

Ending Extreme Poverty through Education

Your Impact Report, Fall 2024

What Is Our Opportunity?

2023–2025 EDUCATION FINANCE STRATEGIC VISION

To reach **an additional 8 million children** with **\$135M** in education loans disbursed annually in **27 high-need countries—getting more kids in better schools.**¹

To end extreme poverty tomorrow, we must educate children today.

Primary school students in a low-cost, non-state school in Uganda



Education is a main factor in whether someone will be able to break the generational cycle of poverty—yet 617 million children are not receiving a quality education if they're in school at all. There is a huge gap in funding and support for low-cost, non-state schools, which are critical to filling this education gap.

Opportunity International's response is clear and active: **get more children in better schools**. Our program breaks down two obstacles to education: **access and quality**.

- ▶ **Access** means getting more “seats” and more ways for children to safely attend school. We connect affordable non-state schools with financial institutions which provide **school improvement loans** for school facilities and resources, and we connect parents with financial institutions for **school fee loans** to send all their children to school, even when their family income is irregular.
- ▶ **Quality** means students have a safe, child-centered learning environment using best teaching practices so they can be successful. We work with schools to improve the quality of teaching and learning conditions for students through our **Education Quality** initiative.

ENABLING IMPACT and OUTCOMES

Opportunity's proven three-pronged model of **training, access to financial resources, and group support** ensures more children are learning from well-trained teachers, and schools are providing quality education led by passionate leaders in school facilities that are welcoming, safe, and equitable. The model **blends the sustainability of Education Finance provision with locally driven Education Quality** program for school leaders and teachers, offering a market-driven solution that ensures more children gain access to a quality education. **Key outcomes**—including financial resources, human capital, and thriving connections among school peers—pave the road for **ultimate outcomes** of resilience, individual agency, and the confident success of schools and students.

¹ Updated September 2024

PROGRESS ON OUR WORK IN EDUCATION ACCESS AND QUALITY

Because of your incredible support, Opportunity International offers one of the only programs in the world that addresses both the need for loans to parents *and* school owners, while also deepening the skills of school leaders and teachers. Cumulatively since Opportunity’s program launched in 2012:

14.9 million children



32 countries



\$943M invested in education



At the end of July 2024, the outstanding portfolio of Education Finance partners remains historically high at **\$451.5M**, reflecting a 4% increase year-on-year. Growth has been driven by the inclusion of 28 new financial institutions, contributing an outstanding portfolio of \$71M in the past 12 months. Metrics represent activity from January-July 2024:

Region	Number of Loans*	Loan Value	Active Child Impact
Africa	62,167	\$142.7M	3,508,215
Asia	147,134	\$270.5M	2,007,861
Latin America	130,050	\$36.1M	75,766

*includes School Improvement Loans, School Fee Loans, and others

- ▶ **School improvement loans** continue to be the biggest driver for value of education loans, making up 35% of total disbursements.
- ▶ In **Africa**, Opportunity’s partners in Nigeria together form the largest disbursements, followed by Uganda and Ghana. Loan leaders in **Asia** are India and Indonesia, and in **Latin America**, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic.
- ▶ **School improvement loans** continue to be the biggest driver for value of education loans, making up 35% of total disbursements.

The three-year **EduQuality** program currently supports 3,300 schools in 15 countries, providing professional development opportunities and guidance on school improvement. We recently onboarded 80 schools across Colombia, and we are engaging new school partners in Rwanda and Tanzania.

- ▶ The educational technical assistance team completed training with 30 financial institutions in 12 countries—including Guatemala, India, Kenya, and Malawi—increasing our number of active **financial partners to 117**.
- ▶ Our **School Leadership Academy** workshops empower school owners by educating them on investment opportunities and loan applications and facilitating introductions to financial institutions. Between March and June 2024, 1,277 schools in Tanzania, Zambia, Nigeria, India, DRC, and Uganda participated.
- ▶ **Gender mainstreaming** initiatives increase availability of capital to female school operators and improve educational attainment for girls in school; content on gender equity and inclusion—for learners with different abilities and backgrounds—has been added to our training materials.



