Field of Activity

**Education & Income**

International Cooperation
Having access to education and vocational training is a human right. With our programmes, we aim to improve access to education and the learning biography of poor and marginalised people by promoting inclusive early childhood and basic education, with a special focus on marginalised children and youth. Furthermore, we implement inclusive and non-formal vocational education and training in combination with inputs on employability and entrepreneurship as an investment in income generation.

Relevance & context

Education has always been a central concern of development cooperation. From a social point of view, education and vocational training are prerequisites for the eradication of poverty. They are the drivers of economic, political and social development. At the level of the individual, they contribute to human development, equality of opportunity and participation in the various social spheres (see Chapter 2 Foundations / Social Inclusion). This is also expressed in the Agenda 2030. Consequently, ‘Education & Income’ focuses on SDG 4 (‘Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’) and SDG 8 (‘Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all’).

The right to education and vocational training is one of the basic human rights, enshrined in Art. 26 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. This right is reaffirmed and put into concrete terms in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966 (Art. 6.2 & 13.1). The incorporation of education as a human right is confronted by numerous shortcomings and gaps in the education landscape of developing countries.

Successful Early Childhood Development (ECD) is an essential prerequisite for children’s learning capability and school career. ECD improves the children’s school performance and leads to a more health-conscious behaviour during adolescence and adulthood. Investing in the early years yields some of the highest rates of return to families, societies and countries. ECD interventions help to mitigate the impact of adverse early experiences. If not addressed, such experiences can lead to low educational attainment, economic dependency, increased violence and crime, poor health and a heightened risk of substance abuse and depression.

Even though policy trends, especially for Africa, are to expand the coverage of ECD programmes and to include ECD separately in the national budget, more than 200 million children under 5 years of age in low- and middle-income countries face inequalities and fail to reach their full developmental potential because they grow up with a broad range of risk factors including poverty, poor health, exposure to violence, abuse, exploitation and inadequate care and learning opportunities. They also face risks resulting from emergencies related to conflict, climate change and global demographic shifts associated with migration and urbanisation. According to UNICEF, around 230 million children were growing up in regions affected by war and crises in 2014.

ECD-interventions cover four main areas: safety & protection, health & nutrition, education and stimulation & care (UNICEF 2014). The focus here is on Early Childhood Education (ECE): A good-quality ECE service prior to entering school improves learning outcomes for children. But age-appropriate educational provision is extremely rare: Only 12 per cent of children between the ages of 3 and 5 in the Least Developed Countries have the chance to participate in ECE programmes.

In 2000, the UNESCO initiative Education for all (EFA) with its six goals was designed to make progress in basic education in the developing countries. The MDGs, adopted in the same year, took over some of these goals. At the end of 2015, the outcome shows a mixed picture, not least because the MDG orientation of the development programmes meant that the EFA goals 1 (early childhood care and education) and 6 (quality of education) were neglected. What can be considered a success is that school enrolment has gained broad acceptance, thanks to EFA and the MDGs. Enrolment rates are very high almost everywhere, with the exception of Sub-Saharan Africa, where 24 per cent of girls and 18 per cent of boys were still not enrolled.
in school in 2015 (projection in: UN 2015b). Globally, 57 million children have no access to primary education, of these, 30 million live in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Despite EFA goal 6, little attention was paid to the quality of education. Moreover, the chronically high dropout rates are alarming. In the developing regions, barely three-quarters of the enrolled children complete primary school, while in the Least Developed Countries, they make up barely half, and the trend is downward. In Sub-Saharan Africa, fewer than 60 per cent of enrolled pupils completed primary school. What’s more, many pupils who have completed primary school, cannot read or write. In order to improve this, UNICEF and UNESCO launched the ‘Global Out-of-School Children Initiative’ (OOSC) in 2010: This aims to work with local and national education officials to design policies and strategies that will allow more children to attend school and complete a full course of education. So far, successes have been modest – as have been the efforts to promote literacy among young adults (aged 15 to 24): In Sub-Saharan Africa, more than 25 per cent can neither read nor write, in the Least Developed Countries just under 30 per cent.

Major challenges in the context of basic education are:

- **Poverty and exclusion:** In rural areas, children often have no access to educational institutions, which are a long distance away. Poor parents lack the cash for travel expenses, school uniforms, school materials and food. Other exclusion factors are: the language used at school is not the mother tongue (affects approx. 220 million children), traditional role models for girls, ethnicity, refugee situation and child labour. More than 190 million children (aged 5–14) work in agriculture, in workshops, in quarries, as street sellers or as servants, up to 16 hours a day.

