



# Transforming Education Systems:

Accelerating Foundational  
Learning for Everyone

**SABER ANNUAL REPORT 2020**

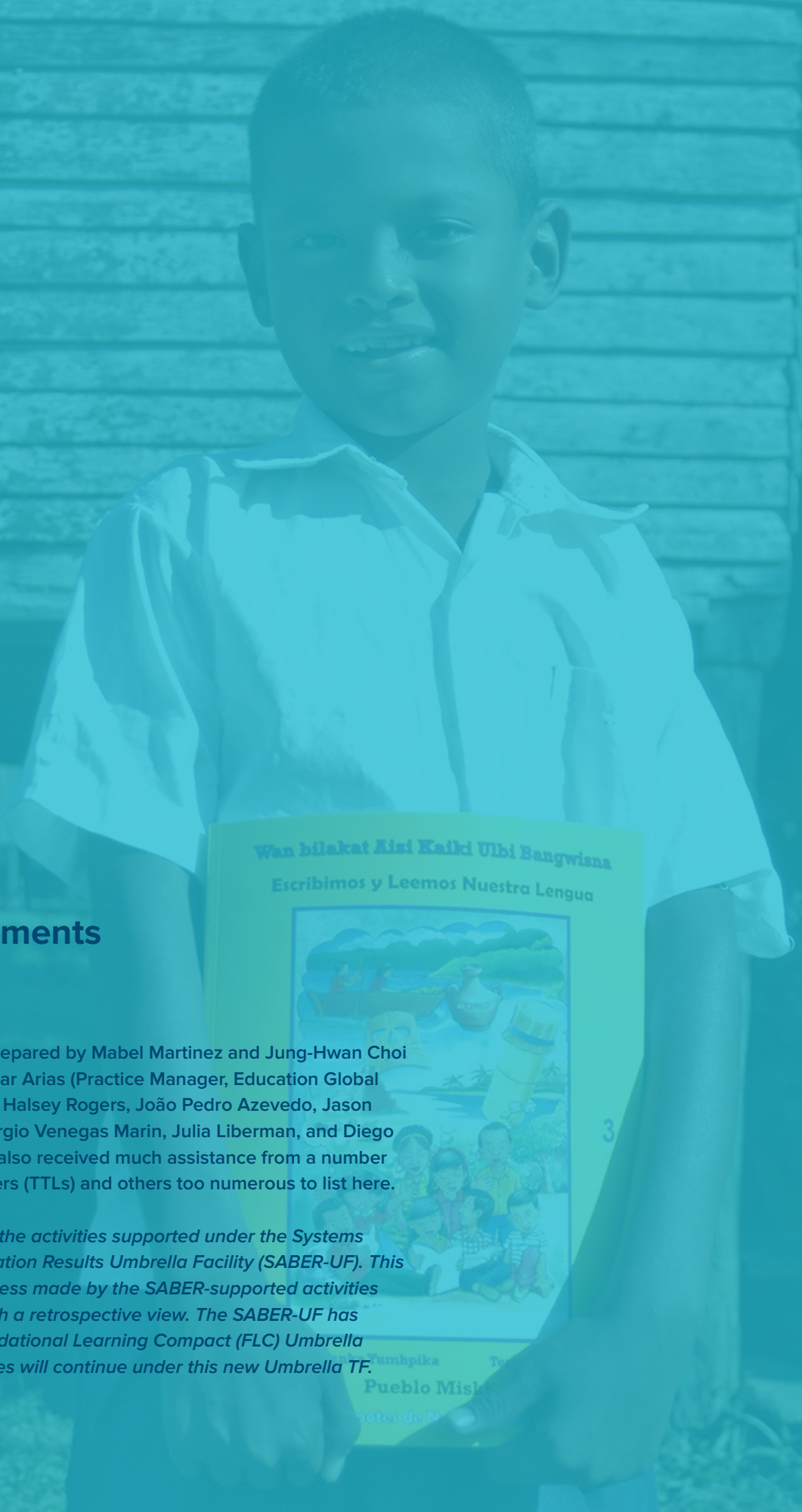
Retrospective Review



## Acknowledgements

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*This is the final Report on the activities supported under the Systems Approach for Better Education Results Umbrella Facility (SABER-UF). This report examines the progress made by the SABER-supported activities during 2019 and 2020 with a retrospective view. The SABER-UF has transitioned into the Foundational Learning Compact (FLC) Umbrella Trust Fund (TF), so activities will continue under this new Umbrella TF.*



