



**Their  
News**

[Their News team](#)

From discrimination and child labour to gang violence and dangerous journeys to school, we look at some of the obstacles children have to overcome to get an education.

Millions of children around the world would love to be at school. They'd give anything to be sitting at a desk and learning with children of their own age.

But more than 260 million children and youth - one in five - don't enjoy that basic right. There are many, often complex, reasons as to why young people aren't in school.

Here's a look at just some of the obstacles that children in some parts of the world have to overcome just to get an education.

## 1. Gender discrimination



In many countries, due to poverty, security or cultural factors, male children will be educated while their female siblings will not. Girls are four times more likely to be out of school than boys from the same background. The poorest girls are the least likely to complete primary school.

— *Photo credit: World Bank*

## 2. Attacks on schools



Education is often hit hard by conflicts - with schools bombed, damaged, looted and destroyed. Many places of learning are permanently closed and children lose out on an education. Each year about 75 million children and youth living in conflict zones have their education disrupted, receive poor-quality education or drop out of school altogether.

— Photo credit: UNICEF / Mahmoud



### 3. Forced to flee their homes



A child uprooted from home – whether a refugee, a migrant or internally displaced – is a child first and foremost. And every child has the right to an education. Some children never return to school. In 2016 only 60% of refugee children were enrolled in primary education and 23% in secondary school. Many of the schools the children do attend are makeshift ones in camps.

— *Photo credit: United Nations*

## 4. Disabilities



Much social and cultural discrimination remains around disability. Children with disabilities are more likely to miss out on school than other children. An estimated one in three out-of-school children have a disability. Throughout Africa, less than 10% of children with a disability are in primary education.

— *Photo credit: UNGEI*

## 5. Child marriage



Early marriage and pregnancy often leads to dropouts and girls being banned from school. Children who do return may face bullying. An average of 40,000 children and young women under the age of 18 are married every day. More than 60% of child brides in developing countries have no formal education.

— *Photo credit: DFID*



## 6. Child labour



Many children are forced to work instead of attending school. Families living in poverty often rely on children to supply extra income. The International Labour Organization said in 2017 that about 152 million children aged from five to 17 are engaged in child labour. Many of them never go to school or drop out of school to work.

— *Photo credit: Theirworld*

## 7. Toxic stress



Prolonged exposure to high levels of stress from trauma, violence, neglect or deprivation is called toxic stress and can have devastating physical and psychological consequences for children. Trauma affects their ability to learn and their ability to stay in school.

— *Photo credit: UNHCR*



## 8. Danger on the way to school



A simple walk to school can be extremely unsafe or intimidating for some children. Many parents refuse to send their children - particularly girls - to school in case they are harassed, exploited or sexually abused.

— Photo credit: UNICEF / Bindra

## 9. Natural disasters



Natural disasters, such as hurricanes, storms and floods, can destroy schools and prevent children accessing education. Last year devastating floods damaged or destroyed more than 700 schools in India and damaged 2166 primary schools in Bangladesh.

— Photo credit: UNICEF / English

## 10. Paying to be at school



Students in many countries have to pay fees to attend school. Even if the school is “free,” students are often asked to have uniforms and supplies that their families cannot afford.

— *Photo credit: UNICEF / Amaya*



# 11. Difficult journeys to school



School can be a hard-won luxury in some parts of the world. Many children in remote communities have to make the most unimaginable and dangerous journeys every day to access education.

## 12. Gang violence



Gang violence on the way to school or even inside school can make children vulnerable. In many Latin American countries in particular, fear of violence means families often keep their children home.

— Photo credit: EU / ECHO / A. Aragón



## 13. Talking a different language



When a child speaks one language at home and comes to school to find teachers using an unfamiliar language, it can push them out of school completely. Yet more than 500 million children - half of all students at primary and secondary schools in low and middle-income countries around the world - are taught in a language they don't speak at home.

— *Photo credit: Julien Harneis*