

Education Finance: Increasing Access to Quality Education

Your Impact Report, Fall 2025

Opportunity International's Education Finance work is rooted in the data-driven premise that access to quality schools increases when schools have access to both capital—for schools and parents—and training for school leaders and teachers.

EXPANDING OUR REACH

Two clear objectives fuel the complex and far-reaching work of Education Finance:

1. **Increase access to education** by accelerating investments into local, affordable schools serving low-income communities.
2. **Improve the quality of education** by equipping school proprietors with training and resources and by providing professional training to teachers, impacting teaching practices and learning outcomes.

As we approach the end of our three-year strategic plan, we are thrilled to share our progress. Thanks to the hard work of our Opportunity-supported schools, leaders, and teachers; our best-in-class staff; and our supporters, we are reaching more children than ever. We have met—and in most cases, exceeded—our FY25 goals prior to year end:

	FY25Q3	FY25 Target
Objective 1: Increase Investment		
Total capital released	\$196M	\$135M
Incremental children reached	3.5M	3.4M
Financial service partners	208	163
Objective 2: Improve Quality		
Schools participating in Education Quality	4,508	3,050
Education Quality schools reporting improvements	82%	55%
Teachers improving teaching practices	59%	60%
Student learning outcome gains	9%	N/A

- The active outstanding education portfolio includes **\$578 million** in education loans, **94%** ahead of targets – spurred by the massive growth of \$196 million loaned out just this year.
- The Education Quality program is working with **4,508 schools**, **representing a 47% increase** in the last three years, reaching many more students at lower cost.
- **82% of schools are improving in quality**, a much faster rate than in the past.
- Our reporting shows that **59% of teachers are improving teaching practices and students are learning 9% more** in a school participating in the EduQuality program. Our goal is to continue to improve these outcomes.

Education Financial Products

Africa

- Completed technical assistance with five new financial institution partners.
- Expanded education financial products into two new countries—Burkina Faso and Benin—to support Oikocredit collaboration partners.
- Approved three new financial institution partnerships in the DRC (2) and Ethiopia (1).
- Hosted 11 School Leadership Academy workshops in Ghana, connecting over 450 low-cost school leaders to local financial institution partners.
- Conducted 15 School Leadership Academy workshops in Malawi (4) and Uganda (11) as part of a joint project with Opportunity International's Agriculture Finance team to support rural communities.
- Launched data collection to better understand the profiles and needs of childcare providers in Kenya.

Asia

- Conducted School Leadership Academies in northwest India in Jodhpur and Suratgarh, engaging 190 schools.
- Supported financial institution lending in technical and vocational education and training to de-risk and maintain portfolio quality despite low placement rates.
- Building a strong pipeline of financial institutions in Indonesia following a national roadshow earlier in the year.

Latin America

- Structured and deployed pre-investment activities in Colombia and Ecuador to implement technical assistance for Early Childhood Development with a focus in immigrants and internally displaced people.
- Completed technical assistance with Fondesa (Fund for Development) in Dominican Republic.
- Promoted and coordinated an international interchange between financial partners Cosami (Guatemala) and Fundacion Paraguaya (Paraguay).
- Completed field mission in Guatemala to implement the technical equipment financing initiative, supporting three financial institution partners.



Education Quality

Quality education remains a persistent challenge for many schools in Ghana. Opportunity International's Education Quality program provides schools with practical and actionable tools to improve learning outcomes for students who need it most. *"I saw this as an opportunity to restructure and improve our school. This program will open bigger doors for schools like ours."*

Ebenezer Gafa, Kings and Queens Preparatory School

Education Quality

- 1,775 schools completed the 3-year program; 1,035 expected to complete by end of FY26; and 2,210 newly onboarded in FY25.
- Despite the termination of USAID funding in Northern Ghana, thanks to rapid response funding from our donors, we continued to serve 212 schools in Northern Ghana through our Education Quality program.
- We are launching Education work in Malawi, starting with the School Leadership Academy. With this workshop, 230 schools were identified and 180 will be onboarded to the Education Quality program under the joint project with Opportunity International's Agriculture Finance team to support rural communities.

