



The Global Importance of Literacy: How Literacy Improves Lives

Literacy lifts individuals out of poverty

Lacking basic reading and writing skills is a tremendous disadvantage. Literacy not only enriches an individual's life, but it creates opportunities for people to develop skills that will help them provide for themselves and their family.



Literacy improves the development of the wider community

The positive knock-on effect of educating girls can be seen in the wider social and economic benefits yielded for their communities. Increasing the emphasis towards women's education positively impacts on each generation through raised expectations and increased self-esteem. Improving literacy facilitates employment whereby both males and females can contribute, helping the wider economy and community to thrive.

Literacy impacts health

Illiteracy directly affects an individual's health and wellbeing, so the importance of education on physical health is vital. Those without education are more likely to be vulnerable to health problems, for example increased schooling reduces the risk of HIV infection. According to one study of women in 32 countries: literate women are three times more likely than illiterate ones to know that a person in seemingly good health can be infected with HIV, and four times as likely to know how to protect themselves from AIDS.

Infant mortality rates drop significantly for women who have had primary education, and even more for those who complete secondary school. It is estimated that infant mortality decreases 9% for every year of education attained. This is because girls and women are able to educate themselves on health issues, which can help reduce the cycle of poverty and mortality rates in the long term.



Literacy positively impacts economic growth beyond the local community

The impact of improving literacy in girls not only has a positive economic impact at a local and community level, but the productivity of the workforce flourishes at country level too by enhancing a country's economic strength.



Literacy empowers women and girls

According to UNESCO, the global illiterate population for young girls is 61.9% so the importance of education for women cannot be understated.

Breaking the cycle of illiteracy and improving self-esteem is crucial for women and girls in the developing world. By enabling them to become economically productive and independent, they become empowered and can take control of their lives. The importance of education in fostering personal autonomy, and creative and critical thinking skills is central to helping girls contribute to their societies.

