World Bank Education Update

July 2, 2021 Edition

Dear colleagues,

It has been an intense second quarter of 2021 in the Education sphere. We have all been working extremely hard to get children back to school and to reboot learning during COVID-19. I thought you might find useful a summary of our activities during the first half of 2021 in support of developing countries' response to the impact of COVID-19 on Education. Please feel free to reach out to Kristyn Schrader-King (kschrader@worldbank.org) if you would like to know more about any of these or other activities, or if we can help you by providing insights from our experts or other information.

Wishing you all a good summer!

Best regards,

Jaime Saavedra

Global Director for Education, World Bank

In Focus:

- **Learning Data Compact:** As part of the joint UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank Mission: Recovering Education 2021, a high-level virtual panel discussion held on July 1st underscored the urgency of more and better learning data for countries to both address the Learning Poverty crisis and understand the magnitude of losses experienced by students as a consequence of the pandemic. The learning crisis has to be solved urgently, but focusing on learning has a precondition that countries know how their children and youth are performing. Enabling the global, regional, and national monitoring of learning is essential to implement appropriate policy measures to accelerate learning. The event discussed the large and persistent learning data gaps that hinder the monitoring of global and national progress towards SDG4 and proposes a way forward: UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank launched a global commitment towards a "Learning Data Compact" to ensure that all countries have quality learning data by 2025.
    - Event (including the recording of the two hour session in both English and French)

- o [Announcement: Learning Data Compact – UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank Unite to End the Learning Data Crisis](#)
- o Updated [Ending Learning Poverty](#) + [Learning Poverty Measure](#) websites
- o [Technical Note](#) documenting what's new in the July 2021 Learning Poverty database
- o Latest [Learning Poverty country-level briefs](#)
- o Latest [Learning Poverty database](#) achieved in the Development Data Hub
- o PowerPoints from event on the [latest Learning Poverty data](#) ([French](#) and [Spanish](#) versions) and the [Learning Data Compact](#) ([Spanish](#))

- **Learning Poverty in MENA:** On June 29, 2021, Queen Rania Foundation hosted the launch of the World Bank's report ***Advancing Arabic Language Teaching and Learning: A Path to Reducing Learning Poverty in Middle East and North Africa (MENA)***. The [report](#) identifies and explores factors affecting teaching and learning Arabic in the region, and proposes a path for MENA countries to make them more effective. Speakers at the event included the World Bank's Vice President for MENA, the CEO of Queen Rania Foundation, the World Bank's Global Director for Education, Jordan's Minister of Education, and high-level ministerial representatives from the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, and Morocco. In total, over 240 participants joined the webinar. [[event with Queen Rania Foundation](#) + [press release](#) + [social media / video](#)]

- [**Accelerator Program**](#) **meeting**: On June 17, the World Bank and UNICEF cohosted an "*Accelerator Program Exchange Forum*" to connect Ministers, Vice Ministers, and delegations from the six Accelerators in Africa: Kenya, Mozambique, Niger, Edo State (Nigeria), Rwanda and Sierra Leone. Since all Accelerators share

a strong political and financial commitment to reduce Learning Poverty, the event allowed the African Accelerators to introduce themselves and their programs to one another and share lessons learned. Given their strong support for the Accelerator initiative, USAID and FCDO also shared advice from their experience. If you would like to learn more about the Accelerator initiative, please ask!

- **Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel (GEEAP) meeting:** In late 2020, the new Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel (GEEAP) came out with user-friendly recommendations for policymakers on the Smart Buys for improving learning for all children in low- and middle-income countries, based on the latest evaluation research. The GEEAP is an independent multidisciplinary panel of 12 leading global education experts, convened last year by UK FCDO and the World Bank and now co-chaired by Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee and Professor Kwame Akyeampong. Now, the GEEAP is back at work. It met in June to begin discussing its next set of recommendations – on how governments can most effectively get all children into school after COVID and help them recover lost learning, while also making systems more equitable and resilient. These recommendations will come out later this year, together with an update of the Smart Buys report that incorporates new evidence and additional areas like school health. Finally, the GEEAP plans to publish short position papers on other topics confronting policymakers – so please send us your topic suggestions.

