

EDUCATION: A PATH TO A PEACEFUL FUTURE

Inclusive, quality education promotes understanding, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence among individuals and communities. Moreover, education holds the potential to reduce the likelihood of conflicts by fostering critical thinking, encouraging open dialogue and creating economic growth opportunities. With more than two decades' experience in lower-income countries, including those affected by conflict, 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

- Too often attention focuses on how violence and conflict disrupt learning, rather than **how learning can contribute to peace**.
- From Latin American to Eastern Europe to the Middle East, conflicts are tearing attention away from the need to support education as a pathway to peace at a time when nearly **a quarter of a billion children in lower-income countries globally are out of school**.
- The **relationship between education contributions 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 & Peace (IEP) have collaborated on research that affirms the potential for education to build peaceful societies¹. 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 with **higher overall school completion rates have fewer recorded conflicts**. This result is especially true to rates of secondary completion.
- Countries with **higher rates of female school completion**, particularly at the primary level, tend to have less conflicts.
- Higher rates of **both primary and lower secondary school completions** show positive correlations with factors known to create and sustain peaceful 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.
- 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>

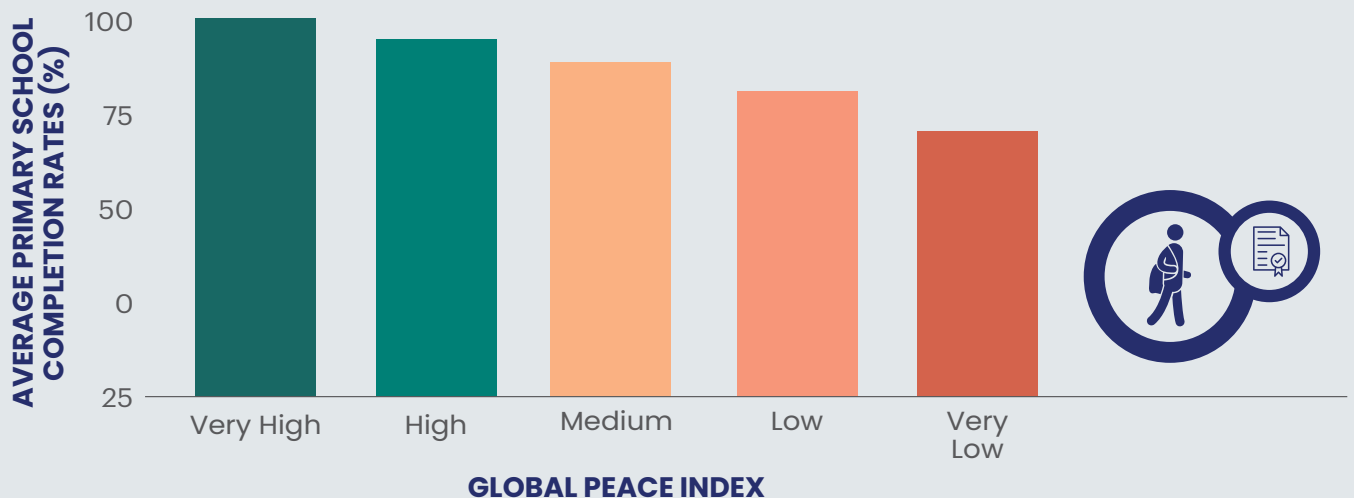
EDUCATION & PATHWAYS TO PEACE

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 \$32 million from GPE since 2006, suggests a parallel between educational advancement 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 more than doubled education spending per capita, focusing on improving learning outcomes and equitable access. In tandem with improved secondary school completion rates, Nepal gained 30 places in the global peace rankings since 2008, driven by an easing of internal conflict. Investments in education, including GPE support of \$236 million since 2009, have likely contributed to Nepal's progressive improvement in peace over time. At the same time that secondary school completion rates in the country more than doubled, Nepal saw its ongoing conflict score in the Global Peace Index improve by 15.3%.

Average primary school completion rates by peace levels

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



Source: IEP