

TEACHING AND LEARNING: Achieving quality for all

Monitoring the Education for All goals

Progress towards the six Education for All goals in Sub-Saharan Africa

Indicator	Sub-Saharan Africa		World	
	1999	2011	2011	
Goal 1	Pre-primary gross enrolment ratio (%)	10	18	50
Goal 2	Primary net enrolment ratio (%)	58	77	89
	Out-of-school children (million)	42.1	29.8	57.2
Goal 3	Lower secondary gross enrolment ratio (%)	29	49	82
	Out-of-school adolescents (million)	22.2	21.8	69.4
Goal 4	Adult literacy rate* (%)	53	59	84
	Youth literacy rate* (%)	66	70	89
Goal 5	Primary gender parity index	0.85	0.93	0.97
	Secondary gender parity index	0.82	0.83	0.98
Goal 6	Primary pupil/teacher ratio	42	43	24
Finance	Public education spending (% GNP)	4.0	5.0	5.1
	(% total government expenditure)	17.1	18.7	15.5

* Progress on literacy is reported for the periods 1985/94 (left column) and 2005/11 (right column).
Source: UIS database

Despite progress, most EFA goals are likely to be missed by 2015

Early childhood care and education

Early childhood outcomes have improved. The under-5 mortality rate fell from 156 deaths for every 1000 live births in 2000 to 97 in 2012. Although sub-Saharan Africa is still the region with the highest child mortality rate in the world, the rate of progress reached 3.8% per year between 2000 and 2012, compared with 1.4% in the 1990s.

The pre-primary education gross enrolment ratio increased from 10% in 1999 to 18% in 2011 leaving the region lagging behind all others. Moreover, access to early childhood education services remains unequal. Even in middle income countries with better coverage on average, such as Nigeria, there is a wide gap in access between the richest and poorest children: in 2011, only 10% of 3- to 4-year olds from the poorest fifth of families attended some form of organized early childhood education programme, compared to about 84% of their richest peers.

Universal primary education

Sub-Saharan Africa is far from achieving universal primary education with a net enrolment ratio of 77%. This is an improvement from 58% in 1999, but sub-Saharan Africa is the region lagging the most as no progress has been made since 2007, leaving nearly 30 million children out of school. Moreover, assessing whether universal primary education has been achieved should be based on measures of completion rather than enrolment, which often gives a misleadingly optimistic picture. For example, Senegal had a net enrolment ratio of 75% in 2010, but only 49% of children of primary school starting age were expected to complete primary school.

Youth and adult skills

By 2011, the net enrolment ratio at lower secondary school reached 49%, but the number of adolescents out of school in the region remained at 22 million between 1999 and 2011, because of population growth. In general, many countries in sub-Saharan Africa have expanded access to lower secondary school, but it will take more time and effort to translate these gains into higher completion rates. Moreover, wide inequalities remain. For example, in Mozambique and the United Republic of Tanzania, almost no young women from the poorest families completed lower secondary school in 2010/2011 whereas young men from the richest families more than tripled their completion rates, to over 35%, between the late 1990s and 2010/2011.

Adult literacy

In sub-Saharan Africa, the number of illiterate adults has increased by 37% since 1990, mainly due to population growth, reaching 182 million in 2011. By 2015, it is projected that 26% of all illiterate adults will live in sub-Saharan Africa, up from 15% in 1990.

Gender parity and equality

Sub-Saharan Africa has not achieved gender parity. In primary education, there were 93 girls for every 100 boys enrolled in 2011, compared to 85 girls for every 100 boys in 1999. In secondary education, there has barely been any progress since 1999 and

there were only 83 girls enrolled for every 100 boys in 2011. Of the 30 countries with fewer than 90 girls for every 100 boys, 18 were in sub-Saharan Africa.

Quality of education

In sub-Saharan Africa, pupil/teacher ratios stagnated and are among the highest in the world. Of the 162 countries with data in 2011, 26 had a pupil/teacher ratio in primary education exceeding 40:1; of these, 23 were in sub-Saharan Africa.

Monitoring global education targets after 2015

The pace of progress towards Education for All goals is too slow for many countries in the region, particularly for the disadvantaged. The gap between the amount of time the poorest rural females and the richest urban males spent in school actually widened between 2000 and 2010, from 6.9 years to 8.3 years. If recent trends continue, the richest boys will achieve universal primary completion in 2021, but the poorest girls will not catch up until 2086. Likewise, if recent trends continue, girls from the poorest families in sub-Saharan Africa will only achieve universal lower secondary completion in 2111, 64 years later than the boys from the richest families. Post-2015 goals need to include a commitment to make sure the most disadvantaged groups achieve benchmarks set for goals. Failure to do so could mean that measurement of progress continues to mask the fact that the advantaged benefit the most.

Trends in financing Education for All

New EFA goals after 2015 should set a target for all countries to allocate at least 6% of GNP to education and at least 20% of total government expenditure on education. Sub-Saharan Africa spent on average 5% of GNP on education and 18.7% of total government expenditure on education. While some countries in the region, such as Swaziland and Ghana, put more emphasis on education financing, for example, meeting the benchmark on spending as a percentage of GNP, other countries, such as the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, spend less than 3% of GNP to education. If the Central African

Supporting teachers to end the learning crisis

Republic increased its tax-to-GDP ratio by 1.25% per year from 2011 onwards and if the government ensured that 20% of the budget is allocated to education, then an additional US\$ 66 million would be available for education in 2015, more than doubling expenditure per primary school child, from US\$44 to US\$95.

