industry*, Swales and Willis Ltd., 2016.
- <sup>4</sup> UNESCO, *Position Paper on Education Post-2015*.
- <sup>5</sup> *A Global Compact on Learning: Taking Action on Education in Developing Countries*, The Brookings Institution Center for Universal Education, June 2011.
- <sup>6</sup> Gove, A. and P. Cvelich, *Early Reading: Igniting Education for All*. Early Grade Learning Community of Practice, Research Triangle Institute, 2011.
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