- **Deficits in the schools:** These include teacher shortages (global recruitment need until 2030 approximately 26 million, mostly in Asia and Africa), and especially female teachers, class sizes (on average 43 pupils in low-income countries), teaching quality (inadequate subject and educational training of the teachers), great shortage of teachers in remote and conflict-affected areas. The main obstacle are insufficient education budgets in most developing countries (cf. Global Partnership for Education).

- **Emergencies/conflicts:** Existing measures to support access to primary education often do not reach children living in conflict-affected fragile states, where the proportion of out-of-school children increased from 30 per cent in 1999 to 36 per cent in 2012. Half of the world’s out-of-school population (39 million children) live in these countries. Moreover, schools are repeatedly considered as targets by parties in a conflict: In 2009, 613 schools were attacked, roughly twice as many as in the previous year.

- **Traumatisation:** Many children are exposed to traumatising situations and experiences: Disasters, wars, violence, the sudden death of relatives, separation from a caregiver and from a familiar environment. The negative impacts of traumatic stress on children’s development are now undisputed, but are rarely taken into account in most developing countries. Teachers are generally overburdened, since they mostly have no training in educational psychology in their professional work and are often themselves affected by the traumatising situations.

**Vocational education and training (VET)** is vital for economic development and plays an important role in tackling unemployment and improving the often extremely precarious work situation of young people (aged 15–24). Youth in developing countries continue to be affected by working poverty due to the irregularity of work and lack of formal employment and social protection. In 2013, more than one-third of employed youth in the developing world were living on less than 2 USD per day. As many as 169 million youth in the world are working poor. The number increases to 286 million if the ‘near-poor’ are included (below 4 USD per day). In most low-income countries, at least three out of four young workers fall into the category of irregular employment, engaged either in own-account work, contributing to family work, casual paid employment or temporary (non-casual) labour. Nine out of ten young workers remain in informal employment.

In 2012, the ILO launched the, Call for action on the youth employment crisis, to pursue pro-employment growth and decent job creation through a multi-pronged approach in five main policy areas, including investment in education and training to enhance employability and facilitate the school-to-work transition, as well as providing career options for young people by supporting
entrepreneurship and self-employment. Meanwhile, youth employment is a policy priority in most countries across all regions, and has been translated into the development of a global strategy for youth employment embedded in the SDGs of the Agenda 2030. The integration of young people into quality employment and income generation is also acknowledged as contributing to the prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism (UN 2015c).

Education, training and lifelong learning foster a virtuous cycle of improved employability, productivity, income growth and development. Much has been done since 2005, but significant deficits remain in access to, and the quality of, education, training and skills. Skills and qualifications that do not meet labour market requirements and insufficient vacancies remain major constraints for the employability of young people.

**Conceptual framework & outcomes**

Against this background, Caritas Switzerland is dedicated to a rights-based and development-oriented position regarding education and income. By focusing on access to education in a broad sense, Caritas contributes to poverty reduction and social justice. Guided by the concept of lifelong learning, which aims to enable people to learn throughout their entire life, Caritas is engaged in early childhood and basic education on the one hand, and in approaches to vocational education and training on the other, which are adapted to meet the needs of poor and marginalised people.

Education & Income has been newly formulated as a field of activity in the current International Cooperation Strategy. It is based on the wide expertise Caritas Switzerland has gained in this area over the years through its engagement in different partner countries with actions in development work and humanitarian aid. This institutional experience allows us to consolidate, replicate and scale-up efforts within and across different geographical contexts.

Since early-years support is a prerequisite for children’s learning capacity and thus their school career, Early Childhood Education is a priority in this field of activity, particularly for marginalised and traumatised children. A stimulating environment shapes the physical, social and cognitive development as well as school readiness with lasting effects into adulthood. It establishes normality in children’s lives. At the same time, it enhances the efficiency of the school system by reducing repetition and dropout rates and improving achievement, especially among marginalised groups. In addition, Caritas will promote adequate nutrition, laying the foundation for child growth and brain development.

![Diagram 14: ‘Education and income’ framework](image-url)
In basic education, Caritas Switzerland is guided by the inclusive education approach, which aims to overcome the exclusion from education of children with special features and needs (e.g. disability, non-native language, marginalisation). In the context of humanitarian crises, education is a fundamental component of humanitarian assistance. Education in emergencies (EIE) proves its relevance, as significant numbers of children worldwide are denied education due to the impact of emergencies. Reasons for education in emergencies include the psychosocial needs of children and adolescents affected by trauma and displacement, the need to protect them from harm, and the need to maintain and develop study skills.