Around the world, governments are grappling with ways to reallocate their education budgets to those children most in need. South Africa's redistribution reforms have aimed to reverse the legacy of the apartheid schooling system by introducing a 'no fee schools' policy. Under this policy, schools in areas which ranked the lowest according to income, unemployment and education level received a per student allocation that was six times higher than the allocation to schools in the richest areas.

An increase in public spending needs to take into account how the cost of education is currently shared so that the poorest can benefit. Adopting a national accounts approach to education, new analysis for this Report shows that of the total secondary education expenditure in Rwanda in 2011, for example, households covered 44%, donors 17% and the government 39%. This shows that, first, education is far from free and, second, that external assistance continues to be very important for certain countries in the region.

Total aid to education in the region may have increased from US\$2.8 billion in 2002-03 to US\$4 billion in 2010 but fell by 8% to US\$3.65 billion in 2011. Total aid to basic education fell by 7% in the region to US\$1.76 billion in 2011. The reduction in basic education aid to the region would have been enough to fund good quality school places for over 1 million children.

The global learning crisis: action is urgent

Globally, 250 million children of primary school age are not learning the basics in reading and mathematics, whether they are in school or not. In sub-Saharan Africa, over half of children are not learning the basics in reading: a quarter of primary school aged children reached grade four but still did not learn the basics, and over a third did not reach grade four.

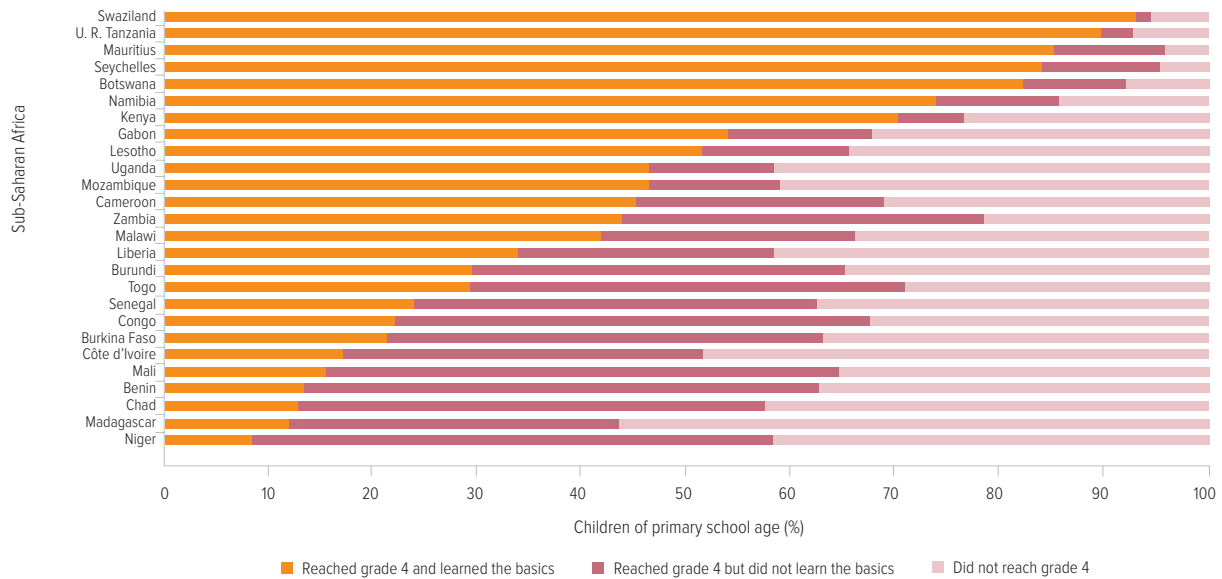
There are wide disparities between countries' education systems: In both Kenya and Zambia, more than three-quarters of primary school age children make it beyond grade 4, but while in Kenya 70% of these children are able to read, just 44% can in Zambia.

Poverty can affect children's ability to learn. In all 20 African countries included in the report's analysis, children from richer household are more likely not only to complete school, but also to achieve a minimum level of learning once in school. In 15 of these countries, no more than one in five poor children reach the last grade and learn the basics. In Kenya, children have a better chance to learn, on average, than others in the region, but there is a wide gap between rich and poor in the country, mainly because over half of those from poor households drop out early, while only 16% from rich households do so. In Chad, only 2% of children from the poorest households complete primary school and master the basics, compared with 43% of those from richest households. In Cameroon, three-quarters of the rich achieve the basics compared with just 18% of the poorest.

