

Research Briefing

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UK aid and education

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Summary

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education” and support lifelong learning, is intended to be met by 2030. However, [the UN’s 2025 report on progress](#) warned that global progress is falling short of targets on school completion rates and literacy.

This briefing provides an overview of progress on SDG 4, UK aid for education, and evaluations of its effectiveness.

Recent trends in UK and global aid spending

Supporting quality education and equal participation of girls has long been a priority for UK Governments, [with the previous Conservative Government endorsing the G7 goal](#) for 40 million more girls in school and 20 million more girls reading by 10 years old (or by the end of primary education) by 2026.

However, UK bilateral aid—that for specific programmes and purposes—for education fell every year from 2020 to 2022, [falling from £780 million in 2019 to £352 million in 2022](#). It since rose to £700 million in 2024. The UK also provides contributions to the core budgets of multilateral institutions: in 2024, £335 million in bilateral aid was delivered via the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), £34 million via the International Finance Facility for Education, and £2 million via the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO.

[According to Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development \(OECD\) data](#) on aid for education, which is not directly comparable with the above figures, the UK was the fourth-largest education aid donor in 2024, behind Germany, France and the US. However, UK aid has fallen more sharply than other donors in recent years, halving from 2018 to 2023 before its partial recovery in 2024.

Spending outlook from 2025

[Analysis by the UN Children’s Fund, Unicef, and UNESCO](#), has warned of stagnating levels of global aid for education in recent years. They project further falls to 2027 as the [major education aid \(France, Germany, the UK and US\), cut their aid budgets](#).

[The UK Government is reducing its aid spending to 0.3% of gross national income by 2027](#) and says education will be one of the negatively affected areas. As set out in the [government’s 2026 international education strategy](#), UK aid [emphasis will instead shift towards providing expertise and helping to mobilise non-aid finance](#). The government’s [impact assessment of the changes for 2025/26](#) said several education projects would be negatively affected. [Spending plans for 2026/27 are expected to be published soon](#).

Education fund replenishments in 2026

Two education funds plan replenishment requests in 2026, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and Education Cannot Wait (ECW).

The [GPE is seeking up to US\\$5 billion from donors for 2026 to 2030](#) to support children in 96 countries and territories. In its last replenishment, the UK pledged £430 million (\$600 million) and [is currently the GPE's largest donor](#).

ECW, which [provides education support in emergency and crisis situations, has not released its replenishment request](#) for 2026. As of 2026, [the UK is the second-largest donor to the ECW](#) and [pledged £80 million for 2022 to 2026](#). Under the Trump administration, [the US plans to withdraw from the ECW](#), having been its third-largest donor. The [US administration has not set out the reasons for its decision](#).

1 Global progress on SDG 4

1.1 UN International Day of Education

In 2018, the UN General Assembly [proclaimed 24 January as the “International Day of Education”](#) (PDF). It said education:

plays a key role in building sustainable and resilient societies and contributes to the achievement of all of the other Sustainable Development Goals; it increases the productivity of individuals and strengthens the potential for economic growth, develops the skills needed for decent work, develops the professional skills needed for sustainable development, including in the fields of water and sanitation, green energy and the conservation of natural resources, helps to eradicate poverty and hunger, contributes to improved health, promotes gender equality and can reduce inequality, and promotes peace, the rule of law and respect for human rights.¹

UNESCO's [“The future at risk: Why investing in education is critical”](#) and World Bank blog, [“Education is a key to jobs, growth, and lifelong learning”](#), provide an overview of how progress on education contributes to other goals.

The UN General Assembly resolution called on all states to help meet [sustainable development goal \(SDG\) four](#), to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”.²

The [SDGs were adopted in 2015](#) and are intended to be met by 2030.

