VOA NEWS · EDUCATION

UN highlights what it calls “learning poverty” in Afghanistan

联合国警示阿富汗的“学习贫困”



图：UNICEF 称，女童中学禁令和 learning poverty 是阿富汗教育的两大问题。 (AP Photo / VOA)

今日导读

联合国儿童基金会指出，阿富汗教育正陷入更深的危机：除了女童被禁止接受中学和大学教育，更隐蔽的问题是 learning poverty——许多孩子即使上了学，到 10 岁仍读不懂一段简单的文字。对雅思考生来说，这是典型的教育类外刊：既有清晰的核心概念，也有可直接用于大作文的因果与对比表达。

约 466 词 · 适合雅思阅读 / 大作文教育类话题 · 2026年11月18日刊发

ANNOTATED TEXT

Afghanistan's education system is facing a deepening crisis[1], with the United Nations warning that the quality of education is deteriorating[2] as millions of girls remain barred from[3] secondary schools and universities.

Daniel Timme, Chief of Communications at UNICEF Afghanistan, told VOA that a major problem facing Afghanistan's education system, besides the ban on girls' education, is "learning poverty,"[4] which refers to children's inability to read and understand a simple text by age 10.

"The two most pressing issues[5] in the education sector are certainly the ban on adolescent girls attending secondary school and the general problem of learning poverty," said Timme.

A joint UNESCO and UNICEF report in 2025, based on 2022 data, said that more than 90 percent of 10-year-old children in Afghanistan were unable to read even a simple text.

"Learning poverty in Afghanistan is among the highest globally," the report concluded, "with 93 percent of children at the end of primary unable to read and comprehend[6] a simple age-appropriate[7] text."

"What is especially worrying is that this problem exists regardless of whether[8] children attend school," Timme said.

According to a U.N. statement early this month, of the 11.5 million Afghan primary school-age children, only 6.6 million are enrolled in formal primary schools in 2025.

The report said that although the enrolment of primary-age children is higher than it was in 2022, when the Taliban took power, it has not kept pace with[9] the growing primary school-age population.

"The priority is to expand the education system's capacity fast enough to meet growing demand," the report added.

After returning to power in August 2021, the Taliban banned girls' secondary and tertiary education[10] in Afghanistan, with primary education the only level of formal schooling accessible to girls. Despite this, girls' enrollment in primary schools remains lower than boys' enrollment.

According to a U.N. report released in October, some 2.9 million girls were enrolled in formal primary schools last year, while 3.7 million boys were enrolled.

Timme said that improving the quality of learning should be a top priority.

"More importantly, we need to train teachers and ensure that they can provide quality education," he added.

The U.N. report noted several challenges affecting the quality of education, including an acute lack of[11] qualified teachers, particularly female teachers, inadequate teaching and learning resources, ineffective assessment and monitoring mechanisms, and significant deficiencies in school infrastructure.

The report also said that "Nearly half of schools lack essential facilities such as clean water, sanitation or heating, while over 1,000 schools remain closed due to conflict or damage. Climate shocks and displacement further disrupt continuity, exacerbating inequities[12] in access and outcomes."

Timme said improving school conditions matters because schools are places where children learn but also "develop social skills, learn to interact with others and begin to understand their roles in society."

VOCABULARY NOTES • 词汇注解

1 **deepening crisis**
不断加深的危机。比 a crisis 更强调：问题还在往下走，没有稳住。

2 **deteriorating**
（v.）恶化、质量下降。the quality is deteriorating 是外刊写“变差”的常用说法。

3 **barred from**
被禁止进入、被挡在门外。比 banned from 更常见于正式书面语。

4 **learning poverty**
学习贫困：到 10 岁仍读不懂一段简单文字。本文核心概念，写作可直接用。

5 **pressing issues**
紧迫问题。the most pressing issue is… 是大作文里很好用的句式。

6 **comprehend**
（v.）理解，比 understand 更正式。常与 read and comprehend 成对出现。

7 **age-appropriate**
符合该年龄段的。an age-appropriate text 就是“适合这个年纪读的文本”。

8 **regardless of whether**
不论是否。后面直接接从句：regardless of whether children attend school。

9 **kept pace with**
跟上……的步伐。has not kept pace with 表示增长或改善跟不上变化。

10 **tertiary education**
高等教育（大学及以上）。教育类固定分层：primary / secondary / tertiary。

11 **an acute lack of**
严重缺乏。acute 强调问题又急又重，比 a lack of 语气更强。

12 **exacerbating inequities**
加剧不公平。exacerbate 是雅思高分词，意为“使已有问题更严重”。

长难句拆解

"Climate shocks and displacement further disrupt continuity, exacerbating inequities in access and outcomes."

主干是 Climate shocks and displacement disrupt continuity（气候冲击和流离失所打断了教育的连续性）。后面的 exacerbating… 是现在分词作结果状语，说明“打断连续性”带来的结果：加剧了入学机会和学习结果上的不平等。displacement 指因冲突或灾害而被迫离开家园。

表达积累 · 可直接用于雅思写作

- **facing a deepening crisis**
  正面临不断加深的危机
- **remain barred from**
  仍然被挡在……门外
- **the two most pressing issues**
  两个最紧迫的问题
- **among the highest globally**
  在全球范围内位居最高之列
- **has not kept pace with**
  未能跟上……的步伐
- **an acute lack of**
  严重缺乏
- **exacerbating inequities in access and outcomes**
  加剧了机会与结果上的不平等

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