How productive will the world’s children be when they are 18?

The Human Capital Index (HCI) measures the human capital that a child born today can expect to attain by her 18th birthday, given the risks to poor health and poor education that prevail in the country where she lives. It measures her expected productivity as a future worker, relative to the benchmark of complete education and full health.

The graph below provides one snapshot of what this means for the world’s children. It shows the share of the world’s population of children under the age of 5 living in each country in the world, sorted from low-to-high values of the HCI. The vertical arrow is positioned at Morocco, where the HCI is 0.5. The graph shows that 56 percent of the world’s children live in 60 countries such as Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, and Pakistan, with HCI scores below 0.5. In these countries, the future productivity – or potential lifetime earnings as future workers – of children will be less than half of what it could be if they enjoyed complete education and full health.

56 percent of children will lose more than half their potential lifetime earnings because governments are not currently making effective investments in their people to ensure a healthy, educated, and resilient population ready for the workplace of the future.