¹ UN General Assembly (UNGA), [A/RES/73/25](#), 6 December 2018

² UN SDGs, [SDG 4](#)

Theme for 2026 international day

For 2026, UNESCO has [named the day's theme](#) as “the power of youth in co-creating education”. It says that “meaningfully engaging students and youth in co-creating the education they want is essential to meet their aspirations and ambitions” and will help achieve the SDGs.³

1.2

UN agency reports

UN SDG reports

The UN publishes annual reports on [global progress on the sustainable development goals](#). The most recent was published in July 2025. Progress on a selection of indicators on education are summarised below and come from the [report's statistical annex](#) (PDF). Note that some data is incomplete.

Proficiency in reading and mathematics, primary level

While the proportion has risen in Europe and North America, from 2000 to 2019 the proportion of children and young people achieving minimum proficiency in reading and mathematics at primary level fell across the globe:

- Mathematics: 49% in 2000 to 44% in 2019
- Reading: 61% in 2000 to 58% in 2019

In sub-Saharan Africa, the proportion achieving a minimum level in mathematics fell from 16% to 11% and in reading from 34% to 30% across the same period.

Proficiency in reading and mathematics, lower secondary level

At lower secondary level, proficiency increased in both mathematics and reading globally (note there is no data for sub-Saharan Africa):

- Mathematics: 47% of children in 2000 to 51% in 2019
- Reading: 62% in 2000 to 64% in 2019

Declines were reported in both Oceania (excluding New Zealand and Australia) and the eastern and south-eastern Asia world regions.

Completion rate of education

Completion rates of education has increased across the globe at all levels:

³ UNESCO, [International Day of Education](#)

- Primary level: increased from 77% in 2000 to 88% in 2024 globally. As of 2024, 89% of girls and 87% of boys complete this level of schooling.
- Lower secondary level: increased from 60% in 2000 to 78% in 2023 globally. As of 2024, 79% of girls and 77% of boys complete this level.
- Upper secondary level: increased from 38% in 2000 to 60% in 2024. As of 2024, 61% of girls and 58% of boys complete upper secondary.

Variations, however, remain between global regions. The lowest completion rates at primary range from 68% in sub-Saharan Africa to 100% in Europe and North America. At lower secondary level, 46% of girls complete their education in [least developed countries](#) compared to 44% of boys.

School facilities and infrastructure

There is substantial variation in access to infrastructure by schools:

- Electricity access: in 2023 79% of primary schools had access to electricity globally. However, this was the case in only 34% in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Internet access: 48% of primary schools and 72% of upper secondary schools had access to the internet in 2023. In southern Asia, only 38% of primary schools had access and 70% at secondary.

UNESCO report on global education in 2024/25

UNESCO's [global monitoring report for 2024/25](#) said that globally 251 million children were out of school. This has [fallen from 390 million in 2000](#). Of those in 2024/25, 129 million were boys and 122 million were girls. Factors driving this included poverty, social norms against educational participation and armed conflict:

Globally, 251 million children, adolescents and youth are out of school, with a reduction of just 1% since 2015. The out-of-school rate is 33% in low-income, 19% in lower-middle-income, 8% in upper-middle-income and 3% in high-income countries [...]

conflict also takes a major toll on education development. The primary completion rate has increased four times faster in Togo than in Yemen, two countries that were at the same level in 2006. ⁴

When assessing academic performance, the monitoring report also said that globally [“socioeconomic status has a more significant impact on academic disparity than gender” on several measures:](#)

⁴ UNESCO, [Global education monitoring report 2024/25](#), 2024, pp 140,150

In reading, only 54 students from the lowest [income] quintile reach the minimum proficiency level for every 100 students from the highest quintile; in mathematics, the ratio is 47 to every 100 students [...]

