EDUCATION OVERVIEW

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CONTEXT

Education is a powerful driver of development and is one of the strongest instruments for reducing poverty and improving health, gender equality, peace, and stability. Although there has been great progress in the last decade—many more children attend schools and girls’ education has markedly improved—124 million children are still out of primary and lower secondary school and 250 million cannot read or write although many have been to school.

Education has large, consistent returns in terms of income and counters widening inequality, but this potential is too often unrealized due to alarmingly low learning levels. Providing all children with a quality education that teaches them skills for work is critical to end poverty by 2030.

STRATEGY

The World Bank is committed to supporting countries that request financing or technical assistance to be able to reach Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which calls for access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030. It helped draft and is a signatory to the Education 2030 Framework for Action, which will guide countries through the implementation of SDG4.

To make this vision a reality, the World Bank is mobilizing all available resources. The Education Sector Strategy 2020, “Learning for All” emphasizes that the knowledge and skills youth gain through learning help lift them out of poverty and drive development. Countries are encouraged to “invest early” because foundational skills acquired early help lifelong learning, “invest smartly” in efforts proven to improve learning, and “invest for all” children and youth.

Achieving learning for all also means moving beyond financing the inputs that education systems need, to strengthening these systems to deliver results. There is growing demand from countries for Results-Based Financing, which is a promising set of tools to help achieve better alignment of incentives and desired outcomes by making financing contingent on the achievement of pre-agreed results. This approach has shown promise and could help countries leverage the financial resources needed to achieve the SDGs. In May 2015, at the historic World Education Forum in Incheon, Korea, the World Bank committed to double its Results-Based Financing support for education to $5 billion over the next five years.
World Bank support to education focuses on areas that matter to developing countries:

- Ramping up Early Child Development investments to enable a lifetime of learning and raise future productivity.
- Ensuring that children who are in school are actually learning foundational skills.
- Lowering barriers to quality education for girls and children from disadvantaged communities.
- Fixing the wide disconnect between skills development, higher education and the labor market.
- Addressing systemic issues at all levels, to increase efficiency and transparency.
- Increasing innovative Results-Based Financing in responding to country demand.

It’s important for education systems to provide students at all levels with the skills necessary to promote productivity and growth.

Investing in young children (from birth to age five) before they even enter primary school—ensuring they have the right stimulation, nurturing and nutrition—is one of the smartest investments a country can make to address inequality, break the cycle of poverty, and boost productivity. The “Stepping Up Early Childhood Development” report is a practical guide for policymakers and practitioners about how to invest in young children.

Quality education can only be achieved with excellent teachers. A 2014 report, “Great Teachers: How to Raise Student Learning in Latin America and the Caribbean”, distills the latest evidence and practical experience with teacher policy reforms.

To help increase labor market productivity, the World Bank examines how education can play a role in addressing the skills mismatch present in many countries around the world. The Skills Toward Employment and Productivity (STEP) skills measurement survey is shedding light on skills gaps and mismatches by generating new, internationally comparable data on adult workers’ skills. The World Bank also produces several regional skills reports, including the Preparing the next generation in Tanzania: challenges and opportunities in education, Developing Skills for Innovative Growth in the Russian Federation, and Sub-Saharan
The World Bank’s Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) platform has been widely used around the world, producing 159 country reports that help assess education policies and identify actionable priorities.

Finally, the World Bank conducts and supports rigorous impact evaluations to generate stronger evidence about what works in education under different conditions. In Africa, Service Delivery Indicator (SDI) surveys track performance and quality of service delivery in education and health across countries and over time. At a global level, the World Bank’s EdStats website features more than 2,500 internationally comparable education indicators on access, completion, learning outcomes, expenditures, and more.

RESULTS

During the period 2000 to 2015, the World Bank invested $42 billion in education. Over the period 2000-2015, the share of education in World Bank lending has doubled from five percent to about 10 percent, showing the importance of education in the overall portfolio.

The World Bank’s lending for education for fiscal year 2015 was $4.3 billion, as compared to an average of $3.3 billion a year over the past 10 years. The Bank’s current active education portfolio is $14 billion.

In many countries, World Bank funds are also helping to crowd in much larger resources from governments, as well as other development partners, resulting in harmonized education programs and lower transaction costs for governments.

These are some of the World Bank’s education results at the country level:

In Bangladesh, incentives rolled out through our Secondary Education Quality and Access Enhancement Project in the poorest 125 sub-districts have included poverty-targeted student stipends, student financial awards for academic performance, remedial support, and better water and sanitation. Secondary enrollment among the poorest children has gone up by a net 27% and the secondary pass rate from 55% (2008) to 85% (2014) in the project areas.