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# List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>BMGF</b>	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation	<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>CLO</b>	Country Learning Outcome	<b>PASEC</b>	Program for the Analysis of Education Systems
<b>FCDO</b>	United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (formerly DFID)	<b>PILNA</b>	Pacific Island Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
<b>EPDL</b>	Education Police Design Lab	<b>PIRLS</b>	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
<b>FLC</b>	Foundational Learning Compact	<b>PISA</b>	Programme for International Student Assessment
<b>GCLO</b>	Global Comparability of Learning Outcomes	<b>PISA-D</b>	Programme for International Student Assessment for Development
<b>GEPD</b>	Global Education Policy Dashboard	<b>SACMEQ</b>	Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
<b>GLAD</b>	Global Learning Assessment Database	<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>GP</b>	Global Practice	<b>TEST</b>	Tertiary Education and Skills Training (umbrella)
<b>GPE</b>	Global Partnership for Education	<b>TF</b>	Trust Fund
<b>GPF</b>	Global Proficiency Framework	<b>TIMSS</b>	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
<b>HCI</b>	Human Capital Index	<b>ToRs</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>HCP</b>	Human Capital Project	<b>UF</b>	Umbrella Facility
<b>HLO</b>	Harmonized Learning Outcomes	<b>UIS</b>	UNESCO's Institute for Statistics
<b>IAEE</b>	International Association for Ethics in Education	<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>IDA</b>	International Development Association	<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>LAYS</b>	Learning-Adjusted Years of School	<b>WBG</b>	World Bank Group
<b>LeAP</b>	Learning Assessment Platform	<b>WDR</b>	World Development Report
<b>LLECE</b>	Latin-American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education		
<b>LP</b>	Learning Poverty		
<b>LPP</b>	Literacy Policy Package		
<b>MDTF</b>	Multi-Donor Trust Fund		
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education		

# Program Manager's Note



*“Having over half of children worldwide in learning poverty is unacceptable, and so we cannot continue with business as usual in education delivery. Through visionary and bold action, policymakers and stakeholders around the globe can turn this crisis into a boon to transform education systems and accelerate foundational learning so that all children can truly achieve learning everywhere.”*

**As Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on education and learning highlights**, simply providing schooling is not enough. Building the human capital that will enable economies to grow and individuals to thrive requires countries to turn schooling into actual learning, which cannot be taken for granted. Many countries, despite having substantially increased access to education, face a devastating learning crisis that is leaving millions of children without the most foundational skills. In low- and middle-income countries, where enrollment in primary school is nearly universal, the Learning Poverty rate was 53 percent even before COVID-19 pandemic, meaning that over half of 10-year-old children were unable to read and understand a simple passage. The crisis has only deepened with the extended school closures and sharp recessions caused by the pandemic. Recent simulations show that Learning Poverty is likely to rise from 53 percent to 63 percent; children affected by learning losses stand to lose US\$10 trillion in future earnings over their lifetimes; and vulnerable groups are likely to be disproportionately affected, with girls and children with disabilities being less likely to return to school post-crisis. Countries must therefore act both decisively and intelligently to tackle the learning crisis.

The SDGs, the World Development Report (WDR) 2018 on learning, the World Bank's Human Capital Project (HCP), and the launch of the Learning Poverty indicator and Learning Target have all drawn attention to the global learning crisis and highlighted the importance of measuring learning and its drivers. There is a new momentum around this measurement agenda, building on accomplishments of recent years. Since the Systems Approach for Better Education Results Umbrella Facility (SABER-UF) was created in 2013, SABER has produced a large body of policy-intent measurement tools and information that has helped dozens of countries diagnose constraints in education systems. With support from the Bill and Melina Gates Foundation (BMGF) and UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), SABER has evolved from its focus from analysis of policies in specific subfields of education to a more holistic measurement approach of all the major drivers of learning. The goals are to better identify binding constraints to improving learning, guide policy decisions, and monitor progress on policy efforts to address them. SABER-UF has made possible three main initiatives for achieving these goals: the **Global Comparability of Learning Outcomes (GCLO)**, to make learning data from different assessments comparable across countries; the multidimensional **Global Education Policy Dashboard (GEPD)**, to assess the capacity and performance of the education systems in client countries in terms of how well their practices (or service delivery), policies, and politics are oriented toward learning and attainment for all children; and the **Education Policy Design Labs (EPDLs)**, to guide the identification of the most binding constraints to learning and the selection of interventions to tackle those binding constraints in a given country context.