Disparities by wealth are particularly wide in literacy rates, including in low-income countries. In a sample of 30 low- and middle-income countries, there are 53 adult males from the poorest 20% of households that could read a simple sentence for every 100 males from the richest 20% of households who could do so.⁵

The report also notes that median public expenditure spending on education has fallen from 4.4% of gross domestic product in 2015 to 4% in 2022, representing a total of US\$5.8 trillion. [The value of overseas aid for education reached a high of US\\$16.6 billion in 2022](#), representing 7.6% of global aid. It noted spending levels were insufficient to meet the increase in enrolment rates:

any increases in the prioritization of education in low-income countries are neither uniform nor large enough to compensate for the 24% increase in enrolment levels (from pre-primary to tertiary education) since 2015. In middle-income countries, the deprioritization of education coincides with an 8% increase in enrolment and is only possible to maintain with higher out-of-pocket spending by household.⁶

UNESCO also reports that [globally there has been a shortage of qualified and interested candidates for teaching positions](#) in upper and high-income countries and a shortage of teaching positions in low and lower-middle income countries.⁷

1.3

Challenges facing education access

In addition to the above, there are further issues affecting educational participation and attainment, including:

- Covid-19 pandemic legacy: in 2023 the World Bank estimated that school closures made in response to the pandemic [resulted in nearly one billion children missing out](#) of at least one year of in-person schooling.⁸ In 2024, analysis of 72 countries for the Bank suggested [widespread losses in attainment](#), especially for those experiencing longer closure periods, for boys, immigrants, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.⁹
- Participation of women and girls: women and girls are often [unable to participate in education](#). [Reasons including](#) higher rates of poverty, child

⁵ UNESCO, [Global education monitoring report 2024/25](#), 2024, pp210-11

⁶ As above, p279

⁷ As above, pp269-70

⁸ World Bank, [Covid-19's impact on young people \[...\]](#), 16 February 2023

⁹ World Bank, [Covid-19 school closures causes a significant drop \[...\]](#), 25 January 2024

marriage, gender-based violence, negative gender norms and behaviours, and lack of legal rights to participate.¹⁰

Analysis for the Center for Global Development [argues girls' education should continue to be prioritised in areas where girls' attainment and participation has equalled that of boys](#), because it compensates for often requiring higher educational outcomes to achieve equal labour market outcomes and because of the [wider significance of education](#), such as improving food security and safety.¹¹

- Disability: Unicef estimates there are [240 million children with disabilities worldwide](#). Compared to children without disabilities, children with disabilities are 49% more likely to have never attended school.¹² Globally, only around half of primary schools [have facilities for students with disabilities](#) (PDF).¹³
- Armed conflict and displacement: in 2024 the UN Children's Fund, Unicef, [reported that around 473 million children live in areas affected by conflict](#). This represented 19% of children worldwide, up from 10% in the 1990s. Children also represent around 49% of internally displaced people across the globe.¹⁴

The NGO, Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, [estimates that there were around 6,000 reported attacks](#) on education and military use of schools and universities in 2022 and 2023. This was up 20% compared to the previous two years.¹⁵

- Lack of learning facilities at home: in 2024 the World Bank reported most students in lower income countries and the bottom 50% in middle-income countries (measured by household income) [lack access to the internet](#) which would allow them to learn at home and catch up on education losses due to the covid-19 pandemic.¹⁶

1.4 Global aid for education is expected to fall

As set out in the Library briefing, [The UK and international development: Global issues for 2026](#) and [Organisation for Economic Development](#)

¹⁰ UNESCO, [Her atlas: status report on girls' and women's right to education](#), 2022; S Psaki and others, [Policies and interventions to remove gender-related barriers \[...\]](#), Campbell Systematic Reviews, 2022, vol 18

¹¹ Center for Global Education, [Girls' education and women's equality](#), May 2022

¹² Unicef Data, [Seen, counted, included \[...\]](#), December 2024

¹³ UN, [SDG report 2025](#) (PDF), July 2025, p17

¹⁴ Unicef, [2024 "one of the worst years in Unicef's history" for children in conflict](#), 28 December 2024

¹⁵ Global Coalition, [Education under attack 2024](#), introduction

¹⁶ World Bank, [Four of the biggest problems facing education \[...\]](#), 12 September 2023

[Cooperation \(OECD\) analysis](#), many of the world’s major aid donors are cutting their aid budgets in 2026 and 2027.

[The OECD projects that global aid for education fell by around 18% to 22% from 2023 to 2025](#). It notes that in 2023, 65% of all global aid for education came from Germany (32%), France (17%) and the United States (16%).¹⁷

Reliance on a narrow range of donors makes education aid highly susceptible to policy changes.