Being poor and female carries a double disadvantage. In Benin, around 60% of rich boys stay in school and attain basic

Learning outcomes vary widely between countries

Percentage of children of primary school age who reached grade 4 and achieved minimum learning standard in reading, selected countries

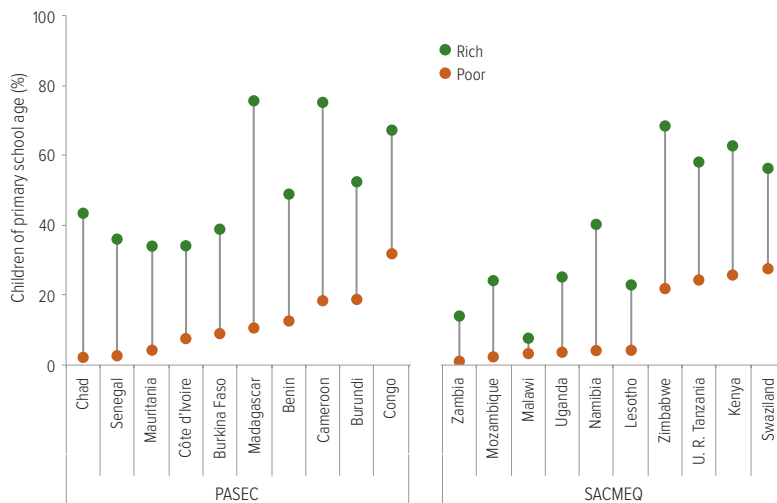


Note: See notes to Figure 4.1.

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013/4.

Wealth affects whether primary school age children learn the basics

Percentage of children who completed primary school and achieved minimum learning standard in mathematics, by wealth, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa



Notes: The definition of primary school completers refers to children aged 14-18 years and is calculated using available household survey data from the year closest to the learning achievement survey. Rich/poor refers to children in the top/bottom quartile in terms of the socio-economic status index in the SERCE, PASEC and SACMEQ surveys. The definition of achievement of a minimum learning standard depends on the benchmark specified in a given survey: level 1 (SERCE); level 1 (PASEC); and level 3 (SACMEQ).

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013/4.

numeracy skills, compared with only 6% of poor girls. In Kenya, among the poorest households, 23% of girls both complete primary education and achieve the basics, compared with 29% of boys.

Living in rural areas, which often lack teachers and teaching resources, can be a barrier to learning: In the United Republic of Tanzania, where average performance in mathematics is better than elsewhere in southern and eastern Africa, only 25% of poor children living in rural areas are in school and learning, compared with 63% of rich children living in urban areas.

Speaking a minority language can be a disadvantage. In many parts of western Africa, French continues to be the main language of instruction, so the vast majority of children are taught from the early grades in a language with which they are not familiar, seriously hampering their chance of learning. In Benin, for example, over 80% of grade 5 students who speak the test language at home achieve minimum learning in reading, compared with less than 60% of the 9 out of 10 students who speak another language. Well-designed bilingual programmes taught by qualified teachers can help children overcome this challenge.

Children who learn less are more likely to leave school early. In Ethiopia, children who scored in the bottom quarter in mathematics at age 12 were more than twice as likely as those who were in the top quarter to drop out by age 15. In Côte d'Ivoire, 75% of children who reached the minimum learning level at the beginning of grade 5 were present to take the test at the end of the school year, compared with 25% of those who did not reach it.

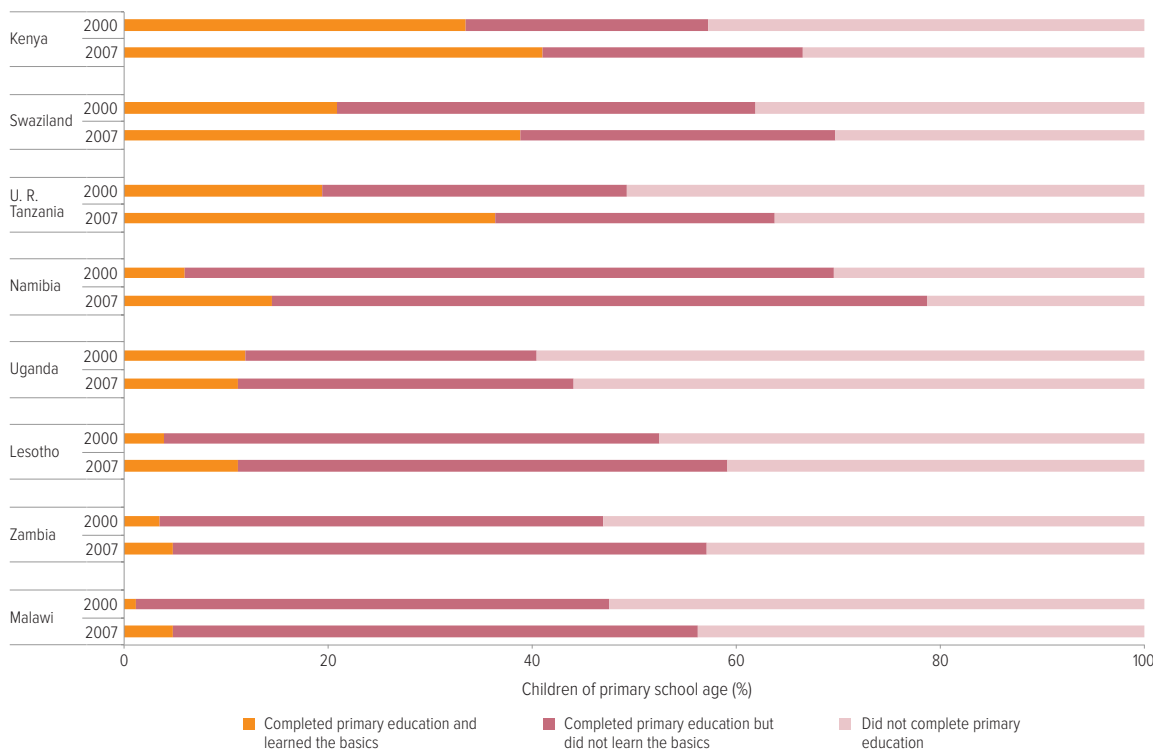
Inequalities remain in secondary education. In South Africa, only around 14% of poor grade 8 students reached the minimum learning standard in mathematics in 2009, compared with 40% of their rich peers. Such gaps in performance between rich and poor pupils are not inevitable. Botswana has achieved much higher levels of learning,

thanks to its much narrower gap between rich and poor and its performance is at the level of upper middle income countries in other regions.