The global public goods being developed under the SABER-UF are even more relevant today because they can facilitate countries' efforts through the three phases of policy responses to COVID-19: Coping with sudden school closures, by mitigating learning loss; Managing Learning Continuity, as schools reopen safely and students are

brought back to classrooms; and Improving and Accelerating Learning, by leveraging opportunities to build educational systems back stronger and more equitable than before the crisis. The GCLO activities and tools within the harmonized learning measurement agenda can be used to either simulate potential learning losses due to the pandemic, or to measure actual learning losses once schools reopen; the GEPD can provide the baseline upon which countries can identify what is needed and the priorities for strengthening as their education systems reopen;<sup>1</sup> and the EPDLs can help prioritize and build shared understanding on how to accelerate learning.

Over the last two years, SABER continued supporting client countries in the deployment of the activities related to the GCLO, GEPD and EPDLs at the country level to accelerate foundational learning and achieve better outcomes. However, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted many of the activities that were planned under these initiatives.<sup>2</sup> The World Bank Group (WBG) had to quickly adapt and innovate, as governments' priorities shifted and school closures and other disruptions prevented planned fieldwork from being carried out. For example, the pandemic made it impossible to carry out in-person policy linking workshops, thus delaying implementation of envisioned activities, but the inter-agency working group was able to adjust the methodology by switching to remote (online) workshop delivery. The GEPD has also adapted: it offered much-needed data to the first batch of countries (for example, on availability of hand-washing facilities in schools) as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded; after the GEPD was fully implemented in Peru, Jordan, and Rwanda, it was partially implemented in Ethiopia and Mozambique before the fieldwork was disrupted by COVID-19 school closures; as fieldwork was paused, it continued to develop all the dashboard resources, technical innovations, and analysis of collected data; and it is prepared to continue implementation once schools can reopen. Likewise, due to the COVID-19 crisis, the implementation of the EPDLs as originally envisioned shifted: some elements were tested as the framework was built and deployed, and the team also developed dashboards and a simulation tool to help teams build evidence-based narratives on the impact of learning losses associated with the pandemic, globally and in each country.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed fundamental weaknesses in education systems, it also provides an opportunity for reimagining education, addressing inequality, and reducing learning poverty. As they rebuild, countries can orient their systems toward a more inclusive “future of learning”, one in which learning occurs for everyone, everywhere. This vision for the future can be realized only by transforming entire education systems to prioritize student learning. To help realize this future of learning, the SABER UF has recently transitioned to the **Foundational Learning Compact (FLC)**, a new Umbrella Trust Fund created by the WBG's Education Global Practice (GP) in alignment with an institution-wide Trust Fund reform. In an effort to address the learning crisis and help realize the promise of learning for all, the FLC has been established to align partnerships, financing, and technical support around key measurable education outcomes, namely decreases in Learning Poverty and increases in Learning-Adjusted Years of Schooling (LAYS). The FLC is now our multi-donor umbrella trust fund that hosts existing and new education initiatives meant to enhance global and country efforts to pursue systemic and sustained improvements in early childhood, primary, and secondary education to achieve learning for all. The SABER initiatives will continue to be a key part of our country engagement, along with other global initiatives planned under the FLC that include (but are not limited to) the Accelerator Program, Coach (teacher professional development tool), and the EdTech Hub/Policy Academy.

<sup>1</sup> The GEPD can be critical in the countries where the data has been collected and that have implemented the dashboard, as a valuable baseline to understand the policy needs to improve education systems as schools reopen; for the countries that have not implemented the dashboard, it will be valuable to set up a baseline to set priorities that countries might want to tackle in the reopening or as they build back better their education systems.

<sup>2</sup> This includes the collection and validation of data, production and dissemination of web data, policy dialogue, country-based and regional capacity development, and expansion of learning assessment coverage, among others.