Although there is some uncertainty about future budget decisions, [UNESCO projects that there could be “at least a further 14% fall \[in global aid for education\] by 2027”](#), and notes “education has been losing ground in donor portfolios” compared to other areas such as transport and education.¹⁸

2 UK aid policy and spending

2.1 Policy and spending cuts, 2020 to 2024

Conservative Government strategies and G7 objectives

The Conservative Government’s [2023 white paper on international development](#) said that educating girls was a “top and long-standing priority for the UK”. Objectives included:

tackling the global education crisis through two G7- endorsed global objectives by 2026: to get 40 million more girls in school and 20 million more girls reading by 10 years old, or by the end of primary education [...]

Our vision for 2030 is to see transformed education systems, providing quality teaching and learning outcomes [...]¹⁹

A separate policy document, [Every girl goes to school](#), was published by the government in 2021, to cover the five years to 2026. This set out three pillars on education: advancing a global coalition to advance girls learning, directing UK aid efforts to increase girls’ participation and retention in school, and championing and disseminating related research. The government also published an [International women and girls strategy, 2023 to 2030](#), in 2023.

Spending reductions from 2021 to 2024

In 2020 the government announced [aid spending would fall from 0.7% to 0.5% of gross national income](#), in response to the covid-19 pandemic. As

¹⁷ OECD, [Cuts in official development assistance](#), 26 June 2025

¹⁸ UNESCO, [Aid to education: Time for tough decisions](#), 2025

¹⁹ FCDO, [International development in a contested world](#), 2023, pp85-6

shown in section 2.4, the total value of UK bilateral aid for education fell every year after 2019, when it was £775 million, to £352 million in 2022.

Unicef UK has published [analysis on the effects of spending reductions from 2021 on UK aid and education](#) (PDF), assessing that while non-child-focused bilateral aid fell by 38% from 2019 to 2023, “child-focused bilateral aid fell by 57% from 2019 to 2023”.²⁰

It found falls in education spending, despite its prioritisation by the Conservative Government (see above), arguing that “children have not been adequately considered or prioritised” in UK aid “for some time”.

2.2

Policy and spending cuts, from 2024

Spending reductions and policy response

As UK aid spending is reduced from 0.5% of gross national income to 0.3% from 2025 to 2027, the International Development Minister, Baroness Chapman, has said that [“in some areas and countries there will be less to spend”](#), and this is “likely to be on education and gender”.²¹

In January 2026 the government [published a new international strategy on education](#). Acknowledging reductions in UK aid, the strategy said that the UK would stress its “leadership” in the field. This will include:²²

- Adopting a “diplomacy-based approach”. Heads of diplomatic missions will be appointed to “protect and promote women’s and girls’ right to education and learning globally”. Education will also be pursued in strategic partnerships with individual countries.
- Working with the UK’s International Education Champion, Professor Sir Steve Smith ([first appointed in 2020](#) under the [2019 international education strategy](#))
- Establishing new Centres of Expertise. This includes through the FCDO’s existing [Education Advisory Cadre](#)
- Investing in research on EdTech (referring to the whole education research sector).

²⁰ Unicef, [Leave no child behind: analysing the cuts to UK child-focused ODA](#) (PDF), 2025, p1

²¹ International Development Committee, [Oral evidence: The development work of the FCDO](#), 13 May 2025, Q1

²² FCDO, Department for Business and Trade and Department for Education, [The UK’s International Education Strategy 2026](#), January 2026, pp6, 8, 12, 19-20, 30-1

- Working with partner government to leverage opportunities offered by artificial intelligence and technology and to ensure that education is climate-resilient
- Providing targeted assistance for inclusive, high-quality education.
- Backing the International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd), as a means to generate further funding for education.²³ The fund, first established in 2023, is [a financing facility](#), providing loans, capital and supporting recipient countries develop education plans and improve accountability. The government estimated that every US\$1 invested unlocks \$7 from multilateral development banks. In 2023, [the Conservative Government had committed up to £180 million for the fund over the next three year period](#), including £100 million of loan guarantees. These budgets are subject to change.²⁴

The Minister for International Development has also said [UK efforts will be about supporting the existing education systems](#) countries already have, and only in humanitarian situations should UK aid be delivering education directly.²⁵

For more on the government’s policy priorities and spending decisions, see the Library briefing, [UK aid: Reducing spending to 0.3% of GNI by 2027/28](#).