Access can be increased while the quality of education improves. Some countries in southern and eastern Africa have expanded education coverage considerably – especially in primary schooling – while also safeguarding or even improving learning outcomes. In the United Republic of Tanzania, for example, between 2000 and 2007, the proportion of children who completed primary school rose from half to around two-thirds, while the proportion who were both in school and learning the basics in mathematics increased from 19% to 36%. This is equivalent to around 1.5 million additional children learning the basics.

Some countries in southern and eastern Africa have both widened access and improved learning

Percentage of children who completed primary school and achieved minimum learning standard in mathematics, selected countries, 2000 and 2007 SACMEQ



Notes: The definition of primary school completers refers to children aged 14 to 18 and is calculated using a linear interpolation from household survey data around years close to the learning achievement surveys.

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013/4.



www.education-inequalities.org

Wide inequalities in learning

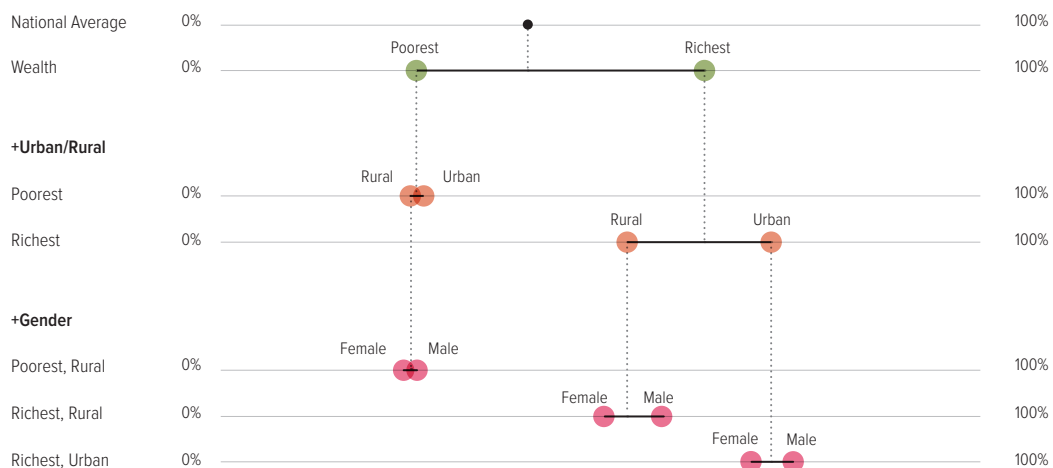
The World Inequality Database on Education (WIDE) highlights the powerful influence of circumstances, such as wealth, gender, ethnicity and location, over which people have little control but which play an important role in shaping their opportunities for education. It draws attention to unacceptable levels of inequality in access and learning across countries and within countries, with the aim of helping to inform policy design and public debate.

In Malawi, 63% of grade 6 children who took part in a regional assessment in 2007 achieved the minimum learning standard in reading. While 73% of the richest reached this standard only 58% of the poorest did so. However, not all children, in particular the poorest, reached grade 6 and so did not participate in the test. As a result, only 40% of all children of primary school age achieved the minimum learning standard – and the gap between the poorest and the richest more than doubles.

Learned basics in reading



Disadvantages associated with poverty are further compounded by where a child lives and their gender. For example, 75% of rich boys living in urban areas achieved the minimum standard compared to 24% of poor girls living in rural areas.



Poor quality education leaves a legacy of illiteracy

The quality of education has a marked bearing on youth literacy. Many young people who have spent just a few years in school do not develop literacy skills – and in some cases even completing primary school is not always a guarantee for literacy. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 40% of young people cannot read a sentence. For example, in Uganda, only 17% of those who had been no more than four years of school and only 43% of those who had five to six years of school had become literate. But there are exceptions. Almost half of young people had not spent more than four years in school in Rwanda in 2010, but more than 50% of these were able to read a sentence. This suggests that the quality of education in Rwanda in the early grades is helping to ensure that even those spending a limited time in the classroom are learning.

Young people from poorer households are far less likely to be able to read. In several countries from the region, including Cameroon, Ghana and Sierra Leone, the difference in youth literacy rates between rich and poor is more than 50 percentage points. In Nigeria, only 14% of poor youth are literate, compared with 92% of rich youth. Poorest women are then often even more at risk as. In some countries in western Africa, including Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, those aged 15 to 24 acquire very low levels of literacy skills, on average, and girls from both rich and poor households tend to be less literate. In Burkina Faso, 72% of rich young men have basic literacy skills, compared with 54% of rich young women, but only 13% of poor men and 6% of poor women.

The combination of poverty and location may also have an adverse impact on the chances of young people being literate. In Senegal, while 13% of the poorest young women were literate, only 4% were literate among the poorest in Tambacounda region.