# Context

**With more than half the world's children already living in learning poverty** even before the COVID-19 pandemic, eliminating learning poverty is an urgent development objective. Beyond its inherent value, it is critical to achieving the twin World Bank Group (WBG) goals of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity. The closure of schools due to COVID-19 has been a setback toward that goal, placing unprecedented pressure on education, with many expected short- and long-term costs. The school closures are not just a long interruption of the education academic and social experience, but also a cause of increased uncertainty about the future. If governments do not respond well, the learning crisis will deepen, with poorer learning outcomes, higher dropout rates, lower human capital accumulation, and greater instability over the long term. The negative impacts are expected to be higher among the poor, leading to increased inequality.

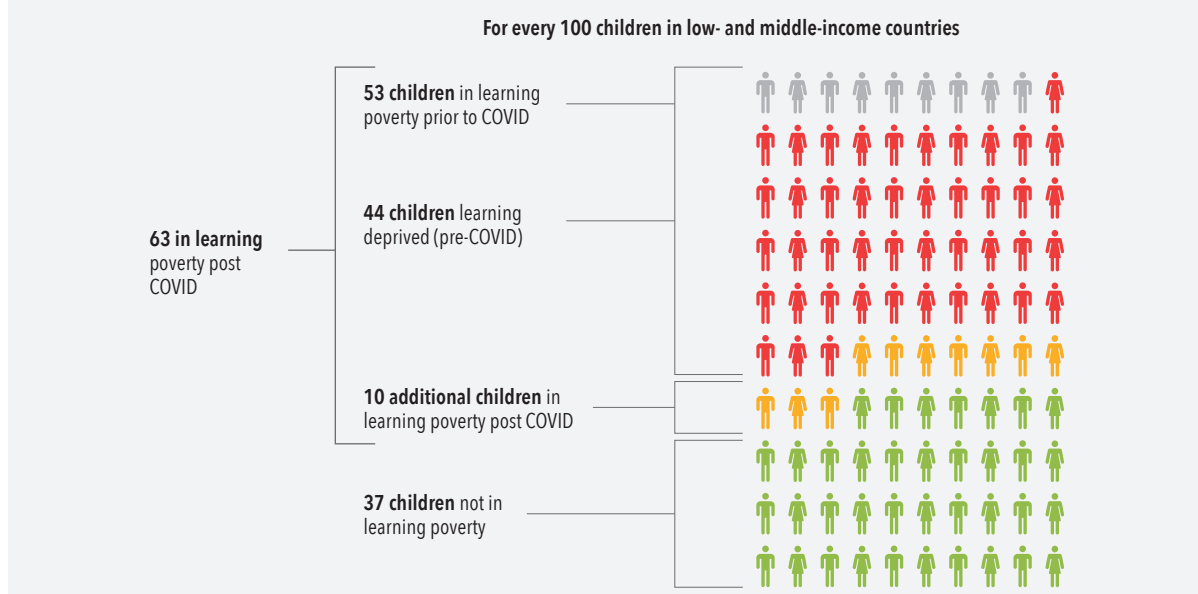
## Impact of COVID-19 on Learning Poverty: A Crisis within a Crisis

Before COVID-19, there was already a global learning crisis, with many countries and communities not achieving learning for all despite all the advances in schooling over the past decade, as highlighted by the WBG's World Development Report (WDR) 2018, *Learning to Realize Education's Promise*. The learning crisis has left countries with large human capital deficits: many students are leaving schools or tertiary institutions without the foundational, socioemotional, digital, and technical skills needed for a world with the fast-paced changing nature of jobs.

The pandemic is amplifying the global learning crisis that already existed. Global, regional, and country-level COVID-19 learning loss simulations by the World Bank estimating the potential impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in learning poverty show that the percentage of primary school-age children in low- and middle-income countries living in learning poverty might increase by 10 points, from 53 percent to 63 percent. This implies that an additional 72 million primary-school-aged children could fall into learning poverty. And the share of youth who fails to achieve minimum functional literacy and numeracy could rise from 40 percent before the pandemic to 50 percent. All this puts this generation of students at risk of losing about US\$10 trillion in future labor earnings over their working lives, an amount equivalent to almost 10 percent of global GDP.<sup>3</sup> See Figure 1 for a summary of the impacts of learning poverty and other outcomes.