Spending reductions and affected programmes

In its [bilateral aid plans for 2025/26](#), the FCDO said that spending on “education, gender, and equality” would fall by £206 million, from £490 million in 2024/25 to £284 million in 2025/26. The breakdown is as follows:

- Gender and equalities department: £73 million to £64 million
- Girls’ education department: £387 million to £185 million
- Scholarships, tertiary education and partnerships: £39 million to £34 million.²⁶

Bilateral spending relates to aid for specific programmes and countries and is complemented by funding to multilateral organisations (see below).

In the summer of 2025, [the government published an impact assessment of the potential effects of its spending plans](#) for 2025/26. This set out several education programmes and countries would be affected:

²³ PQ 66483 [[Developing Countries: Education](#)], 16 July 2025

²⁴ FCDO Development Tracker, [UK support to the new International Finance Facility for Education \(IFFEd\)](#), updated February 2025

²⁵ Fabian Society, [Promising development: The future of aid in an uncertain world](#), 2025, pp6-7

²⁶ FCDO, [Annual report and accounts 2024 to 2025](#), July 2025, p269

Education: in-year reductions to education spend are envisaged in Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and in Zimbabwe. Adverse impacts on children will be likely, including the most vulnerable and children with disabilities. Education Centrally Managed Programmes (programmes managed at FCDO's UK offices, where accountability sits with departments at headquarters) are continuing with reduced budgets, reducing the scale of education reforms.²⁷

2.3 Statements on 2026 funding replenishments

In 2026, both the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and Education Cannot Wait (ECW) are planning replenishment requests.

Replenishment requests

The [GPE request, covering 2026 to 2030](#), is seeking up to US\$5 billion for the GPE and US\$10 billion in co-financing. If fully funded, it aims to support 750 million children in 96 countries and territories, [primarily in Africa, Asia and Oceania](#). The [GPE seeks to mobilise further capital for education](#), support local training and reforms, and improve accountability.²⁸

In the previous replenishment, [the GPE raised US\\$4.2 billion](#). The UK pledged £430 million (\$600 million) and [is currently the GPE's largest donor](#).

ECW works in crisis and emergency situations, primarily in Africa but including [other situations in Ukraine, Latin America, and Oceania](#).

The [ECW has not published its request for next replenishment](#), covering 2027 to 2030. As of 2026, [the UK is the second-largest donor to the ECW](#) and [pledged £80 million for 2022 to 2026](#). Under the Trump administration, [the US plans to withdraw from the ECW](#), having been its third-largest donor.²⁹ The US State Department [does not set out its reasons for no longer supporting ECW](#).³⁰

Government, APPG and think-tank statements

The chairs of the all-party parliamentary group for education, Bambos Charambolous MP and Lord German, have said that “faced with the task of implementing the cuts to aid”, [the APPG “urge\[s\] the government to make the best use of the funds that remain”](#).³¹

²⁷ FCDO, [Equality impact assessment of Official Development Assistance \(ODA\) programme allocations for 2025 to 2026](#), 2025

²⁸ GPE, [Case for investment, summary](#), 2 October 2025

²⁹ ECW, [Our donors](#)

³⁰ US Department of State on Substack, [Ending the charade of wasteful international organizations](#), 10 January 2026

³¹ Politics Home, [The UK must not walk away from its commitment to education](#), 21 May 2025

As of January 2026, the government has not made spending pledges to either body. In January the FCDO said [its plans are “being determined as part of our multi-year budget allocation process”](#) and outcomes will be published “in due course”.³² The department says [it “remain\[s\] advocates for both”](#) and Baroness Chapman has [described them both as “incredibly effective”](#).³³

2025 analysis from the Center for Global Development [provides an assessment of multilateral funds that donors can invest in](#), writing “GPE offers a specific focus on basic education [and] ECW fills a crucial niche in crisis context”. Other assessed education funds are the International Development Association (part of the World Bank), Unicef and UNESCO.³⁴

2.4 How much aid the UK spend on education?

The UK provided £700 in bilateral aid in 2024

In 2024, the UK provided £700 million in bilateral aid targeted at education. This, along with equivalent figures for the previous few years, breaks down into sub-sectors as in the below table.