Children and young people with disabilities are often the most neglected. In the United Republic of Tanzania, the literacy rate for people with a disability was 52%, compared with 75% for those without.

Making teaching quality a national priority

Strong national policies that make teaching quality and learning a high priority are essential to ensure that all children in school actually obtain the skills and knowledge they are meant to acquire. Ethiopia, Mozambique and the United Republic of Tanzania include improving quality and learning outcomes as an explicit priority alongside expanding access. South Africa's plan goes into more detail than most, highlighting recruitment of new teachers as key in reaching required learning standards.

The global learning crisis cannot be overcome unless policies aim to improve learning among the disadvantaged. Education plans tend to pay attention to children with special education needs but the term that is understood in different ways. In Rwanda, the definition is broad, including reducing the barriers to learning for children who are most vulnerable to exclusion. In others, such as Namibia, it is confined to access to school for children with disabilities.

National policies should address teacher quality. Kenya and Namibia emphasize school cluster-based in-service teacher education. Rwanda aims to use mentors in every school to support teacher development. Uganda emphasizes working with NGO providers to expand primary education to disadvantaged rural and urban areas, including by training teachers in these schools.

Governments need to get incentives right to retain the best teachers. The education sector strategy of the United Republic of Tanzania makes increased pay a high priority, acknowledging that if teachers lack sustained increases in real pay, this may hinder the development of an environment conducive to teaching and learning.

Between 2011 and 2015, sub-Saharan Africa needs to recruit about 225,000 additional teachers per year to achieve universal primary education by 2015. Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for 57% of the global total need for additional primary school teachers, or 63% if the deadline is extended to 2030. Nigeria has by far the largest gap to fill,

primarily because enrolment is low. Between 2011 and 2015, it needs 212,000 primary school teachers, 13% of the global total.

Many countries need to expand their teacher force much faster than they have previously. Malawi has achieved a net enrolment ratio of 97% but the pupil/teacher ratio rose from 63 in 1999 to 76 in 2011. Its teaching force is growing at just 1% per year. For Malawi to reduce the pupil/teacher ratio to 40:1 by 2015, it would need to increase its teaching force by 15% annually between 2011 and 2015. Rwanda and Uganda would need to expand recruitment by 6%, on average, compared with a current average increase of 3%. At that pace these countries would not achieve UPE until after 2025. Countries such as Côte d'Ivoire and Eritrea will not even be able to fill the teacher gap until after 2030 on past trends.

Between 2011 and 2015, sub-Saharan Africa needs to recruit about 394,000 additional teachers per year to reach a ratio of 32 pupils per teacher in lower secondary education. Between 1999 and 2011, the number of lower secondary school teachers grew by 52,250 annually in the region. Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for half of the total global need in additional lower secondary school teachers needed between 2011 and 2030.

Teachers need not only to be recruited but also to be trained. Many countries have expanded their teacher labour force by engaging untrained teachers on contract. At the current rate of recruitment, some of these countries, including Cameroon, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali and Senegal, appear on course to have sufficient teachers to achieve UPE by 2015 or 2020 – but only by continuing to recruit untrained teachers. Training existing teachers whose skills do not meet minimum standards will add further pressure on systems with limited resources. In Benin, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the challenge of training existing teachers is greater than that of recruiting and training new teachers.

Filling the teacher gap is likely to be hampered by the low supply of upper secondary school graduates, the minimum qualification for primary teacher trainees. In 8 out of 14 countries with available data in the region, including Burkina Faso, Mozambique and Rwanda, at least 5% of all upper secondary school graduates in 2020 would need to be drawn into teaching to allow these countries to fill the teacher gap.

The shortage of trained teachers is likely to affect disadvantaged areas in particular. In Kano state, Nigeria, there are at least 150 pupils per trained teacher in the most disadvantaged 25% of schools.

Children in the early grades who live in remote areas face a double disadvantage. In Ethiopia, where 48% of teachers are trained, only around 20% of teachers were trained in grades 1 to 4 in 2010, compared with 83% in grades 5 to 8. The percentage of lower primary teachers who were trained was as low as 1% in the Somali region and 4% in Afar, the two most remote rural regions.

It is estimated that US\$4 billion annually is needed in sub-Saharan Africa to pay the salaries of the additional primary school teachers required by 2020, after taking into account projected economic growth. This is equivalent to 19% of the region's total education budget in 2011. For some countries, bridging the gap would require a considerable increase in the education budget, for example by 51% in the Central African Republic and by 35% in Zambia.

The financing challenge is inevitably greater for lower secondary school. For sub-Saharan Africa, recruiting more lower secondary school teachers to achieve universal education at that level by 2030 would add US\$9.5 billion to the education budget annually. In Burkina Faso, for example, the lower secondary education budget would need to grow by 6% by 2030 to achieve this goal.

A four-part strategy to provide the best teachers

1. Attract the best teachers

The quality of an education system is only as good as the quality of its teachers. It is not enough just to want to teach. People should enter the profession having received a good education themselves. They need to have completed at least secondary schooling of appropriate quality and relevance, so that they have a sound knowledge of the subjects they will be teaching and the ability to acquire the skills needed to teach.

Policy-makers need to focus their attention also on achieving the right mix of teachers, including recruiting teachers from under-represented groups. Flexible policies for entry qualifications may be required to increase the number of female teachers and improve the diversity of the teaching force. In South Sudan, the Gender Equity through Education Programme provided financial and material incentives to over 4,500 girls to complete secondary school and to train young women graduates to enter the teaching profession.