**Learning Poverty is calculated as the share of students below the minimum proficiency level in reading**, adjusted by the out-of-school population. It combines learning and access into one simple measure, which the World Bank developed together with UNESCO's Institute for Statistics (UIS). Foundational skills—and reading in particular—are at the core of the aspirations embodied in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4. The ability to read with comprehension is a foundational skill that every education system strives to impart by late in primary school—generally by age 10. Children who do not become proficient in reading by the end of primary school often cannot catch up later.

3 Azevedo, João Pedro, Amer Hasan, Diana Goldemberg, Syedah Aroob Iqbal, and Koen Martijn Geven. 2020. [Simulating the Potential Impacts of COVID-19 School Closures on Schooling and Learning Outcomes: A Set of Global Estimates](#). World Bank Policy Research Paper 9284. The new report, [Realizing the Future of Learning: From Learning Poverty to Learning for Everyone, Everywhere](#), lays out a vision for the future of learning that can guide countries today in their investments and policy reforms, so that they can build more equitable, effective, and resilient education systems and ensure that all children learn with joy, rigor, and purpose in school and beyond the school walls. The accompanying report, [Reimagining Human Connections: Technology & Innovation at the World Bank](#), presents the World Bank's new approach to guide investments in education technology, so that technology can truly serve as a tool to make education systems more resilient to catastrophic shocks like COVID-19 and help in reimagining the way education is delivered.

**Figure 1. Impacts of COVID shocks on Learning Poverty and other outcomes**

Without visionary and strategic action, the crisis will almost certainly widen gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged children and youth, and further weaken the performance of education systems for years to come. It is essential to lay out a clear vision of what the new normal for education systems—the (not-too-distant) Future of Learning—should look like, so that this vision can guide and inform efforts to build back better.

## The Strategic Vision for the Learning of the Future: Transforming Education to Chart a Course Beyond the Pandemic

Countries now have the opportunity to build the foundations for the learning of the future. The COVID-19 crisis has exposed the fragility of the long-standing model of service delivery of education that relies heavily on in-school interactions—connections between teachers and students, as well as parents, caregivers, and principals.

**“Effective action today to mitigate large and mounting learning losses, recover, and rebuild stronger is needed more urgently than ever to accelerate the acquisition of foundational skills and, increasingly, 21st-century skills for every child. There is a window of opportunity to build on the lessons of the pandemic and to build back a system that is equitable, where all schools and homes have the conditions and support for learning; that is effective, where teachers and schools are equipped to support each student at the level she needs; and that is resilient, with education services that are well-managed and ensure continuity in the learning process between the school and the home and community.”**

**Jaime Saavedra**, World Bank Global Director for Education, at the launch of the reports *Realizing the Future of Learning: From Learning Poverty to Learning for Everyone, Everywhere* and *Reimagining Human Connections: Technology & Innovation at the World Bank*.

Transforming education delivery and accelerating progress in learning might seem overly aspirational given the huge challenges countries are facing during the pandemic. However, governments and other stakeholders are



already investing in non-traditional models of education delivery during the pandemic. Many will be putting in a lot of effort to rebuild school systems in the near future, likely with much fewer resources than before. The acceleration in use of remote learning approaches, along with better support for parents and caregivers, can be used as a launching pad to build more equitable and resilient education systems, improving learning both in schools and at home. This is momentum that countries can and should capitalize on.

In responding to the pandemic, education systems have been forced to rapidly implement innovations in remote learning at scale. To reach as many children and youth as possible, they have used multi-modal remote learning approaches that combine online resources with radio, TV, mobile, as well as printed materials for the most vulnerable. However, the huge digital divides—from connectivity to digital skills—and inequalities in the quality of parental support and home learning environments is amplifying learning inequality.

Two outcome indicators of foundational learning and skills help in charting strategies for long-term improvement out of the pandemic. First is the Learning Poverty indicator described above, which brings together schooling and learning indicators at the end of primary education in one easy-to-understand measure. It is calculated as the share of children who have not achieved minimum reading proficiency (as measured in schools), adjusted by the proportion of children who are out of school and are assumed not able to read proficiently. It is therefore an early-warning indicator, focused on 10-year-olds, that can be used to track progress toward gains in the second outcome indicator, Learning-Adjusted Years of Schooling (LAYS). LAYS, which is the education measure embedded within the WBG's Human Capital Index (HCI), also combines data on the quantity and quality of education but is focused on a later age. It calculates the number of high-quality-equivalent years of schooling a child can expect to receive by age 18.

