



# Lack Of Education: 11 Lifelong Effects

By Chris Drew (PhD) / November 4, 2022

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## Quick Answer: The Effects Of Lack Of Education

Lack of education has serious effects on everyone, not only people who are under-educated. People who lack education have trouble getting ahead in life, have worse health and are poorer than the well-educated. Major effects of lack of education include: poor health, lack of a voice, shorter lifespan, unemployment, exploitation and gender inequality.

## Introduction

Across the world, 264.3 million school children, adolescents and youth are not in school. We're getting more of these children into school, but there's still a long way to go.

These children who are under-educated will likely suffer from long-term side effects that may limit their quality of life. There are 11 major effects of lack of education that cause real worry to us all.

# The 11 Lifelong Effects Of Lack Of Education



## 1. Poor Health

Healthcare of the general population is a major [reason education is important](#).

Primary education is important for learning about personal health and hygiene. Education is how health professionals and governments communicate important information to society.

Poor health and hygiene is a serious issue in societies where large amounts of the population lack an education.

Important basic health that is taught at school includes:

- Pregnancy and prenatal care;
- Basic hygiene like cleaning teeth and washing hands; and
- Sexual health.

According to the [UNHCR](#), simply educating all girls to a secondary school level would decrease worldwide deaths from pneumonia, diarrhea, and malaria by 49%.

### Case Study: Lack of Education During the Ebola Crisis

This became a huge problem during the [2014-15 Ebola crisis](#) in West Africa. During the crisis, there was a huge amount of misinformation about how the disease was spreading. Many people used old wives' tales and folklore to understand the disease rather than scientific knowledge.



To remedy this, there was a need for a huge public information campaign to educate the masses on how diseases spread. One of the major things to do was teach people how to bury the dead appropriately to prevent the spread of the disease.

## **Case Study: HIV/AIDS in Uganda**

The [Borgen Project](#) reports that highly educated people in Uganda are 75% less likely to suffer from HIV/AIDS than uneducated people. If a Ugandan completes primary school, they're 50% less likely to suffer from HIV/AIDS.

[>>>Related Post: 27 Points on the Importance of Education](#)

## **2. Lack Of A Voice**

People who are undereducated do not have the skills or confidence to speak up for themselves.

This is a part of the reason many women remain oppressed in the developing world. Girls who are undereducated are married young – often still as children – and forced into domestic chores rather than education.

These women find it very hard to speak up about their own situation and find ways to improve their lives. They can't find jobs, are reliant on their husbands' incomes, and often can't read or write which prevents them from self-educating.

[>>>In-Depth: 45 Facts on the Importance of Reading](#)

## **3. Shorter Lifespan**



Less educated people don't live as long as more educated people, the International Monetary Fund's [Fiscal Monitor Report](#) shows. According to the report, less educated men statistically live between 4 and 14 years less than their well educated counterparts.

[Here's a graph](#) from the IMF on these startling figures.

- The smallest gap is in Italy, where educated men live 4 years longer than uneducated men.
- The largest gap is in Hungary, where the gap is 14 years.

According to the IMF, this shortened lifespan for the poor has a drag effect on national productivity. So in effect, we all suffer when the poor get sick and die.

#### 4. A Poverty Trap

**Poverty Trap:** The inability to escape poverty due to lack of resources.

Children of poorer people are more likely to be poor themselves. This is often known as the *intergenerational poverty trap*.

One of the only ways to escape the poverty trap is through education. If you're not educated, you are not likely to escape.

**Here's the facts.**

While the exact figures are disputed, higher education appears to lead to higher incomes:



- According to the [Borgen Project](#), each year of education beyond grades 3 and 4 increases a woman's earning potential by 20%.
- [This South African study](#) finds wages only see significant growth beyond a Grade 11 education.
- [This Brookings Institute study](#) finds one year of education leads to a 10% growth in earnings.

And the problem isn't only lack of education. It's also the quality of education.

A report from the [University of Stellenbosch](#) found that children in South Africa who attend poorer public schools suffer from low teacher quality and lack of resources. This can keep children in poverty despite the fact that they attended school.

*Related Article:* [How Can Health Influence Learning?](#)

## 5. Unemployment

Everywhere in the world, jobs are given out to the most qualified people.

Educational credentials are one major way in which employers choose between job applicants. If you don't have that high school diploma or university degree, chances are you'll drop to the bottom of the pile.

**Here's the facts.**

The [OECD](#) found that across all OECD nations:

- 83% of people with a [university degree](#) are employed;



- 74% of people with an upper secondary or non-university postsecondary education (e.g. a trade qualification) are employed;
- 56% of people without an upper secondary education are employed.

## 6. Exploitation

People who have not been educated may have to resort to terrible types of work just to survive. In a world of limited jobs, those with an education get first pickings of the safer and more secure work.