- **IDA20:** The IDA20 replenishment process was launched in April 2021 to support countries in their recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and transition to green, resilient, and inclusive development. Human Capital has been introduced as a new Special Theme as part of the IDA20 replenishment process, which has been brought forward by a year due to COVID-19. The Education GP has been actively engaged in the preparation of this Special Theme paper, including the formulation of a set of Policy Commitments that aim to respond to the COVID-19 emergency as well as drive a robust and accelerated recovery. The IDA20 replenishment will conclude in December 2021 with a policy and financial package to support 74 countries between July 2022 and June 2025.

- **Acting Now report:** On March 17, the report *Acting Now to Protect the Human Capital of our Children: The Costs of and Response to COVID-19 Pandemic's Impact on the Education Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean* was launched. The report is a regional call for action to all governments in the region to raise awareness about the dimension of the education tragedy in LAC due to the pandemic. It argues that there is no time to waste: countries must act now, preparing for the safe and effective reopening of schools nationwide, protecting the necessary funding and ensuring critical learning remediation strategies and policies are implemented as soon as possible. All these actions should be carried out while seizing opportunities to build back better education systems in the longer run. The report is having an impressive uptake in countries and regionally, with subsequent dissemination events and policy and operational

engagements building on its recommendations. It has received media coverage in more than 13 countries in the region through more than 80 media outlets thus far. On April 15, the report was discussed in a [joint event with the Inter-American Dialogue](#), which can be viewed in [Spanish](#), [English](#), and [Portuguese](#). It has also been covered in the [NY Times](#) and [The Economist](#). The report is available in Spanish and English, and the Executive Summary has been translated into French and Portuguese. [[press release](#) + [blog](#) + [social media](#)]

- ***[Ending Learning Poverty and Building Skills: Investing in Education from Early Childhood to Lifelong Learning](#)***: The Education Global Practice's new booklet describes the World Bank's education strategy, providing an overview of the types of projects we support governments on, and our partnerships and global initiatives designed to impact the future of learning.

New reports / initiatives:

- **June 28:** The **[Global Education Recovery Tracker](#)** is a collaboration of WB Education GP, Hopkins, and UNICEF with more partners being considered. It went [live in March](#) and an [event](#)

was held on June 28. Data is continuously updated as it becomes available. The goal in setting up the Tracker is to monitor the impact of schooling disruptions by collecting data on ongoing and emerging issues. Using publicly available information collected on an ongoing basis from country teams, the GERT has evolved to include: (1) where schools are open/closed; (2) what modalities of learning are ongoing; (3) who is prioritized to return; (4) which countries are vaccinating teachers; (5) what remedial catch up looks like; and (6) whether learning losses are underway (visualization of indicators on the website is evolving, but is already available to download).

- **June 8: *Learning Recovery after [#COVID19](#) in Europe and Central Asia: Policy and Practice*** report launch [[blog](#) + [report](#) + [social media](#)] – The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant damage to human capital development across Europe and Central Asia. Lengthy periods of school closure have resulted in major learning losses among school-age children, particularly those living in poverty and those from ethnic minorities.

- **May 28: *Getting back to learning: key policy actions for reopening schools*** launch [[blog](#) + [webpage](#) + [social media](#) + [video](#)] – To support countries' reopening efforts, our team at the Bank's Education Global Practice has developed a package of short Policy Action Notes that curate evidence and examples around essential policy actions and provide choices for different contexts during both remote and in-person instruction.

- **May 12:** [Global Education Policy Dashboard (GEPD)](#) launch – While a good sense of what works to close learning gaps is emerging, policymakers – and more generally stakeholders in education – need information about what the key barriers to learning are in their country context. The GEPD offers policymakers an easy-to-use, quick, and cost-effective tool for tracking key drivers of learning throughout the system in low- and middle-income countries.

- **April 29: World Bank – Financial Times Blog Competition** winners announced [[FT Special Report](#), including [blog](#) and [President Malpass op-ed](#) + [social media](#)]

- **April 27: *[Primer on Large-Scale Assessments of Educational Achievement](#)* [event](#) + [blog](#)** – Building a strong education system that promotes learning for all is fundamental to a country's development and economic growth. Among the different actions that can strengthen the quality of an education system, regular, large-scale assessments of student achievement levels – when done well – can be particularly relevant and cost-effective.

- **March 30: [Mission: Recovering Education in 2021](#) launch [[blog](#) + [brief](#) + [social media](#) + brochure ([English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#))]** – The World Bank, UNESCO, and UNICEF launched a joint Mission focused on three priorities: bringing all children back to schools, recovering learning losses, and preparing and supporting teachers.

