LEARNING TO REALIZE EDUCATION’S PROMISE

#wdr2018
Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda

“The name of the dog is Puppy”

Grade 3

Could understand
Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda

“The name of the dog is Puppy”

Could not understand

Grade 3
Rural India

46 - 17 = ?

Could not solve

Grade 3
Rural India

46
- 17

?  

Could not solve

Grade 5
Brazil

Progress in Math (PISA 15 year olds)
Brazil

Time to reach OECD average in Math (PISA 15 year olds)

OECD average

75 years
Brazil

Time to reach OECD average in Math and Reading (PISA 15 year olds)

>260 years
Percent of end-of primary students who meet a minimum proficiency threshold for learning in math?

- High income countries
- Upper-middle income countries
- Lower-middle income countries
- Low income countries
High inequalities in learning

PASEC 2014: Percent of students performing at each competency level (end of primary)
Remaining inequities in access

Percentage of youth (ages 15–19) who have completed each grade (2012)
Immediate causes of the learning crisis

How do teaching and learning break down?
Immediate causes of the learning crisis
Immediate causes of the learning crisis

Non-deprived infant

Infant exposed to high deprivation
Immediate causes of the learning crisis

- Unskilled and unmotivated teachers
- Unprepared learners
- School management
- School inputs

Bar chart showing the percentage of teachers absent from classrooms and schools in various countries over different years.
Immediate causes of the learning crisis

One Laptop Per Child initiative in Brazil

Textbooks in Sierra Leone
Immediate causes of the learning crisis
Deeper causes of the learning crisis

Why are these problems allowed to persist?
Deeper causes of the learning crisis

Barriers to learning at scale

Technical complexity

Coherence between elements is hard, e.g. curriculum, teacher preparation, evaluation, student assessment

Lack of coherence undermined teacher effectiveness in South Africa in the early 2000s
Deeper causes of the learning crisis

Barriers to learning at scale

Political economy

Multiple actors have competing objectives, driving misalignment and incoherence

Political negotiation undermined teacher pay reform in Indonesia in the late 2000s

Systems are stuck in a low-learning, low-accountability, high-inequality equilibrium
Don’t give up: Success is possible
Don’t give up: Success is possible

- Sustained improvement: Republic of Korea
- Remarkable performance: Vietnam
- Profound reforms: Peru
- Rapid progress in reading: India, Liberia, Papua New Guinea
- Broad-based approach to improvement: Malaysia, Tanzania
Countries need to take action showing that learning really matters to them.
Assess learning to make it a serious goal
Assess learning through measurement

Assess learning ....

... to shine a light on the hidden exclusion of low learning
Many countries don’t know whether students are learning: Percent of countries in each region with a nationally representative learning assessment.

Source: UIS 2016.
Act on evidence to make schools work for all learners
Act to improve learning at student, classroom and school levels

Ensure learners are prepared and motivated
• Investing in the early years
• Removing financial barriers/Demand-side incentives
• Preparation for training

Early childhood program in Jamaica led to 25% higher earnings in adulthood

Conditional cash transfers in Burkina Faso led to a 20% increase in girls’ enrollment
Act to improve learning at student, classroom and school levels

Ensure teachers are skilled and motivated
- Effective professional development
- Motivation and incentives
- Teaching to the level of the students

In Liberia, training teachers to use student assessments more than doubled students’ reading fluency

Grouping students by ability level in Kenya increased test scores for all students
Act to improve learning at student, classroom and school levels

In the US, training *principals* to provide feedback to teachers increased student learning by 0.19 SD on average, reaching as high as 0.35 SD for some schools.

In India, adaptive learning software doubled students’ rate of learning.

Ensure school investments complement students learning from teachers
- Inputs and infrastructure
- Technology
- Management and school-based decision-making
Align actors
to make the whole system work for learning
Align actors by tackling technical and political barriers

Opportunities for creating and sustaining **strategic change**

- Information and metrics
- Coalitions and incentives
- Innovation and agility
Align actors by tackling technical and political barriers

Opportunities for creating and sustaining **strategic change**

**Tanzania**

- School-leaving exam scores +
- UWEZO citizen-led assessment +
- Service Delivery Indicators

→ Political pressure
→ Large-scale education reform program
Align actors by tackling technical and political barriers

Opportunities for creating and sustaining strategic change

Chile

Long-term negotiated reform process
Confidence-building and opt-in reforms

Malaysia

Lab model:
Two-month exercise with all key players
Planning and decision-making
Align actors by tackling technical and political barriers

Opportunities for creating and sustaining strategic change

**Burundi**
- Adaptive approach successfully distributed textbooks in post-conflict setting

**India**
- Experiment showed grouping students by ability level worked
- Then NGO tested variants at scale (with government)
Align actors by tackling technical and political barriers

External actors and strategic change

- Information and metrics
- Coalitions and incentives
- Innovation and agility
An aligned system focused on learning
An aligned system focused on learning

**Assess** learning to make it a serious goal

**Act** to make schools work for all learners

**Align** actors to make the whole system work for learning
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