UK bilateral aid spending on education, by sub-sector							
£ millions, not adjusted for inflation							
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Education policy and administrative management	147.7	121.3	80.4	103.8	60.9	86.9	424.4
Higher education	102.4	104.5	76.5	99.0	80.8	98.8	83.5
Primary education	219.2	315.0	134.7	85.3	82.3	70.8	56.6
Education facilities and training	8.8	36.8	78.5	56.8	21.9	10.1	51.1
Educational research	34.7	28.0	26.9	23.8	21.9	18.4	21.6
Teacher training	25.3	21.1	22.0	14.4	15.9	16.8	14.5
Basic life skills for adults	20.3	6.4	5.1	9.6	11.2	8.4	14.0
Upper Secondary Education (modified and includes	66.5	87.1	71.4	43.6	32.1	27.0	11.9
Vocational training	30.2	36.1	25.1	10.3	16.8	11.2	11.8
Advanced technical and managerial training	16.6	15.7	12.8	7.9	6.0	8.4	8.1
Early childhood education	4.8	8.4	4.3	1.4	2.6	6.0	2.0
Lower secondary education	-	-	-	-	0.0	0.0	0.1
Basic life skills for youth	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	-	1.0	0.0
Total	676.5	780.5	537.9	456.0	352.4	363.8	699.6

Source: FCDO, [Statistics on International Development: final UK ODA spend 2024](#), 18 September 2025, and earlier editions

³² PQ 101785 [[Global Partnership For Education](#)], 12 January 2026

³³ PQ 95975 [[ECW and GPE: Development Aid](#)], 9 December 2025; HL Deb, [4 November 2025](#), c1811

³⁴ Center for Global Development, [Four criteria for prioritizing education funds](#), May 2025

The bilateral aid total has varied over the years. It fell in every year between 2020 and 2022, but then almost doubled in 2024.

UK support to bilateral organisations

This includes only bilateral aid – that is, aid provided for a specific programme or purpose. The UK also provides contributions to the core budgets of multilateral institutions such as UN agencies or the World Bank, and some of these may also have provided aid for education – for example, the UK provided £7.0 million in multilateral aid to UNESCO in 2024.

The UK also supports [Education Cannot Wait](#), the UN’s fund for education in emergencies and protracted crises. This support does not appear separately in the government’s aid statistics, but [according to Education Cannot Wait’s data](#), the UK provided the equivalent of US\$60.8 million in 2024 and US\$52.5 million in 2025, with a further US\$16.2 million expected to be provided in 2026.