USAID PARTNERSHIP: Advancing Partnerships for Improved Learning

Over the next five years in 17 districts in northern Ghana, Opportunity will collaborate with USAID to improve learning outcomes and financing options for low cost, private schools in northern Ghana.

Case Study: Miracle Valley International School *(reported by Jason Amoo, Communications Manager for Ghana Education Finance, September 2024)*

Before becoming a teacher, Sakina Mahamadu worked as a saleswoman, selling carpentry supplies and renting benches. Her transition into education marked a significant career shift driven by a passion for teaching and a desire to make a difference in young minds. *"Growing up, I loved sharing knowledge with others, which motivated me to apply for a teaching position,"* Sakina reflects.



Sakina Mahamadu, teacher in northern Ghana, and her learners. Sakina is taking professional development coursework that advances her abilities as a teacher as well as improves the learning environment for students.

Her journey, however, was not without challenges. As a first-time teacher at Miracle Valley International School, Sakina faced the daunting task of navigating classroom dynamics and student needs. *"There are many challenges in helping young children understand what you are trying to teach them,"* she admits—but Sakina's perseverance and commitment to her students have been unwavering.

The USAID-funded *Advancing Partnerships for Improved Learning* initiative plays a crucial role in addressing the gap in teacher training within low-cost, non-state schools. Over 74% of teachers in schools supported by the initiative do not have the requisite teaching qualifications. **We are expanding access to affordable and relevant teacher certification programs, ultimately enhancing the quality of education delivered in these schools.** One solution? Setting up eight satellite sites in northern Ghana to make professional development courses more accessible for local teachers.



As Sakina continues her studies, the potential for further positive change is significant. With ongoing support from the program, she successfully completed the program in foundational studies and is now enrolled in the Diploma in Basic Education program and is well-positioned to make an even greater impact at Miracle Valley International School. Her journey illustrates the profound effect that well-targeted educational interventions can have on teachers and students alike.

PARTNERSHIPS



Since the launch of our [partnership with Oikocredit](#) in 2021, 17 loans have been disbursed to EduFinance partner financial institutions, with a total approved loan value of \$55M. These loans unlock liquidity barriers that may limit a financial institution's potential to develop and grow a robust EduFinance portfolio investing in the affordable non-state school sector.



We recently surveyed our financial institution partners to understand what they value in our services and to identify their future needs. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the value of Education Finance technical assistance, networking opportunities, and learning sessions. Looking ahead, our partners expressed a desire for increased access to funding, more event participation, and stronger connections with investors.

INDUSTRY LEADERS IN IMPACT

This year, we completed a [three-year quasi-experimental study in Kenya](#) that found children gain as much as half a year equivalent of additional schooling that can be linked to the work of Opportunity's Education Finance program, which includes leader and training professional development and school improvement loans at their schools.

Key Insights

Improved learning Outcomes



- ▶ In **English Literacy**, the study finds that students coming from **lower socioeconomic backgrounds** stand to gain the most from the Education Quality intervention – gaining the equivalent of **0.53 years of school** more than their peers throughout the study period.
- ▶ This outcome is followed closely by **girls**, who gain **0.47 years** of English literacy schooling and **all students gain 0.26 years** from the Education Quality intervention.
- ▶ **Students** attending schools that received a loan **gained 0.24 years** in **Mathematics**, with **girls** benefitting marginally more, **gaining 0.26 years**.

What Is Your Opportunity?

Thank you for your interest in expanding access to quality education for children living in under-resourced areas in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Know that your belief in our work—and, more importantly, your belief in the teachers, parents, and learners we support—enables us to move forward with conviction and momentum. Thanks to the efficiency of our model and our deep partnerships with local financial institutions, **every dollar invested in our education work puts \$10 to work in local education.**

We are advancing the fight to eradicate poverty through education.