Obtaining a quality education is the foundation to creating sustainable development. In addition to improving quality of life, access to inclusive education can help equip locals with the tools required to develop innovative solutions to the world’s greatest problems.

Over 265 million children are currently out of school and 22% of them are of primary school age. Additionally, even the children who are attending schools are lacking basic skills in reading and math. In the past decade, major progress has been made towards increasing access to education at all levels and increasing enrollment rates in schools particularly for women and girls. Basic literacy skills have improved tremendously, yet bolder efforts are needed to make even greater strides for achieving universal education goals. For example, the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, but few countries have achieved that target at all levels of education.

The reasons for lack of quality education are due to lack of adequately trained teachers, poor conditions of schools and equity issues related to opportunities provided to rural children. For quality education to be provided to the children of impoverished families, investment is needed in educational scholarships, teacher training workshops, school building and improvement of water and electricity access to schools.

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.

617 million youth worldwide lack basic mathematics and literacy skills.

 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and Goal-4 effective learning outcomes

By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and preprimary education so that they are ready for primary education

By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development

Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries

By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states

Despite the considerable progress on education access and participation over the past years, 262 million children and youth aged 6 to 17 were still out of school in 2017, and more than half of children and adolescents are not meeting minimum proficiency standards in reading and mathematics. Rapid technological changes present opportunities and challenges, but the learning environment, the capacities of teachers and the quality of education have not kept pace. Refocused efforts are needed to improve learning outcomes for the full life cycle, especially for women, girls and marginalized people in vulnerable settings.

In 72 countries with recent data, approximately 7 in 10 children aged 3 and 4 were developmentally on track in at least three of the following domains: literacy-numeracy, physical development, social-emotional development and learning.

In 2015, an estimated 617 million children and adolescents of primary and lower secondary school age worldwide – more than 50 per cent – were not achieving minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics. Of these, about two thirds were attending school but were not learning in the classroom, or dropped out school.

Some 750 million adults – two thirds of them women – remained illiterate in 2016. Half of the global illiterate population lives in South Asia, and a quarter live in sub-Saharan Africa.

Many developing countries still lack basic infrastructure and facilities to provide effective learning environments. Sub-Saharan Africa faces the biggest challenges: at the primary and lower secondary levels, less than half of schools have access to electricity, the Internet, computers and basic drinking water.

ODA for scholarships amounted to $1.3 billion in 2017. Australia, France, Japan, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and institutions of the European Union accounted for nearly two thirds of this total.

Globally, there has been little progress in the percentage of primary school teachers who are trained: it has been stagnating at about 85 per cent since 2015. The proportion is lowest in sub-Saharan Africa (64 per cent).