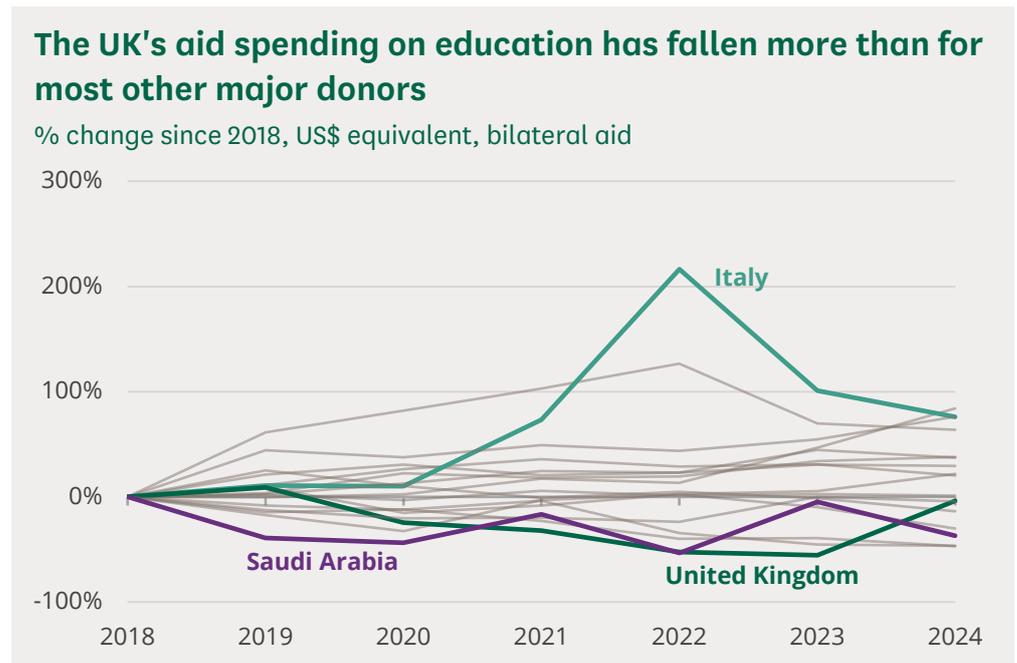
Some bilateral aid is also delivered via multilateral organisations; in 2024, £335 million in bilateral aid was delivered via the Global Partnership for Education, £34 million via the International Finance Facility for Education, and £2 million via UNESCO.

How does UK aid spending compare?

The UK’s levels of aid for education rank highly in international terms – based on [data from the OECD](#) (which is not directly comparable to the FCDO’s figures), the UK provided the equivalent of US\$898 million in 2024 in aid for education, which is the fourth-highest among countries for which the OECD has data. (The top three were Germany, at \$3,009 million, France, at \$1,753 million, and the United States at \$1,541 million.)

However, the UK’s reduction in aid funding for education in recent years has been sharper than for most donors. As the chart below shows, the UK’s aid spending on education more than halved between 2018 and 2023.

The fall for the UK, shown in the below chart, was a larger decrease than for any other major donor (defined here as countries with average education aid spending of over \$100 million per year between 2018 and 2024). The UK’s increase in spending in 2024 went some way toward making up for this.



Note: Grey lines indicate all donors with average education spending of over \$100 million per year between 2018 and 2024.

Source: OECD Data Explorer, [Creditor Reporting System data](#), retrieved 16 January 2026

2.5

How effective is UK spending on education?

Independent Commission for Aid Impact Assessment

In 2022, the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) published [Assessing UK aid's results in education](#), with a particular focus on girl's education. The Commission rated the UK's efforts as Green/Amber, the second highest rating.

The report referenced estimates by the Department for International Development (DFID) that from 2015 to 2020 UK aid supported 15.6 million children gain a "decent education," exceeding a commitment of 11 million. However, the ICAI noted a lack of clear measurement to ensure "decent" schooling in all circumstances. The ICAI concluded that increased global and national efforts are needed [to meet the challenges of improving the quantity and quality of learning globally](#):

Globally, more investment is needed to address the scale of the challenge, and DFID/FCDO could have done more to leverage additional education funding from other sources, but funding will not be enough. FCDO needs to build on its strengths in supporting the capacity of national education systems to ensure

that all of the spending on education in partner countries, not just its own, translates into improved learning.³⁵

The Government [accepted all five of the ICAI's recommendations in its response](#), published in July 2022.

Commons debates since 2021

There have been three debates held on aid and education in the Commons and Westminster Hall since 2021:

- HC Deb, [International Day of Education](#), 22 January 2026, cc241-62WH
- HC Deb, [International Day of Education](#), 23 January 2025, cc418-35WH
- HC Deb, [International day of education](#), 26 January 2023, cc358-73WH
- HC Deb, [UN International day of education](#), 28 January 2021, cc636-56

³⁵ ICAI, [Assessing UK aid's results in education](#), 2022, section 6

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