- **March 4: *[Better Jobs and Brighter Futures: Investing in Childcare to Build Human Capital](#)* report launch** – More than 40

percent of all children below primary-school age – or nearly 350 million – need childcare but do not have access, according to a new World Bank report launched today. As a result, too many children are spending time in unsafe and unstimulating environments.

Upcoming Events:

- **July 14 (8:30 – 10 am): Loud and Clear: Effective Language of Instruction Policies for Foundational Skills** report launch – Given the large numbers of students being taught globally in languages that they do not understand, massive learning improvements are feasible by teaching in a small number of additional languages. This discussion will present the World Bank's first Policy Approach Paper on Language of Instruction, "Loud and Clear: Effective Language of Instruction Policies for Learning", to outline its position and recommendations. Join us for the live conversation on July 14! [Event link](#)

LOUD AND CLEAR:
EFFECTIVE LANGUAGE OF
INSTRUCTION POLICIES
FOR LEARNING

Wednesday, July 14, 2021
8:30 AM – 10:00 AM (EDT)

The World Bank's focus on foundational skills requires that issues of language and Language of Instruction (LoI) be brought to the forefront of education policy discussions. Poor Language of Instruction policies harm learning, access, equity, cost-effectiveness, and inclusion. Yet nearly 37% of students in low- and middle-income countries are taught in a language they don't understand. Given the large numbers of students being taught in languages that they do not understand globally, massive learning improvements are feasible by teaching in a small number of additional languages.

This event will present the World Bank's first Policy Approach Paper on Language of Instruction to outline its position and recommendations. The Paper also offers an indication of the work that will be undertaken to support countries in introducing reforms that will result in more resilient, equitable, and effective systems by promoting teaching in the languages that students and teachers speak and understand best.

SPEAKERS

- World Bank Senior Officials:
  - Mamta Murthi, Vice President, Human Development, World Bank Group
  - Ousmane Diagana, Vice President, West and Central Africa, World Bank Group
  - Jaime Saavedra, Global Director, Education, World Bank Group
- Ministers of Education (TBC)
- High Level Specialists on Language and Learning (TBC)

Formal invitation including final list of panelists,
connection details, and registration forthcoming

WORLD BANK GROUP

Blogs / Podcasts:

- The Teachers team is pleased to announce a new podcast that will feature conversations with educators, practitioners, and researchers about teaching. Please subscribe on *Apple* and *Spotify*.

- *Podcast (Apple | Spotify)*: Reducing Learning Poverty and Improving Foundational Learning: The Magic of Sobral, Brazil

- *Podcast (Apple | Spotify)*: Structuring Effective One-to-One Support Systems for Teachers: Lessons from South Africa

- *Blog*: Transforming how Teachers use Technology

- *Blog*: Scaling up Quality Early Childhood Education: What Gets Measured Gets Done

- *Blog*: Getting Back to Learning: Key Policy Actions for Reopening Schools

- *Blog*: How can Countries Implement Low Tech Remote Learning? Using the Experiences from Edu Radio and Edu TV in Sierra Leone and Pakistan to Develop Knowledge Packs

- *Blog*: Mapping the Road to Recovery: How a New Venture helps Track Learning in the Wake of the Pandemic

See Education for Global Development for all blogs posted by the Education Global Practice.

Country Results Stories:

- **Pakistan:** [Thinking Inside the 'Box': Pakistan Turns to Education TV During COVID-19](#)
- **Sierra Leone / Pakistan:** [How can countries implement low tech remote learning? Using the experiences from Edu Radio and Edu TV in Sierra Leone and Pakistan to develop Knowledge Packs](#)
- **Bangladesh:** [Keeping Bangladesh's Students Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- **Costa Rica:** [Improving Higher Education Enrollment and Graduate Outcomes in Costa Rica](#)
- **Sierra Leone:** [Protecting Children from Learning Loss: Sierra Leone's Experience with Distance Learning and Keeping All Students Safe](#)
- **Afghanistan:** [Expanding Connectivity to Pave the Way for Digital Transformation in Afghanistan](#)
- **Ghana:** [Increasing Access to Quality Secondary Education to the Poorest Districts: Ghana's Experience with Results Based Financing in Education](#)

