What if with one investment, you could help decrease infant mortality, improve nutrition, increase wages and boost Gross Domestic Product (GDP), enhance social cohesion and civic engagement, and empower a generation of boys and girls? Sound too good to be true? It’s not.

Providing out of school children with a full course of quality primary education can lift entire communities out of poverty and create positive changes that span generations.

THE MULTIPLIER EFFECT: WHY EDUCATING CHILDREN MAKES ECONOMIC SENSE
Economic: • The economic cost of out of school children tends to be highest in countries that have experienced slow growth in the past decade, suggesting that providing a quality primary education for all could contribute to reducing economic inequality between and within countries.

• Investing in out of school children can increase GDP by up to 7% in poor countries; providing remedial education to the out of school children of past generations can further increase these gains.

• The estimated economic gain from achieving universal primary education exceeds the estimated increase in public spending required to enrol those children in primary school.

Health: Increasing girls’ primary school enrollment by 20% is expected to decrease infant mortality rate before age one by an average of 4 deaths per 1000 births.

Nutrition: Women’s education is strongly and significantly associated with a decline in malnutrition.

Social cohesion: Enrolling out of school children would likely reduce crime threats and have a stabilising effect on security.

Environmental: Research suggests education can make communities less vulnerable to climate shocks.

Active citizenship: Increasing access to primary education can significantly improve civic engagement.

Income: Each additional year of schooling a child receives increases his or her hourly wages by 10-30%.

Fertility: Fertility rates decrease by 5-10% with every additional year of school a girl attends.

Marriage age: African women with seven or more years of schooling tend to marry 5 years later than women with no education.

Nutrition: Women’s education is strongly and significantly associated with a decline in malnutrition.

Fertility: Fertility rates decrease by 5-10% with every additional year of school a girl attends.

Empowerment: Education is an instrument for empowerment.

Why Invest in Primary Education?

2Ibid
3Ibid
4UNICEF, Quality Primary Education: The potential to transform society in a Single Generation, 1999
5UNAIDS/UNFPA/UNIFEM, Women and HIV/AIDS. Confronting the Crisis, 2004
8Ibid
9Ibid
11Ibid