

**OVERVIEW**

# WE ARE LIVING A LEARNING CRISIS

*Millions of children cannot read or write, despite having attended school.*



Developing countries have made tremendous progress in getting children into the classroom, and more children worldwide are now in school. But learning is not guaranteed. For about half of students, schooling is not learning. And in Sub-Saharan Africa, almost 90 percent of students do not have the minimum skills.

And not even all children are in school. Education systems need to be strengthened and aligned so that the focus is on ensuring that all children learn. Education is fundamental to building the human capital that allows people and countries to thrive.

## OUR PRIORITIES:

### **1 Ensuring that kids are off to a good start**

In the developing world, only half of all children between the ages of three and six years are in preschool. In low-income countries, only one in five are in preschool. We are working to ensure access to a fulfilling preschool experience for all children by promoting and supporting quality early childhood education.

### **2 Revamping teachers' professional development**

A good teacher makes all the difference. For learning to happen, teachers must be in the classroom and be qualified, motivated, and focused on making sure all students learn. We are working with governments and partners to improve how teachers are recruited, paid, rewarded, incentivized, assessed, and trained. Teachers' responsibilities are immense. Countries that succeed are those that recognize this and value teachers.

### **3 Integrating curriculum and instruction for learning**

Learning happens through rich interactions between students and teachers. Improving the quality of those interactions is at the center of our work. We support countries in defining what competencies and knowledge should be taught, in supporting teachers and schools in effective instruction strategies, and in measuring what students learn.

### **4 Building implementation and management capacity**

Education systems must deliver a complex service, day after day, to millions of students. Great program designs, even when resources are available, can fail if they lack financial management, procurement, and administrative capacity. Implementation and managerial capacity is critical for a successful education system. We are working with countries to build their capacity to organize and manage education systems.

# WHAT WE DO

The World Bank Group works with countries to develop and improve their education systems to identify and support the policies, programs, and interventions needed to deliver learning for all.

We prioritize our efforts across the whole of the education life cycle, focusing on what is needed for successful, accessible, and impactful education systems. These include five key focus areas: Early Childhood Development, Teachers, Management Capacity & Service Delivery, Higher Education, and Skills; and five areas that cut across these focus areas: Girls' Education, New Technologies, Data & Measurement, Inclusive Education, and Education in Fragile, Conflict & Violence Contexts.

## OUR PRINCIPLES

The World Bank applies a systemic approach to supporting and enhancing education systems that deliver learning for children, young adults, and adults who were not able to get the fundamental skills when young and for whom the future of work poses new challenges.

### 1 We take an integrated approach to the education system

to ensure learning throughout the life cycle. Education services from preschool to secondary education, and beyond to university and other tertiary education, need to be aligned and consistent.

### 2 We work to ensure progressive universal access to quality education

. Realizing true universal access requires equality of opportunity. We must meet the educational needs of children and young adults in fragile or conflict-affected areas, those in marginalized and rural communities, girls and women, displaced populations, students with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups.

### 3 Our approach is inclusive and focused.

We understand the needs of governments and work with them to ensure that education works for everyone.



## WHY WE DO IT

Education is a human right and is a powerful driver of development and one of the strongest instruments for reducing poverty and improving health, gender equality, peace, and stability.

Education delivers large, consistent returns in terms of income and is the most important factor to ensure equality of opportunities. For individuals, it promotes employment, earnings, health, and poverty reduction. For societies, it drives long-term economic growth, spurs innovation, strengthens institutions, and fosters social cohesion. Indeed, making smart and effective investments in people is critical for developing the human capital that will end extreme poverty.

# MOVING FORWARD

An increasingly automated economy demands that people of all ages be equipped with the skills to keep learning, adapt to changing realities, and thrive in a dynamic global marketplace. With this in mind, the World Bank is ensuring that embedded in our work is a focus on:



### SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS

Our economy places a premium on skills such as critical thinking and problem solving, grit, persistence, curiosity, creativity, and the ability to communicate and work in teams. These are critical complements to the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy and should be integrated into classroom curricula throughout the education cycle.



### LIFELONG LEARNING

The changing nature of the labor market demands that youth and adults be equipped with the tools to continue learning—whether it's gaining basic literacy and numeracy later in life, accessing higher education, or receiving training, both before and during employment.



### SCHOOLS OF THE FUTURE

The schools of the future are being built today. These are schools where all teachers have the right competencies and motivation, where technology empowers teachers, and where all students learn fundamental skills, social-emotional skills, including the ability to retain what is learned, and digital skills. These schools are safe and affordable to everyone and are places where children and young people learn with joy, rigor, and purpose. But it will take a lot of effort to make sure these schools reach everyone, in every village, in every city, in every country.



**"Education has the power to transform the lives of individuals and entire societies for a better, more prosperous, and inclusive world."**

*Jaime Saavedra, Senior Director  
Education Global Practice, World Bank Group*

The World Bank is the largest financier of education in the developing world. In 2018, we provided about \$4.5 billion to education programs, technical assistance, and other projects designed to improve learning and provide everyone with the opportunity to get the education they need to succeed. Our current portfolio of education projects totals US\$ 17 billion, highlighting the importance of education for the achievement of our twin goals, ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity.

We work on education programs in more than 80 countries and are committed to helping countries reach Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which calls for access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030.