In its vocational education & training and entrepreneurship programmes, Caritas focuses on non-formal vocational training, enhancing the employability of youths as well as on promoting entrepreneurship.

**OUTCOME 1: BASIC EDUCATION**

Traumatised or marginalised children are capable of personal development and recover their ability to learn. Marginalised children, youths and adults receive basic education of adequate quality.

With its early childhood education (ECE) activities, Caritas gives traumatised, physically disabled or stress-affected children a new physical self-assurance and self-confidence. Their motivational drive is reawakened, which helps them to make up for delays in their development. Methodical-didactic tools are used as supports, which are adapted to each particular situation. ECE builds on the concept of progressive education and uses a holistic approach. The nursery school equipment and the lesson structures are coordinated with each other, culturally adapted and take account – where they exist – of national curricula. ECE requires an approach which addresses the children’s current needs. Their different development deficits indicate how the lessons should be structured so that the children can practise positive coping strategies and are able to continuously build their individual resilience. The Caritas focus is on the priorities of children from very vulnerable contexts. Caritas’ work with traumatised children is a niche activity which not many organisations are involved in.

Practical ECE education and training courses equip teachers and parents to link methodical-didactic teaching practice with theoretical contents. This enables them to foster the child’s development and meet the curricular conditions. Moreover, Caritas’ preschool projects are supported with mentoring, so that education and daily working life can be linked to each other and practical capabilities can be enhanced as part of the process.
Caritas’ aim in the basic education sector is to promote inclusion. It is about making schools available for marginalised groups: disabled children, girls, children in remote villages, and the very poor, who are often excluded from government policy and access to education. It is about being proactive in identifying the barriers and obstacles learners encounter in attempting to access opportunities for quality education, as well as in removing those barriers and obstacles. All children can learn and all pupils – including many considered to be non-disabled – need some form of learning support.

Inclusive education aims to uncover and minimise barriers to learning. It takes a broader view than just formal schooling by also including the home and the community. Hence it is about changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methods, curricula and the environment to enable all children to access education and meet their specific needs. In fact, inclusion in education is a dynamic process which is constantly evolving according to local contexts and is part of a wider strategy to promote an inclusive society.

Children with special needs should not be placed in special classes but should attend mainstream classes and be given special support. The starting point of all educational efforts is to identify the individual needs of each pupil. This differs from an integrative concept of education which – based on an understanding of mainstream teaching – makes the same pedagogical demands on all pupils irrespective of their specific characteristics, strengths and weaknesses.

Caritas Switzerland takes various different measures to ensure that disadvantaged children have access to a primary school education:

- Support of pupils from poor and disadvantaged families with regard to help with homework, expenses for school bus transport or boarding schools for pupils from remote villages, school fees, school uniforms, materials and food.
- Capacity building activities to improve the quality of educational provisions with a view to the needs of marginalised groups: they include the methodical-didactic and psychosocial training of teachers (dealing with traumatised children) and teaching materials that enable and support child-centred learning methods and are culturally adapted.
- Infrastructure investment as a basic requirement to ensure that regular school classes that are adapted to the situation are possible. This includes furnishings, working tools or teaching materials as well as the reconstruction of school buildings in emergency contexts.
- Advocacy with education authorities in favour of marginalised pupils to enable access to lessons, the quality and pay of teachers, the development of needs-based and differentiating curricula, design of the infrastructure, provision of day-care, support in case of language barriers and promotion of an inclusive school and teaching culture.
- Enabling of conflict-affected or marginalised communities to offer functional and learner-friendly school facilities for their pupils, to develop a professional school management and ensure adequate teaching quality, and to support resilience-building among teachers and pupils and thus strengthen school outcomes and psycho-social well-being (see below for Education in Emergencies).

OUTCOME 2: VOCATIONAL EDUCATION & TRAINING AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Youths and adults acquire professional and life skills by means of non-formal vocational training. Marginalised groups improve their economic situation through entrepreneurship as well as employment.

Regarding vocational education & training (VET) and entrepreneurship, life skills und key competences as well as specific professional skills are at the forefront. Non-formal vocational training appears promising in this regard, since it is more effective in reaching the poor and marginalised youth and adults. Adequate employability is a precondition for income and ensuring decent work relations. As part of the VET-programming, we will contribute to the employability of poor and marginalised youth and adults, with a special focus on needed key qualifications for employment. In addition, promoting entrepreneurship can be a pathway to income. Of vital importance for successful non-formal VET measures is their close connection to the world of work and the needs for specific vocational know-how. This in turn requires an awareness of labour market requirements and future trends.