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF POVERTY THROUGH INNOVATION

The work of Opportunity's CoLab—our in-house innovation hub focused on human-centered designed digital solutions—produced two tools that are currently being tested by a small number of participants in schools in Ghana and Kenya, with plans for expansion based on learnings and feedback:

1. Teachers face the challenge of meeting each student's unique learning needs while adhering to standardized curricula. Enter The Teacher's Assistant, an innovative Android application designed to revolutionize the way educators approach lesson planning and student engagement (Ghana).

The time-saving digital "coach" helps teachers build customizable lesson plans, improving a student's experience, engagement, and learning outcomes.

2. MySchool uses AI to search Opportunity's 18-module guide for school leaders, *Pathways to Excellence*, enabling leaders to build and implement school improvement plans to increase student success (Kenya).

Transformational

"The EduQuality Program has been transformative for us," said Ms. Wilfrida Chepkorkor Alukulem of Hillside Riwo Academy in Kenya. "Our operational budget and strategic planning have improved, allowing us to allocate resources more effectively and create a safer, more supportive environment for our students."



"One of the things that's become more apparent to us and to funders is solving the access problem is only half of the issue. If you talk about the global education deficit by number of kids, there's more kids that are sitting in the class but not learning than are not in school."

*About five years ago, we launched an **education quality** program to come alongside of the financial support for school leaders and teachers which is not just about getting more capital into schools, but about improving the quality of the schools. And both are still very much needed in many of the markets that we work in."*

Andrew McCusker, Head of Education Finance, Opportunity International



If you're interested in reading more about Opportunity International's client-centric application of technology, read Leading an AI Revolution for the Poor by Opportunity International CEO Atul Tandon: *"I believe we can end extreme poverty within our lifetime."*

LEADING THROUGH LISTENING

Women School Proprietors in Kenya

We surveyed over 600 school owners, split evenly between men and women in Kenya's Nyanza, Western, and Coast regions who had participated in our School Leadership Academy (2023-2025), to determine any gender-based differences.

After attending the Academy training, the number of women school owners planning to apply for a loan nearly doubled—from 47% before the training to 81% after. About 40% of women school owners surveyed had never accessed any type of loan prior—highlighting a gap in financial inclusion and a significant opportunity for outreach. The most cited reasons for unsuccessful loan applications among women were poor cash flow (often due to uncollected school fees) and existing debt, with 44% reporting that 30–50% of student fees remain unpaid annually.

School Leadership Academies in Ghana

School Leadership Academy workshops bring unbanked schools together with financial institutions and provide training to build capacity to run financially sustainable quality schools, and to learn about financial products available to support their institutions. At a series of recent Academies in Ghana we captured some helpful data:

- The average low-cost non-state school in Ghana serves 239 pupils and employs 15 teachers, with most offering basic education (kindergarten to junior high).
- 51% of schools have no income sources beyond tuition fees, making them highly vulnerable to fluctuations in fee collection and enrollment.
- 70% of schools use manual bookkeeping, limiting their ability to produce audit-ready financial records, which are essential for accessing credit.
- If given access to a loan, 36% would build classrooms, 20% would buy school buses, and 9% would purchase furniture, demonstrating a need to make room for more students.
- 67% of schools have never taken a formal loan; nearly 30% of schools do not have a bank account.

MULTIPLYING IMPACT

We see a multiplier effect every day in our work: our work with one school proprietor could impact 15 teachers and over 200 children just in one school—not to mention the mentorship that proprietor could offer to peer schools. Every education loan impacts many people beyond the loan recipient—families can send all their children to school; those schools can build more classrooms to welcome more students.

You play a part in the multiplier effect: for every dollar invested in our education work, \$10 is loaned out locally. Thanks to your generous support, transformational opportunities reach our neighbors living in the deepest poverty, creating a path to sustainable livelihoods.

Thank you for believing that all children deserve access to quality education. In the words of Ghana school proprietor Florence Ajesunu, “*We let children explore with toys to build their thinking and confidence. Our goal is to give them a solid foundation.*”

Thank you for making a strong foundation possible.