Deploying teachers to conflict zones is difficult because of the dangerous working conditions, particularly as schools and teachers are sometimes attacked. In conflict-affected parts of the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, teachers have been recruited from local communities to keep education going.

People with disabilities are likely to face large barriers to achieving the level of education needed to train as a teacher. Flexible policies for entry into teacher education programmes are a possible way to help overcome this. In Mozambique, a community-based teacher training college has been running a teacher education programme for visually impaired primary school teachers for more than ten years. During training, the visually impaired trainees teach in practice schools nearby, helping create a more welcoming environment for teachers and students with disabilities.

2. Improve teacher education so all children can learn

Initial teacher education should make up for weak subject knowledge. Prospective teachers should ideally enter teacher education programmes knowing enough about the subjects they are going to teach. In some income countries, however, teachers often enter the profession lacking core subject knowledge because their own education has been poor. In Kano state, northern Nigeria, for example, 78% of 1,200 basic education teachers were found to have 'limited' knowledge of English when tested on their reading comprehension and ability to correct a sentence written by a 10-year-old.

In such circumstances, initial teacher education programmes need to ensure that all trainees acquire a good understanding of the subjects they will be teaching. In Ghana, for example, teacher education was restructured in the early 2000s. Trainees have to pass an examination on foundation academic subjects at the end of their first year before they can proceed to the second and third years, which focus mainly on pedagogical skills. Trainees who fail can resit the examination, but those who fail a second time are withdrawn from training.

Teacher education programmes need to support teachers in being able to teach early reading skills in more than one language and to use local language materials effectively. In Mali, a study of pupils' skills using an Early Grade Reading Assessment and teacher observation found that few teachers were able to teach their pupils how to read. In Senegal, where attempts are being made to use local languages in schools, training is given only in French, and only 8% of trainees were confident about teaching reading in local languages.

As a result of inadequate training, many newly qualified teachers are not confident that they have the skills necessary to support children with more challenging learning needs. A study of pre-service teacher education for lower secondary mathematics teaching in 15 countries, found that none of the countries included preparation for

student diversity as a key focus of teacher education. Botswana is one of just five countries that has strong preparation for teachers to address professional challenges.

Teachers also need adequate preparation to understand and address gendered dimensions of school and classroom interactions that can negatively affect girls' and boys' learning experiences and outcomes. The Forum for African Women Educationalists has developed a Gender-Responsive Pedagogy model to address the quality of teaching in African schools including training teachers in the use of gender-equitable teaching and learning materials, classroom arrangements and interaction strategies, along with strategies to eliminate sexual harassment and encourage gender-responsive school management. Case studies of schools where teachers were trained using this model reported that teachers were more responsive to gender issues and provided greater support to girls.

Initial teacher education needs to provide classroom experience. Teacher education programmes often fail to ensure that trainees get adequate experience of learning to teach in classrooms, which contributes to the poor quality of teaching. Time spent on teaching practice can be as short as nine weeks out of six months of training in Senegal, or nine weeks out of two years in Kenya. Development Aid from People to People, an international non-profit organization, has established teacher training colleges in Malawi that offer pre-service education designed to equip new teachers with the skills necessary for rural schools. A strong practical orientation and ample time for school-based experience and community work help prepare teachers for the realities of living and teaching in rural areas.

Pre-service education is vital to provide teachers with the skills to teach multiple grades, ages and abilities in one classroom. In remote or under-resourced schools and classrooms, some teachers need to teach multiple grades and ages in one classroom. In some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, including Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Senegal

and Togo, at least 10% of students study in multigrade classrooms. In Chad, almost half of students are taught in such classrooms.

Regular supervision and ongoing training have the potential to address knowledge gaps and upgrade and reinforce acquired skills. Teachers need ongoing support to help them adapt to new approaches via workshops, distance learning and in-class support. In Kenya, a school-based teacher development programme shows that such training can be effective in helping teachers adopt learner-centred methods. The EGRA Plus: Liberia project has trained and supported teachers in how to teach, monitor and assess early reading. It included intensive training for practising teachers and follow-on support, backed by detailed curriculum-based lesson plans and assessment tools.

Mentoring new teachers once they are in the classroom is vital, particularly in poorer countries where teachers have limited prior practical experience. As part of Ethiopia's second Teacher Development Programme, teacher candidates are expected to work in schools with mentor teachers and supervisors. In Ghana, trainees are paired with experienced teachers in early grades.

The key role that teacher educators play in shaping teachers' skills is often the most neglected aspect of teacher preparation systems. Analysis of teacher education practices in six sub-Saharan African countries found that educators training teachers in early reading were rarely experts in the field by either experience or training. In countries including Kenya, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, teacher educators have no instruction in training teachers for basic education.

Distance education can boost countries' capacity to train teachers. Malawi and the United Republic of Tanzania used distance learning to help expand the number of teachers rapidly after primary enrolment rose when school fees were abolished. In Zimbabwe, the Virtual and Open Distance Learning programme, combining print-based modules and online instruction, was introduced to respond to the science teacher shortage. In South Africa, the Advanced

Certificate in Education, a professional qualification in education management, is offered as a modular distance learning programme by the University of Pretoria, targeting teachers in rural areas.