To support countries in improving their Learning Poverty and LAYS outcomes in the COVID context, the WBG's Education GP has articulated a five-pillar Education Approach to help countries chart their own path with a political commitment to carry out investments and reforms to ensure that (see Figure 2): (1) learners are prepared and motivated to learn; (2) teachers at all levels are effective and valued; (3) learning resources ensure that every student is taught at the level she needs; (4) schools are safe and inclusive spaces; and (5) education systems are well-managed.

Given the critical importance of foundational skills, before the pandemic the WBG set an ambitious but achievable global Learning Target to guide its operational engagements with countries: by 2030, reduce by at least half the share of children who cannot read and understand a simple text by age 10.<sup>4</sup> To support near-term progress toward this target, the institution has developed and integrated a Literacy Policy Package (LPP or the Package) to complement broader, longer-term system reforms.

The LPP includes country policies and measures that have proven to be effective in achieving foundational literacy at scale. While the Learning Target is a global one, for concrete actions to happen in the classrooms of the world, each country has to establish its own path to eliminating learning poverty in the foreseeable future. The LPP comprises a set of integrated recommended interventions focused on promoting acquisition of proficiency in reading in primary school; this package should be adapted to country circumstances as short-term reforms today that will improve service delivery for students. The Package consists of five interrelated lines of action that have proven successful in rapidly boosting literacy in several countries.

For all these five lines of action, the WBG will support smart uses of technology to deliver, and it will work with countries to estimate the cost of implementing the Package to achieve their own national learning poverty targets. In addition, throughout the five pillars of the WBG's Education Approach depicted above, countries can effectively harness the power of education technology—or “EdTech,” encompassing hardware, software, digital

4 A complete description of Learning Poverty and the Learning Target are contained in the World Bank report *Ending Learning Poverty: What Will It Take?* (World Bank, 2019).

Figure 2. Education Approach and Literacy Policy Package



**Literacy Policy Package OFFERS SUBSET OF NEAR-TERM INTERVENTIONS THAT MAKE A CHANGE IN CLASSROOM TODAY**

1		<b>Assure political and technical commitment to making all children literate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political will</li> <li>• Measure baseline levels of achievement</li> <li>• Develop age-appropriate milestones for literacy development</li> </ul>
2		<b>Ensure effective literacy instruction by supporting teachers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear curricula and pedagogical guidance for literacy instruction</li> <li>• Focused, practical professional development &amp; coaching</li> <li>• Frequent assessment of student progress to teach at the right level</li> </ul>
3		<b>Provide at least one quality, age-appropriate book for child</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure each child has access to high-quality reading material</li> </ul>
4		<b>Teach children first in a language they understand</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mother tongue instruction supported by well-planned transitions to additional languages later in primary school</li> </ul>
5		<b>Foster children's oral language abilities and love of books &amp; reading</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oral language development and awareness in ECE</li> <li>• Daily home reading and positive reading experiences outside school</li> </ul>

content, data, and information systems—to support and enrich teaching and learning and improve education management and delivery. As noted in the Bank's new *Reimagining Human Connections: Technology & Innovation at the World Bank* report, EdTech can create new connections between teachers, students, parents, and broader communities to create learning networks.

Equity and inclusion are at the core of this response package and the WBG's Education Approach. Disadvantaged children and youth will suffer the most, e.g., children from poor and less educated households will suffer the largest learning losses; girls may be more likely to drop out; and students with disabilities may also find it harder as schools reopen. Therefore, the WBG and development partners have been focusing support on, for example, inclusive remote-learning technologies, dropout prevention, learning recovery, practical and effective pedagogy, foundational skills, and socioemotional support.



## | SABER Umbrella Facility (SABER-UF)

The activities supported under the Systems Approach for Better Education Results Umbrella Facility (SABER-UF) aim to generate public goods geared toward improving education system performance. This is at the core of the WBG's Education Approach, which aspires to achieve better learning outcomes and empower countries to deliver quality education for learning for all. All the above-mentioned efforts (previous section) are highly complementary to the SABER-UF activities.

The SABER-UF was created in 2013 as a Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) to help countries analyze and strengthen their education systems through the provision of public goods designed to capture education policies and their implementation. Initially funded by Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID, now renamed FCDO), SABER initially focused on assessing how well a country's education policies and institutions aligned with its education goals by conducting a thorough inventory of their critical education policy gaps, and benchmarked these policies against global evidence of what works to improve learning. Later, SABER began developing a framework for measuring and analyzing service delivery at the school level, providing a much-needed feedback loop to help countries strengthen their policies and institutions.