In all countries, youth and adults aspire to productive employment opportunities that provide them with a decent wage, relative security and good working conditions. But far too few are able to match their aspirations
to reality. Caritas Switzerland will enable young people and adults who lack professional training to acquire life skills as well as professional expertise through vocational training, either by placements in existing institutions, or by providing additional training opportunities. These interventions will pay particular attention to its primary target group. Non-formal vocational training seems to be more promising in this regard, since it is usually more effective in reaching marginalised and poor youth and adults.

Working with local partner organisations, employment-oriented training which creates market-oriented job and income opportunities will be promoted. Consequently, Caritas links its VET-activities directly with the demands of the labour market to increase the employability of graduates. For example, the career counselling centres, such as those introduced in Moldova, are important and will be replicated for other VET-programmes. Working with mobile VET units, as is planned in Cambodia, seems to be another innovative approach that has perhaps not yet been explored by other organisations. Additional components of entrepreneurial thinking will further strengthen these VET-projects.

Caritas Switzerland supports marginalised youth and adults to organise themselves in cooperatives to start small enterprises, such as the Rag-Pickers Cooperative for Paper Recycling & Products in the Jehangirpuri Slum in Delhi. In addition, we support and empower marginalised groups to gain access to the necessary means for entrepreneurship and income generation, such as credits, subsidies or land rights.

In order to reach a large number of young people, Caritas and its partner organisations actively lobby government departments to encourage them to launch larger-scale programmes.

To give young people without formal qualifications an opportunity on the labour market, Caritas advocates the elaboration and official recognition of portfolios, so young people can use them to prove their range of experiences and competences.

Bosnia-Herzegovina: Inclusion of Roma into the Bosnian school system

The estimated 60,000 to 100,000 Roma remain a highly marginalised, impoverished and vulnerable minority in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Caritas project aims to reduce the gap between Roma and non-Roma by providing equal access to quality education, socio-economic support and housing. At the core of the project is the active promotion of equal opportunities in schools and access to education for all. In order to achieve this there is a need to overcome stereotypes and exclusion of minorities, which currently result in the fact that only about 24 per cent of Roma complete primary school. Caritas works both at systemic level as well as at the level of pilot solutions in selected schools. The multi-level, multi-stakeholder approach addresses the Bosnian national authorities as well as, local governments in order to improve the legal framework as well as transforming the pedagogical approaches in teacher’s trainings. Schools, principals, teachers, parents, Roma communities and organisations and the children themselves are addressed in the programme which provides evidences on positive changes by implementing those new approaches. Specially trained ‘Roma Mediators’ help the Roma children to catch up with their non-Roma peers. At the same time, the housing and livelihood situations of the families are enhanced, which further helps Roma children to be successful in school.
Partnerships, Networks

To further develop the field of activity of Education & Income, Caritas Switzerland will develop its cooperation with various platforms and networks. These include:

RECI: Schweizer Netzwerk für Bildung und internationale Zusammenarbeit. www.reseau-education.ch/de. [Swiss network for education and international cooperation]

NORRAG: Network for international policies and cooperation in education and training (Geneva), www.norrag.org

INEE: International Network for Education in Emergencies; www.ineesite.org/en/


SDC/E+I: SDC Employment & Income network web-platform. www.shareweb.ch/site/EI/Pages/Home.aspx

SDC/Education: SDC Education network webplatform. www.shareweb.ch/site/Education/fr

GPE: Global Partnership for Education. www.globalpartnership.org/

Uganda: Teenage mothers have access to technical vocational training

The Ugandan NGO Christian Counselling Fellowship (CCF), a local partner of Caritas Switzerland, empowers pregnant adolescent girls and teenage mothers to access economic resources through the provision of formal education and vocational training. For that purpose, CCF has set up Nwoya Girls Academy, a boarding facility including a secondary school section, a vocational training centre, including an accelerated learning programme for the mothers, and an early childhood day-care centre for their children. In addition, CCF offers life-skill counselling, sensitises communities on girl child protection and empowerment, and runs its own guesthouse and model farm for income generation and teaching purposes. Hence, CCF responds to the impact of gender discrimination through socio-cultural norms, attitudes and behaviours that prevent adolescent girls from developing their human potential and make them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. It also addresses the loopholes in Uganda’s legal framework, which so far has not provided clear policies on how pregnancy in school can be handled, or assisting girls who may want to re-join school after giving birth.
Education & Income in Humanitarian Crisis Situations

Crisis and disasters can have a variety of devastating individual and system-wide impacts, ranging from the destruction of infrastructure to the disruption of systems, and an increased concern for protection. Children across age ranges are also affected differently, with young children susceptible to health problems and developmental delay. Education responses in humanitarian situations focus predominantly on primary school, with little attention being given to either pre-primary children or to those in secondary or tertiary education. The education continuum is often disrupted, which then leaves children and young people excluded from the life chances that education provides. Caritas will focus on all dimensions of the Education & Income area.

