All Children Learning: Quality Education Beyond 2015

We offer the following recommendations for the post-2015 global education agenda. This goal, targets, and indicators reflect our strong commitment to quality education and learning as a foremost priority of the emerging global agenda for sustainable development and as the critical driver for eradicating extreme poverty. These recommendations are designed to maximize linkages with other key development priorities and to cover a broad spectrum of quality education for lifelong learning.

Goal: By 2030, all children and youth receive and complete a quality primary and lower-secondary education with expected learning outcomes.

Targets and Indicators:

In order to narrow inequities across disadvantaged groups, it is essential that the measurement of all indicators be nationally disaggregated by gender, income, location, disability, ethnic groups, conflict, and emergencies.

**Universal Readiness to Learn:** All children start school on time and healthy.
- % of all children enrolled in pre-primary school
- % of children under 5 meeting minimum levels of child development indicators, including height-for-age (stunting)
- % reduction in pre-primary enrollment gap between the poorest and richest quintiles and with respect to all disadvantaged groups
  
  [Linkage to nutrition, ending preventable child deaths]

**Universal Equitable Access:** All children — regardless of gender, income, location, disability, ethnicity, conflict, or emergencies — access a quality primary and lower-secondary education.
- % of children enrolled in and attending primary and lower-secondary school
- % reduction in enrollment and attendance gaps between the poorest and richest quintiles and with respect to all disadvantaged groups
- increased quality of education as measured by ratio of students to teachers trained to national standards, breadth of curricula, and textbook-pupil ratios

**Universal Learning:** All children complete primary and lower-secondary education with the requisite knowledge and skills.
- % of children completing primary and lower secondary school based on the fulfillment of nationally-adopted standards
- % of children demonstrating proficient skills in literacy, numeracy, and science at ages 12 and 15
- % of youth demonstrating proficient skills in problem solving and critical thinking by the end of lower-secondary
- % reduction in learning outcome gaps between the poorest and richest quintiles and with respect to all disadvantaged groups
  
  [Linkage to adult literacy, youth employment, economic growth]

We believe that the above targets and indicators capture critical aspects of the goal of quality education for all. First, they reflect a construct for lifelong learning at the pre-primary, primary, and lower-secondary levels. They also address the related and complex challenges of improving access, equity, and the quality of education, and frame the critical issue of learning around demonstrated proficiency in core subject areas and skills considered by countries as integral prerequisites to the successful completion of a quality education.

The above recommendations posit education as a strong, freestanding global priority and value its linkages with other key development priorities, as noted above. We understand the importance of issues or principles that cut across all sectors, which should include: 1) tracking and narrowing disparities within countries based on gender, income, location, disability, ethnic groups, or conflict/ emergencies; 2) transitions from humanitarian aid to sustainable development in conflict and emergencies; and 3) measures to strengthen systems, build transparency for national budgets and planning, improve monitoring and evaluation, and boost long-term capacity.
The above recommendations reflect our effort to arrive at a global goal and targets on education that are clear, immediately understandable, and that will inspire and mobilize collective action. They also are designed to empower countries, particularly in the Global South, to reach the goals and targets in a manner that accounts for their specific priorities and challenges. Although the above indicators are narrowly focused to provide snapshots of education at different points in the education cycle, they are premised on critical assumptions about quality, teaching, and learning:

- Each country’s government will design and implement national educational strategies and plans based on nationally-appropriate standards for teacher training and curricula. The recommendations do not mandate how countries should design their primary school curriculum. However, they do suggest the importance of having a curriculum that is as comprehensive as possible and is tied to nationally-adopted standards so that youth acquire the relevant skills they need to succeed in the 21st century. Similarly, the recommendations do not prescribe assessment methodologies, leaving options for international and national assessment tools, including new open source and low-cost options.

- Quality education must take into account proven elements that enhance teaching and learning, such as:
  - Percentage of teachers trained or certified according to nationally-adopted standards and with opportunities for ongoing professional development
  - Teachers trained with specific academic and gender awareness skills
  - Adequate supply of textbooks, equipment, and other learning materials
  - Availability of sanitation and toilet facilities for boys and girls
  - Conflict- and violence-free environments for students en route to and within schools

- An equitable access to a quality education cannot be achieved without gender equity, something that can only be achieved when the systemic barriers to education that affect girls are overcome.

- Parent, teacher, and community interaction and engagement on education are essential to improve learning.

We acknowledge important additional work to be done in the area of standards, practices, and measurement that will be pivotal to the realization of these recommendations. Therefore, we suggest that these recommendations be launched in tandem with global consultations on effective education practices and standards, led by an international body and including participation from a broad range of stakeholders. These consultations could identify standards and practices, including for non-formal education, that would assist countries towards realization of the above goal and targets, in recognition of individual country needs, challenges, and priorities.

The data that would be tracked and reported by the above indicators are primarily intended to enable countries to effectively design, implement, and improve national education plans. Once established, these plans should be the basis for collaboration and coordination among an array of stakeholders working together across sectors to further country priorities. These plans should also transparently convey country progress in moving towards the global goal, and their success will be reflected in the proficiency snapshots.

Data:
The above indicators are either currently measurable or relate to metrics which can be improved or further developed. UNESCO’s World Inequality Database on Education (WIDE) provides a helpful starting point to identify and narrow the educational inequities that exist within countries and perhaps could be expanded to include measures on disability as well as children impacted by conflict or emergency. In addition, the work being done by the Learning Metrics Task Force -- convened by UNESCO’s Institute for Statistics and the Center for Universal Education at Brookings -- and in particular that of the Measures and Methods Working Group, is an example of the on-going development of innovative and constructive ways of measuring learning outcomes of a quality education.

These recommendations have been developed with input from:  
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The following organizations have signed on in support of these recommendations: