

Backgrounder for new World Bank Reports:

“Realizing the Future of Learning: From Learning Poverty to Learning for Everyone, Everywhere” ***“Reimagining Human Connections: Technology & Innovation at the World Bank”***

Key message #1: COVID19 has led to the worst education crisis in a century. The pandemic has massively disrupted education delivery and aggravated a pre-existing global learning crisis. This generation of students may never achieve their full education and earnings potential and countries will lose essential human capital required to sustain long-term economic growth.

- Before the pandemic, the world was already tackling a learning crisis, with 53 percent of children in low- and middle-income countries living in Learning Poverty, that is, being unable to read and understand a simple age-appropriate text by age 10.
- The massive school closures and the ensuing economic recession caused by COVID19 are likely to increase learning poverty to 63 percent, pushing an additional 72 million primary school-age children into learning poverty (for a total of 382 million learning poor children in LICs and MICs), and putting countries further off-track to eliminate learning poverty and achieve the SDGs.
- Without swift and bold action to recover and accelerate learning, this generation of students is at risk of losing about \$10 trillion in future life-time earnings, the equivalent to almost 10 percent of global GDP. Bold action today to recover learning losses and build back better is more urgent than ever.

Key message #2: While COVID19 poses huge challenges, the crisis can be turned into a catalyst for transforming and reimagining education and chart a path to realize the “Future of learning”.

- In responding to the pandemic, education systems have rapidly implemented innovations in multi-modal remote learning at-scale, combining online resources with radio, TV, mobile, as well as printed materials for the most vulnerable. However, the huge digital divides and inequalities in the quality of parental support and home learning environments is amplifying learning inequality.
- The pandemic has highlighted that *resilience and equity in education are two sides of the same coin*.
- Yet the significant investments in remote learning at scale and innovations to improve teaching can be a launching pad to build back better, more equitable, effective and resilient education systems, where all children learn with joy, rigor, and purpose in school and beyond the school walls.
- To this end, it is critical to empower families to support their children’s learning by increasing the quantity and quality of the learning resources available in the home, providing support to parents and caregivers, as well as get their buy-in and commitment to new models of education delivery.

Key message #3: Visionary and bold action is needed today to recover and rebuild stronger, to start realizing a vision where all children learn with joy, rigor, and purpose in school and beyond school walls. While there is no single path toward the future of learning, Countries can chart their own path with political commitment to carry out investments and reforms in five pillars, ensuring that:

1. *Learners are prepared and motivated to learn*—with a stronger emphasis on whole-child development and ensuring all children engage in learning that is personalized, inclusive, holistic,

and relevant to their realities in-and-beyond the school, starting with quality preschool, early stimulation, and nutrition.

2. *Teachers are effective and valued*—and ready to take on an increasingly complex role of facilitators of learning at and beyond the school and are provided with the training and holistic support they need to play this role, including on the effective use of education technology. This requires a meritocratic career path and continuing support through practical training that focuses on the quality of instruction.
3. *Learning resources, including curricula, are diverse and high-quality*—to support good pedagogical practices and personalized learning that ensure that every student is taught at the level she needs.
4. *Schools are safe and inclusive spaces*—with a whole-and-beyond-the-school approach and resources to leave no child behind and create an environment free from discrimination, violence, and bullying.
5. *Education systems are well-managed*—with school leaders who spur effective pedagogy and a competent educational bureaucracy adept at managing using technology, data, and evidence.

Key message #4: Countries can effectively harness the power of education technology—or “EdTech,” encompassing hardware, software, digital content, data, and information systems—to support and enrich teaching and learning and improve education management and delivery.

- While not a magic bullet, education technology can be used to effectively expand access to learning both inside and outside of the classroom, building more resilient systems that personalize learning at and beyond the school; that is, that ensure continuity of learning between the school and the home.
- Investments in EdTech can pay off if ministries of education ensure they are:
 - ✓ Embedded in broad, sustainable policies and programs that enable schools and education systems to provide blended in-person and multi-modal remote learning;
 - ✓ Geared to empower and support – not replace- teachers, so they are prepared to navigate distance learning and personalize instruction in and beyond the school; and
 - ✓ Oriented toward assessing if children are learning and using data to develop early warning mechanisms to identify and help children who are at risk of dropping out or falling behind.

Key message #5: With an ambitious and well-grounded vision for the future of learning, the World Bank has stepped up its support to countries to lay the groundwork today to build back better more equitable, effective, and resilient education systems.

- The Bank is supporting 92 education-related projects with COVID-19 response investments in 62 countries, totaling US\$10.5 billion in both new and restructured projects and covering the entire cycle from early childhood to higher education, and supporting the appropriate, cost-effective use of EdTech for expanding access and improving learning for all students.
- So far, these COVID-related efforts are reaching over 400 million students and 16 million teachers—about one-third of the student population and nearly a quarter of the teacher workforce in current client countries.
- The Bank’s overall new commitments in education during the 2020 fiscal year reached US\$5.2 billion, the largest figure ever, which adds to an active education portfolio of \$20.6 billion.
- In charting and supporting implementation of these investments and reforms, the Bank is guided by five principles that capture common tenets in high-performing systems: (i) Pursue systemic reform that focuses on learning; (ii) Promote inclusion and equity, through a progressive path to universalism in access to a quality education; (iii) Measure results and base policy on evidence; (iv) Assure the needed political and financial commitment; and (v) Effectively harness technology to support learning.

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