Projects (January – June 2021):

- **June 25:** Pakistan: [Securing Human Investments to Foster Transformation II](#)
- **June 25:** St. Vincent and the Grenadines: [Supplemental Financing to the Fiscal Reform and Resilience DPC Series](#)
- **June 25:** Burundi: [Skills for Jobs: Women and Youth Project](#)
- **June 25:** Lesotho: [Nutrition and Health System Strengthening Project](#)
- **June 25:** Haiti: [Promoting an Efficient Education System in Haiti](#)
- **June 24: South Asia:** [Higher Education Acceleration Transformation Project](#)
- **June 24:** Peru: [Investing in Human Capital DPF II](#)
- **June 23:** [Enhancing the Foundation of Learning](#)
- **June 17: Guyana:** [Education Sector Program Project](#)
- **June 17: India:** [Supporting Andhra's Learning Transformation](#)
- **June 16: Somalia:** [Education for Human Capital Development Project](#)
- **June 11: Nepal:** [Nurturing Excellence in Higher Education Program for Results](#)
- **June 11: Sierra Leone:** [Accountable Governance for Basic Service Delivery](#)
- **June 10: The Gambia:** [Additional Financing for the Education Sector Support Program Project](#)
- **June 4: Democratic Republic of Congo:** [STEP Third Additional Financing](#)
- **June 3: Malawi:** [Skills for A Vibrant Economy Project](#)
- **May 27: Tanzania:** [Higher Education for Economic Transformation Project](#)
- **May 27: Tanzania:** [Digital Tanzania Project](#)

- **May 20: India:** [Facilitating School to Word Transition](#)
- **May 20: Ethiopia:** [Enhancing Shared Prosperity through Equitable Services (ESPES) Second Additional Financing](#)
- **May 20: Bangladesh:** [Accelerating and Strengthening Skills for Economic Transformation (ASSET)](#)
- **May 17: Zambia:** [Second Additional Financing for Girls' Education and Women's Empowerment and Livelihood Project - COVID 19 Scale-up of Social Cash](#)
- **May 7: Ethiopia:** [Additional Financing to GEQIP-E for Refugees Integration](#)
- **May 6: Senegal:** [Additional Financing for the Quality Improvement and Equity of Basic Education Project](#)
- **May 5: Ukraine:** [Improving Higher Education for Results Project](#)
- **April 29: Angola:** [Girls Empowerment and Learning for All Project](#)
- **April 29: Romania:** [Safer, Inclusive and Sustainable Schools](#)
- **April 27: Central African Republic:** [Education Sector Plan Support Project](#)
- **April 19: Cameroon:** [Third Fiscal Consolidation and Inclusive Growth DPO](#)
- **April 10: Nicaragua:** [Additional Financing for the Alliance for Education Quality Project](#)
- **April 2: Liberia:** [Learning Foundations Project](#)
- **March 30: Western Africa:** [Regional Sahel Pastoralism Support Project II](#)
- **March 29: Afghanistan:** [EQRA Additional Financing](#)
- **March 26: Mozambique:** [Improving Learning and Empowering Girls in Mozambique](#)

- **March 24: India:** [Gujarat Outcomes for Accelerated Learning (GOAL)](#)
- **March 18: Lao PDR:** [Global Partnership for Education III: Learning and Equity Acceleration Project](#)
- **March 3: Sao Tome and Principe:** [Social Protection and Skills Development Project Additional Financing](#)
- **March 2: Ethiopia:** [Additional Financing to General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP-E)](#)
- **February 23: China:** [Hunan Subnational Governance and Rural Public Service Delivery Program for Results](#)
- **February 23: Mali:** [Improving Education Quality and Results for All Project (MIQRA)](#)
- **February 11: Chad:** [COVID-19 Education Emergency Response GPE Project](#)
- **February 5: Sierra Leone:** [AF for COVID-19 Response under the Free Education Project](#)
- **January 25: Guyana:** [Additional Financing to the Guyana Secondary Education Improvement Project](#)
- **January 21: Marshall Islands:** [RMI Education and Skills Strengthening Project](#)
- **January 12: Burkina Faso:** [Improving Education of Children with Disabilities](#)
- **January 12: Lebanon:** [Emergency Crisis and COVID-19 Response Social Safety Net Project](#)

See [Projects](#) website for all World Bank projects.