3. Get teachers where they are most needed

Inequality in deployment leads not only to fewer teachers in deprived areas but also to disadvantaged students being taught by teachers with weaker subject knowledge, exacerbating inequality in learning outcomes. In Eritrea, the government assigns teachers to one of six regions and to specific schools, strictly depending on student numbers. Young teachers who start their careers as part of national service are sent to the most difficult schools.

Financial incentives and good housing can promote deployment to remote or rural areas. The Gambia introduced a hardship allowance of 30% to 40% of base salary for positions in remote regions at schools more than 3 kilometres from a main road. The incentive was large enough to change teachers' attitudes: by 2007, 24% of teachers in the regions where the incentive was offered had requested transfer to hardship schools. An alternative approach adopted by Rwanda is to provide subsidized loans to trained teachers working in hard-to-reach areas.

Local recruitment of teachers to serve in their own communities can address teacher shortages in remote or disadvantaged areas and can result in lower teacher attrition but some of the most disadvantaged communities lack competent applicants. In Lesotho, school management committees hire teachers, who apply directly to the schools for vacant posts, ensuring that only teachers willing to work in those schools apply. As such, most teaching posts are filled, and there is relatively little difference in pupil/teacher ratios between rural and urban areas. However, many of the rural schools recruit untrained teachers: only half of teachers in mountain areas are trained compared with three-quarters in the lowlands.

Some countries are providing alternative pathways into teaching to attract highly qualified professionals with strong subject knowledge. One approach is exemplified by the Teach for All programmes in a range of countries. Such programmes recruit high-performing graduates to teach in schools that predominantly serve disadvantaged students and often have trouble attracting trained teachers.

4. Provide incentives to retain the best teachers

Governments should ensure that teachers earn at least enough to lift their families above the poverty line and make their pay competitive with comparable professions. In the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau and Liberia, teachers are paid no more than US\$5 per day, on average. Already-low teacher pay has even been falling in some poor countries and late or incorrect payments create considerable difficulties for teachers without access to credit. In addition, teachers may have to travel some distance to collect payments, which further reduces their take-home pay. In rural Zambia, for example, it may cost teachers up to half their wages for transport and accommodation to collect their pay from district offices each month.

Contract teachers are usually paid considerably less than civil service teachers, some are hired directly by the community or by schools and tend to have little formal training and to be employed under less favourable terms than regular civil service teachers. In West Africa, contract teachers made up half the teaching force by the mid-2000s. By the late 2000s, the proportion of contract teachers in the teaching force reached almost 80% in Mali and over 60% in Benin, Cameroon and Chad. In Niger, 79% of teachers are on temporary contracts, earning half the salary of a civil service teacher. While hiring contract teachers helps alleviate teacher shortages in the short term, it is unlikely to meet the long-term need to extend quality education. Countries that rely heavily on contract teachers, notably those in West Africa, rank at or near the bottom for education access and learning.

Rather than using teacher evaluations to link pay directly to performance, a more appropriate way of motivating teachers to improve education quality is to offer an attractive career path, with promotion criteria that take into account initiatives by teachers in addressing diversity and supporting weak students. In 2010, Ghana began reviewing its teacher management and development policy to address such concerns. The new policy framework is intended as a mechanism for promoting teachers and ensuring that all teachers, irrespective of their qualifications and location, receive support to improve their teaching.

Strengthen teacher governance

Strong school leadership is required to ensure that teachers are accountable: that they show up on time work a full week and provide equal support to all. In countries where large teacher shortages are already harming children's learning, absenteeism exacerbates the problem. In Zambia, an increase in teacher absence by 5% reduced the learning gains that grade 5 students made over the year by about 4% in English and mathematics. The most appropriate way to address teacher absenteeism is to tackle its root causes, which vary according to context. In Malawi, 1 in 10 teachers stated that they were frequently absent from school in connection with financial concerns, such as travelling to follow up and collect salaries or securing credit and making loan payments. In Uganda, teacher absenteeism was lower when teachers were born in the district where they worked, where the school had better infrastructure and where students' parents were literate.

Legislation needs to be strengthened to address teacher misconduct and gender violence. A survey of gender-based violence in schools in Malawi found that around one-fifth of teachers said they were aware of teachers coercing or forcing girls into sexual relationships. Governments should work more closely with teacher unions and teachers to formulate policies and adopt codes of conduct to tackle unprofessional behaviour such as persistent absenteeism and gender-based violence. Codes of

conduct for teachers need to refer explicitly to violence and abuse, and ensure that penalties are clearly stipulated and consistent with legal frameworks for child rights and protection. In Kenya, for example, a range of penalties is available to discipline teachers in breach of professional conduct, including suspension and interdiction.

Private tutoring by teachers reinforces disparities between students whose parents can afford to pay the fees and those who cannot. In sub-Saharan Africa, tutoring has become more prominent, largely as a means to generate extra income for teachers. SACMEQ II data show that 82% of grade 6 pupils in Uganda received extra tutoring, and that over half of these paid for their tuition. Strategies should be in place to prevent tutoring of pupils by teachers who are responsible for teaching them in their daily classes. This would ensure that full curriculum coverage is available to all students, even those not able to afford supplementary tutoring.

Private schools that charge low fees are seen by some as one way of expanding access to better quality education for disadvantaged children in areas where government schools are failing. Such schools are also seen as a less expensive way of achieving quality, because they can recruit teachers at lower cost than government schools. In Kenya, across four districts, low fee private school teachers receive around half the basic pay of a government teacher.