Early childhood development: In humanitarian crisis contexts Caritas will promote adequate nutrition during the first years of life, as well as implement the concept of Early Childhood Education as described above. The modular ECE structure is adaptable and can be multiplied in many different crisis situations. Each child is supported in the best-possible way based on its abilities. This requires a specific, methodical-didactic and psychosocial training of teachers and, ideally, also of the parents.

Education in emergencies: Caritas has experience in the educational and psycho-social care of children and young people affected by crises and conflicts. They receive appropriate educational and culture-sensitive support which mobilises the learning ability they have frequently lost, and enables them to thrive at school. In addition, the interventions by Caritas and its partner organisations (e.g. UPP and STEP in Iraq) are designed to promote teachers’ diagnostic capabilities, and help them to make adaptations in their lessons in line with the local school system. In this, they are guided by the findings of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), which has a leading role in raising awareness of, and further developing EIE.

Humanitarian Context

Gaza: Education in emergency

Despite high access to education in Gaza, quality and effectiveness are at stake as long as the effects of war and occupation on children are not properly addressed. This poses the threat of creating a ‘lost generation’ that adopts negative coping strategies (e.g. dropping out of school and aggression). Drawing on pilot activities in Gaza and elsewhere, Caritas and its local partner developed a child-centred and holistic emergency education approach. It links pedagogical with structured psychosocial components and aims to establish safe and motivation-based educational services in Gaza. Past experiences indicate that this comprehensive approach to emergency education contributes to improved preparedness, resilience and learning capacities of children affected by psychological stress, shocks and trauma. It helps children to manage their fear and anger, while supporting them to catch up with the requirements of the schools system in Gaza.

Teachers receive training in special pedagogic methodologies for education of traumatised children (Caritas Switzerland).
Infrastructure investment: Caritas ensures that the necessary conditions for implementing educational provisions are in place, and that regular school lessons are possible. This includes the construction and/or renovation of school buildings (where needed, also sleeping facilities) and enabling local authorities or groups in to ensure their maintenance, as well as procuring furniture, working tools or teaching materials.

VET & income: For Caritas Switzerland, livelihood components are typically included in rehabilitation programmes – the aim is to enable the people affected by humanitarian emergencies to generate an income as quickly as possible. Therefore, infrastructure projects often include training components for workers to enable them to learn safe construction techniques and improve their qualifications and thereby also their opportunities on the labour market or as petty contractors beyond the project duration. Caritas Switzerland raises awareness and spreads the Build Back Better principles in the communities at large. Examples of such approaches include reconstruction projects in Pakistan, Haiti, and the Philippines, where foremen and local workers were trained, and some earned a nationally recognised certificate in earthquake-safe construction techniques. In areas of protracted crisis – as in Jordan and Lebanon, Caritas Switzerland will place a special focus on VET measures as well as income generation.

Somaliland: TVET in drought response

Somaliland is plagued by recurrent droughts and had an unemployment rate among the youth (14 to 29 years old) of 84 % in 2014. It is also a host for refugees from South Central Somalia. With its economy dominated by livestock breeding, there is an obvious need for diversifying income generation opportunities. Caritas Switzerland is thus active in non-formal education, including technical vocational education & training (TVET) during its emergency aid. It is providing unemployed youth with training that improves their literacy, numeracy and life skills and equips them with basic, marketable vocational skills. A special focus is placed on women and youth from drought-affected rural areas and on refugees. As a result, 840 women completed literacy and numeracy courses and 350 young women and 133 men completed skills training during 2013 and 2014. Tracer studies showed that 60 per cent of artisan graduates secured a job or were self-employed in less than three months, and 23 per cent within half a year.
Literature


Our commitment

Caritas Switzerland is committed to a world without poverty that is guided by solidarity, justice and peace. We provide professional, effective and efficient help to people in need irrespective of their political or religious beliefs, gender or ethnicity. The aim of all programmes is to reduce poverty, strengthen people's resilience, ensure that their rights are respected and expand their capabilities to realise goals they have reasons to value. We are an independent Swiss aid organisation and a member of Caritas Internationalis, a network comprising more than 160 national Caritas organisations.

Expertise and Networks

Our expert offers consultancies, networks with other experts and shares the Caritas perspectives at conferences and workshops.

Caritas is a member of the 'Schweizer Netzwerk für Bildung und internationale Zusammenarbeit' (RECI).

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