Girls in the third world who lack education are some of the most vulnerable. According to the [UNHCR](#), these girls are likely to find themselves doing jobs like:

- Prostitution;
- Sweatshop labor;
- Domestic Labor;
- Being married off as child brides.

### Case Study: Syrian Civil War

[UNICEF](#) reports that many Syrian children are lured into fighting for the government in the civil war. These children – rather than going to school – need to work to feed their families. The US\$400 per month soldier salary is often their only option due to their lack of skills.

Similarly, Syrian children who flee to Turkey end up working in sweatshops earning \$10 a day to feed their families. According to [The Guardian](#), sexual and

physical abuse takes place in these sweatshops regularly.



## 7. Gender Inequality

Gender inequality can be a massive [barrier to education](#) for women.

Countries where women are less educated continue to perpetuate gender inequalities from one generation to the next.

Women who are less educated tend to have babies at a younger age. According to the [United Nations Girls' Education Initiative](#), each year a girl is out of school increases national fertility rates by 10 percent.

Women who have children *after* receiving a secondary school education tend to have healthier babies. The UNGEI argues that these women's higher levels of education means "they will know how to properly care for" their babies.

Furthermore, women with a lower education are less likely to raise their voice when it comes to political and community issues that affect them.

Education is also a space where gender stereotypes are challenged, which may also lead to decreased gender inequality. If girls and boys are educated side-by-side, such stereotypes may also disintegrate.

Read Also: [Types of Stereotypes](#)

## 8. A Brake On Economic Growth

Countries that have a more educated population will have [more sustainable economic growth](#) over the long term than those with a less educated population.



This is particularly evident now that we live in a globalized world.

Nations are competing against each other for economic dominance. If a nation is more educated, the nation's productivity is higher and its workers are more innovative. The nation attracts higher-paying jobs in growth industries.

By contrast, nations that are poorer have to attract lower-paying industries such as manufacturing. While many third-world countries can grow their economies rapidly by lowering labor standards and attracting industry, there is a cap on this growth.

That's why China is investing so heavily in tech and education. They know that if they want to continue to grow at a rapid rate, they need to transition to the high-paying industries of the future.

## **9. Inability To Make Smart Political Decisions**

If too many people in a society lack the ability to think critically about the big challenges of the future, we won't collectively make smart political decisions.

Education is about more than money. We need to educate our society so they can make democratic decisions like:

- Who should I vote for in the next election?
- Is climate change action important?



- Is it good for me that my taxes are spent on foreign aid?
- Etc.



A politically uninformed society may lack the knowledge to make smart decisions. Or, they might be easily duped by a smooth-talking populist.

Perhaps this is why one-sentence slogans tend to win out in our political discourse. The logic here is simple: dumb it down for the dumbies out there. Don't treat them like adults. Don't have an informed debate.

As [Alex Lickerman](#) argues:

*“The solutions our political leaders seek for our most pressing problems are largely determined by which are most popular. And which are most popular is largely determined by our population’s ability to understand the problems”*

## 10. It's Harder To Raise Children

If you lack an education yourself, raising children becomes more difficult. And not just because you're more likely to be poor.

Issues uneducated parents face include:

- Not knowing how to seek help or teach yourself about raising children;



- Inability to help your children with their homework;
- You're statistically more likely to be poor;
- You'll expose your children to less words.

According to the [American Psychological Association](#), this means:

- Children of uneducated parents are behind their peers in cognitive capacity and literacy and numeracy levels;
- Your children will have less financial literacy (they won't be able to handle money as well);
- Your children will struggle getting the right information about attending college.

## **11. Your Job Is About To Disappear Due To Automation**

Automation is coming. We have already seen many millions of jobs disappear over the past few decades due to the introduction of robots. Think of factory lines or – closer to home – automated cashiers at the supermarket.

These are just the beginning. As artificial intelligence comes closer to reality, chances are that more and more low-skilled jobs will come off the market.

Think about the United States: manufacturing jobs have been on the decline for decades. The next big thing to go is truck driving as safe driverless trucks hit the road in the coming years.

[The Hill](#) argues: “the largest shares of jobs that can be potentially lost belong to low-skill individuals who do low-income jobs”.

Whether new jobs in new industries will emerge to replace the old ones is debatable. But the new jobs will likely require some form of education!



## Final Thoughts

**Students:** If you're using this information for an essay or speech on the topic, don't forget to [cite the sources](#) I've linked to.

Now that you've got the right information, [here's 7 tips on how to start your essay](#).

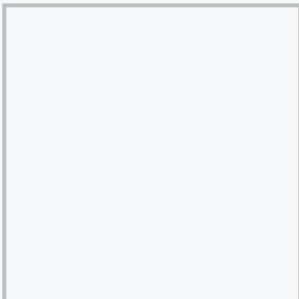
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Dr. Chris Drew is the founder of the Helpful Professor. He holds a PhD in education and has published over 20 articles in scholarly journals. He is the former editor of the Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education.



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