Advocates of low fee private schools argue that students in these schools achieve better learning outcomes than students in government schools, but such differences arise partly because teachers in government schools often face more difficult conditions, teaching larger classes and children with a wider diversity of learning needs. Low fee private schools may often have fewer trained teachers. In Ghana, less than 10% of teachers in private schools in economically disadvantaged districts were trained compared with nearly half of government teachers in schools in the same area. Expanding private schooling on a large scale can widen inequality in access to

quality education, leading to widespread dissatisfaction and social unrest. This is a particular risk if such expansion triggers a decline in the quality of government schools mostly serving the disadvantaged.

Curriculum and assessment strategies that improve learning

Policy-makers should ensure the curriculum focuses on securing strong foundation skills for all, is delivered at an appropriate pace and in a language children understand. Governments should ensure that adequate and relevant resources are in place to support learning from the earliest years and build a culture of reading. At the end of a two-year Early Childhood Development Programme in Mozambique run by Save the Children in Mozambique, 5- to 9-year-olds who had attended pre-schools were 24% more likely to be enrolled in primary school compared with children who had not participated in the programme.

Curricula that do not acknowledge and address issues of inclusion can alienate disadvantaged groups within the classroom, and so limit their chances to learn effectively. In some countries, curricula reinforce traditional gender stereotypes. An interdisciplinary curriculum questions dominant power structures and challenges gender stereotypes.

Getting out-of-school children back into school and learning is vital. Governments and donor agencies should support accelerated learning programmes to achieve this goal. A recent study of complementary basic education classes using Ghana's nine-month accelerated School for Life programme found not only that graduates re-entering formal primary schools outperformed their peers, but also that improved learning was sustained as they progressed through the primary grades. Formal schools can also use accelerated learning in situations where large proportions of students are over-age for their grade.

Learning in an appropriate language can reduce learning disparities. Children's participation in bilingual programmes can improve their learning in subjects across the curriculum. In Ethiopia, primary school children learning in their mother tongue performed better in grade 8 in mathematics, biology, chemistry and physics than pupils in English-only schooling.

Textbooks are of limited use if learners have difficulty reading them, as was demonstrated in an experiment supplying textbooks written in English to Kenyan classrooms. Many pupils could not read the books, which were suited to academically strong pupils with educated parents. As a result, low achievers, mainly from poor and disadvantaged backgrounds, did not benefit from the greater access to textbooks.

Achieving and sustaining literacy in early grades requires ample opportunities to read, both at school and in the community. The Save the Children Literacy Boost programme, now operating in 13 countries, aims to improve early grade reading skills in government schools through teacher- and community-focused interventions. Reading assessments are used to identify gaps and measure improvement in core reading skills. Teachers are trained to teach these skills and monitor pupils' mastery of them. Communities are encouraged to support children's reading and enhance their literate environment. Evaluations in Malawi and Mozambique showed greater learning gains by children in Literacy Boost schools than by their peers, including a reduction in the number of children whose scores were zero, suggesting that the programme benefited low achievers.

Interactive radio instruction holds promise as a strategy to support second-language acquisition. In Guinea, the Fundamental Quality and Equity Levels project builds on traditions of storytelling and song to encourage children to read and speak French; in contrast, standard French literacy education in Guinea focuses on recitation and memorization. The programme has helped to narrow achievement gaps. Rural pupils

who participated in the programme scored as high or almost as high as their urban counterparts on French tests. In Zanzibar, children who had received interactive radio instruction, whether in non-formal or formal settings, had greater overall learning gains than children in formal classrooms who had not received radio instruction.

Effective use of ICT for learning requires careful consideration of how pupils' overall access to technology affects learning outcomes. Children from low income groups are less likely to have experience of ICT outside school, and may thus take longer to adapt to it. In Rwanda, 79% of students who used computers in secondary schools had previously used ICT and the internet outside school for various activities and this additional exposure supported their learning in school. However, girls and rural children were at a disadvantage because they were less likely to have access to internet cafés or other ICT resources in their communities.

Classroom-based learning assessments help teachers identify students who are struggling to learn, diagnose their learning difficulties and choose strategies to support them. Students can also make considerable gains if they are offered more opportunities to monitor their own learning. In Liberia, the EGRA Plus project, which trained teachers in the use of classroom-based assessment tools and provided reading resources and

scripted lesson plans to guide instruction, made a substantial impact, raising previously low levels of reading achievement among grade 2 and 3 pupils.

The use of national assessments for improving learning is less common in sub-Saharan Africa. Uganda, a notable exception, has conducted its survey-based National Assessment of Progress in Education since 1996, and yearly since 2003. The assessment tests literacy and numeracy in grades 3 and 6. In 2008, it was extended to the Senior Two grade of lower secondary level to test mathematics, English and biology. Reporting is disaggregated by age, location (rural or urban), and geographic region and zone. Results are meant to be used for better resource allocation, greater emphasis on classroom-based assessment, and intervention to support struggling pupils, and as a basis for changes to curriculum and teacher education. While the assessment system is fully functional, in practice, assessment results are not used well at the classroom level to improve learning. Targeted additional support via trained teaching assistants or community volunteers is another key way of improving learning for students at risk of falling behind.

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