In Bulgaria, nearly 80 percent of the vulnerable children (including ethnic Roma) who received early childhood education under the Bulgaria Social Inclusion project successfully passed the school readiness diagnostic tests, compared to just 40 percent before the start of the project.
In **Haiti**, the World Bank has financed more than 390,000 school fee waivers for primary students for over four years to enable them to enroll in non-public schools, provided more than 320,000 daily meals reaching about 84,000 students per year in public and non-public schools, trained almost 2,700 primary teachers, and supported rural communities in opening 61 community-led public schools in rural, previously undeserved regions of the country serving over 5,000 students. In addition, through World Bank-administered Global Partnership for Education funding more than 2,800 schools received grants, allowing them to re-open after the 2010 earthquake.

In **India**, 78% of public school teachers working in elementary schools are now receiving improved in-service training, up from 50% in 2012. Under the **Third Elementary Education Project** in 2014, girls’ enrolment rose to over 48%. In addition, 85% of schools now have separate toilets for boys and girls, up from 72% in 2012.

In **Indonesia**, more than half a million children aged 0-6 in poor, hard-to-reach districts received **early childhood education** between 2007 and 2013. Under the **Bermutu project** (2007-2013), over 1.7 million teachers have acquired the mandated four-year college degree.

In **Jamaica**, **Results-Based Financing** has been used in the **Jamaica Education Transformation Capacity Building Program**, resulting in an improvement in Grade 4 numeracy from 45 percent of students in 2009 to 58 percent in 2014 and Grade 4 literacy from 70 percent to 78 percent. Going forward this approach is also being used to improve school readiness in four-year-olds, through the Early Childhood Development Program benefiting 300,000 young children.

In **Kuwait**, a **competence-based curriculum framework has been developed and approved for general education**. Since 2015, curriculum and standards documents have been developed for all subjects for grades one to nine; 141 schools have introduced highly innovative strategic leadership and management; and over 1,000 core professionals have been supported in transformational school based management and reform.

In **Nigeria**, the World Bank supported government efforts to expand access to post-basic education, primarily through the **Lagos Eko Project**, which was completed in December 2015. Senior secondary school students’ grades in Lagos state surpassed expectations, and the proportion of students obtaining grade B and above in science and technology was more than double the expected result.
In Pakistan, the first country to use Results-Based Financing in an IDA education project, the Second Sindh Education Reform Project has recruited 16,800 teachers through a test, merit and need based recruitment process.

In Vietnam, tuition subsidies were given to more than 8,000 poor students to attend non-public upper secondary schools and professional secondary schools. Using a results-based aid approach, the project linked the payment of a tuition subsidy with student performance. This helped increase access to upper secondary school education and reduce dropout rates among disadvantaged students in 12 provinces.

In West & Central Africa, 19 “Africa Centers of Excellence” are supported at universities in seven countries on science-related subjects that are critical for Africa’s development, e.g. crop science, water and sanitation engineering, communicable diseases, among others. These centers serve students from the entire sub-region, helping achieve cost efficiency. As of December 2015, there are 2410 regional students enrolled in short-term courses, Masters, and PhD programs.

In Yemen, the World Bank implemented the Secondary Education Development for Girls Access Project in five governorates. The Gender Parity Index in secondary education gross enrollment improved from 0.43 to 0.63, and Grade 10 to 12 female students’ retention rate increased from 78.3 percent to 84.5 percent in the project intervention districts. A total of 14,349 teachers were trained in subject modules and 89 female teachers were trained and hired. This encouraged parents to send their daughters to school, especially at the secondary education level. In addition, the project built 43 schools and equipped 50 schools with libraries, and science and computer laboratories. This significantly contributed to create safe and conducive learning environments for both boys and girls.

Find out more about World Bank education results here.

PARTNERS

The World Bank collaborates closely with United Nations (UN) agencies and development partners and will strongly support countries as they work towards the SDGs.

The World Bank a co-convener of the World Education Forum (May 2015; Incheon, Korea)—the most important global event on education in a decade.

The World Bank was instrumental in creating the multi-donor Global Partnership for Education (GPE), an important partner in basic education, in 2002. Efforts to better coordinate education
financing from GPE and the International Development Association (IDA), the World Bank’s fund for the poorest countries, are underway.

The World Bank partners with bilateral donors, for example, with Norway, the United States, and Germany for the Results in Education for All Children (REACH program), which will support the efforts to build evidence on RBF in education.

Other trust fund partners include Australia, the European Commission, Ireland, Korea, the Netherlands, Japan, Spain, Russia, and the United Kingdom.

The World Bank is also working with new partners including Teach for All, the Arab World Initiative, the Early Childhood Consultative Group, the Global Reading Network, the Building Evidence in Education (BE²) Group, and the Global Compact on Learning Donor Network.