



## SABER

# Equity and Inclusion

2016

*Equity and inclusion are at the core of the World Bank Group's twin goals of eradicating extreme poverty and building shared prosperity. Within the Education Global Practice, promoting equity and inclusion (E&I) is a core component of the Education Sector Strategy 2020 (2011) which aims to help countries improve the capacity of their education systems to promote learning, including among the most disadvantaged populations. At the global level as well, equity is a guiding theme in the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals. SABER-Equity and Inclusion aims to help countries ensure that children and youth from disadvantaged groups benefit from equitable access to a quality education.*

## Why do countries invest in equity and inclusion?

Equity and inclusion in education are essential to enable individuals and their families to emerge from extreme poverty. Without E&I in education, many children will not be able to acquire a minimum level of learning, which often has dramatic consequences not only for future earnings, but also for other dimensions in life. E&I in education are essential for shared prosperity and sustainable development. Disparities in education are one of the major drivers of income inequality, both within countries and internationally.

## What challenges exist?

Despite substantial progress toward education for all, massive challenges remain for vulnerable groups. The latest Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO 2015) provides a synthesis of these issues. Three particular challenges at the core of the SABER-E&I framework are worth emphasizing:

- Many children never enroll in school or enroll late; some

58 million children of primary school age remain out of school today. Among those, 43 percent are expected to never enroll in school under present conditions, and another 35 percent are expected to enroll late.

- Many children drop out of school without completing basic education. Another 63 million children of lower secondary school age are out of school, in most cases due to drop-out.
- Even more children do not learn enough while in school. At least 250 million children of primary school age either fail to advance to grade four or do not reach a minimum level of learning.

## What is SABER-Equity and Inclusion?

Using new diagnostic tools and detailed policy information, the World Bank Group's Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) platform collects and analyzes comparative data and

knowledge on education systems around the world and highlights the policies and institutions that matter most to promote learning for all children and youth. SABER's detailed data-gathering and analysis are organized by "domains," or areas of education policymaking within an education system. These currently include levels of education (early childhood development, primary and secondary, workforce development, and tertiary), types of quality resources and supports (school finance, school health and school feeding, and teachers), areas of governance (engaging the private sector and school autonomy and accountability), information sources (education management information systems and student assessment), and complementary inputs and cross-cutting themes (equity and inclusion, information and communication technologies, and resilience). SABER aims to give all parties with a stake in educational results—from students, administrators, teachers, and parents to policymakers and

business people—an accessible, detailed, objective snapshot of how well the policies of their country's education system are oriented toward ensuring that all children and youth learn.

SABER-E&I, one of the domains most recently developed, documents and analyzes policies that promote equity in access to education and learning. Of the many policies under the control of governments, the allocation of public spending is one of the most important factors affecting equity in access to education and learning. But the domain also considers other policies, including the regulation of for-profit and non-profit private schools, as well as mechanisms related to affordability, cost recovery, and incentives for schooling and learning. The SABER-E&I framework helps policymakers ensure that children and youth from disadvantaged groups are able to learn.

Unlike many of the other domains, the SABER-E&I domain does not rely on standardized data collection tools to rate policies at the country level because issues of E&I can differ markedly between countries. Instead, the SABER-E&I domain provides a framework with which in-depth country studies can be conducted.

## What drives effective equity and inclusion?

Based on extensive research and global evidence on policies that work to improve education attainment and achievement for vulnerable groups, SABER-E&I identifies three policy goals that education systems need to fulfill to achieve learning for all:

**Establishing an enabling environment and providing adequate resources for the education system to be**

**equitable and inclusive.** This first policy goal relates to whether E&I in education are recognized as a priority, and whether financial and other resources as well as analysis are available to achieve strategic objectives. Five policy levers are considered: (1) the existence of a strategy for E&I in education with appropriate coordination mechanisms defining responsibilities and accountability for Ministries and agencies with a role in the promotion of E&I; (2) the availability of an E&I diagnostic for education; (3) the adoption of targets and the availability of financial resources to achieve E&I targets; (4) a regulatory and legal framework for E&I, including the recognition of different types of education providers; and (5) the existence of an adequate information system to monitor how vulnerable groups are served, evaluate the performance of programs and policies, and scale-up proven interventions while phasing out unsuccessful ones.

### Ensuring that all children are ready to learn and in school.

This second goal relates primarily to education attainment. The policy goal corresponds to the idea that children should enroll in school and that higher education attainment is in principle better for children. The three policy levers under this policy goal are: (1) improving child readiness for primary school, especially among vulnerable groups; (2) reducing the cost of schooling and improving affordability for the poor; and (3) ensuring that schools are not located too far away from where children live so that they can indeed enroll.

**Ensuring that all children and especially vulnerable groups learn in school.** This policy goal relates more or less to the quality of the education provided, with an emphasis on learning for specific

vulnerable groups who often have particular needs. The three policy levers under this policy goal are: (1) ensuring that basic conditions for learning in school are met; (2) implementing interventions that increase student learning; and (3) meeting the needs of specific vulnerable groups.

## How will SABER-Equity and Inclusion help to improve education systems?

SABER-E&I is supporting governments in their efforts to improve education results by:

- Providing a comprehensive framework based on a thorough review of global evidence and related diagnostic tools.
- Aiding countries in analyzing their education systems through diagnosis, dialogue, and reform.
- Enhancing the global knowledge base on effective policies.
- Enabling cross-country learning and fostering informed dialogue and decision-making using a structured framework and methodology.
- Involving key system leaders and stakeholders in identifying reform priorities.

## SABER-Equity and Inclusion Partners

Support from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) has been instrumental in the development of the SABER-E&I program. The Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is also a strong supporter of SABER and education systems research and has done much work to support the application of SABER globally.