These efforts resulted in a large body of tools and information to help countries diagnose constraints in education systems, but scaling up the use of these instruments is difficult and costly. The release of the WDR 2018, the SDGs, the HCP, and the WBG's Learning Target, by drawing attention to the global learning crisis, raised the ambition for the measurement agenda on learning and its drivers, as well as for streamlined and cost-effective instruments that build on the existing SABER tools, and that can be scaled up to all countries to better identify binding constraints to improving learning, guide policy decisions, and monitor progress on policy efforts to address them

To support these priorities and as a result of new commitments from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and FCDO, in 2018 the SABER program strengthened its support for making the internationally comparable learning outcome data publicly available, in close coordination with UNESCO's Institute for Statistics (UIS) and efforts under the Learning Assessment Platform (LeAP), and it moved toward more holistic measurement of the drivers of learning. With regard to the latter, the SABER program has been focusing on streamlined, yet comprehensive, initiatives for (1) identifying important gaps between what the evidence suggests is effective in promoting learning and what is happening in practice and (2) providing client countries with resources they can use to identify key decision points and to monitor progress toward improving the quality of their education systems and learning outcomes in the short and medium terms. These initiatives have the following objectives: (1) to harmonize existing international, regional, and national learning assessments to make learning data from different assessments comparable across countries through the **Global Comparability of Learning Outcomes (GCLO)**; (2) to measure and track progress of the key drivers of learning outcomes in basic education around the world at the service delivery, policy, and politics level, with specific attention to their impact on policy dialogue and policymaking, through the **Global Education Policy Dashboard (GEPD)**; and (3) to identify the key constraints to learning and set the priorities for policy intervention and implementation to remove such constraints in a given country, through the **Education Policy Design Labs (EPDLs)**.

These objectives and their associated overarching initiatives encourage improved measurements and use of the data to track short-term progress toward the HCI and to reduce Learning Poverty. For countries that already have the necessary data, SABER has supported making better use of the data through the GCLO, by making learning data from different assessments comparable across countries. The GEPD has enabled countries to monitor holistically the quality of their education systems, while the EPDLs have offered a systematic approach to guide better decision making using all relevant learning data from the GEPD and elsewhere.

Given the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures, there is uncertainty about the calendar of the international and regional learning assessments under the GCLO. The Dashboard fieldwork has been disrupted as well; once schools can reopen, implementation will continue, and indeed planning is already underway. Moreover, the implementation of the EPDLs shifted: some elements were tested as the framework was built and deployed, and the team developed dashboards and a simulation tool to help teams build evidence-based narratives on the impact of COVID-19-driven learning losses in each country. These initiatives will be presented in more detail in the next section, which reviews activities and accomplishments in 2019-2020.

The WBG's recent Trust Fund reform led to the transition of SABER-UF into the Foundational Learning Compact (FLC) Umbrella Trust Fund, carried out with the agreement of SABER's current donors/partners. FLC will include not only these SABER initiatives, but also the Accelerator Program, Coach, EdTech Policy Academy, Early Learning Partnership (ELP), and Results in Education for All Children (REACH).

## SABER-UF's Transition to the New Foundational Learning Compact (FLC)

### World Bank Group's Umbrella Trust Fund (TF) Reform

**The WBG has been undertaking a significant TF reform** since 2019 to reduce TF portfolio fragmentation, improve increase strategic alignment, increase efficiency, and enhance oversight of its trust fund portfolio—all with the goal of improving the value proposition to the WBG's funding partners. The current Umbrella Trust Fund reform moves the WBG to a system of fewer, larger, and more strategically aligned trust fund programs that collectively tackle sizeable development challenges, such as the problem of promoting foundational learning, and achieve meaningful results at scale.

As part of this reform effort, the Education GP has created two Umbrella Trust Funds which will serve as the basis for most future fundraising efforts: the Foundational Learning Compact (FLC) and the Tertiary Education and Skills Training (TEST) Umbrellas. The FLC covers the World Bank's work in early childhood education, primary education, secondary education, and system-wide support, while TEST covers post-secondary, tertiary, and lifelong learning.

### The FLC and SABER

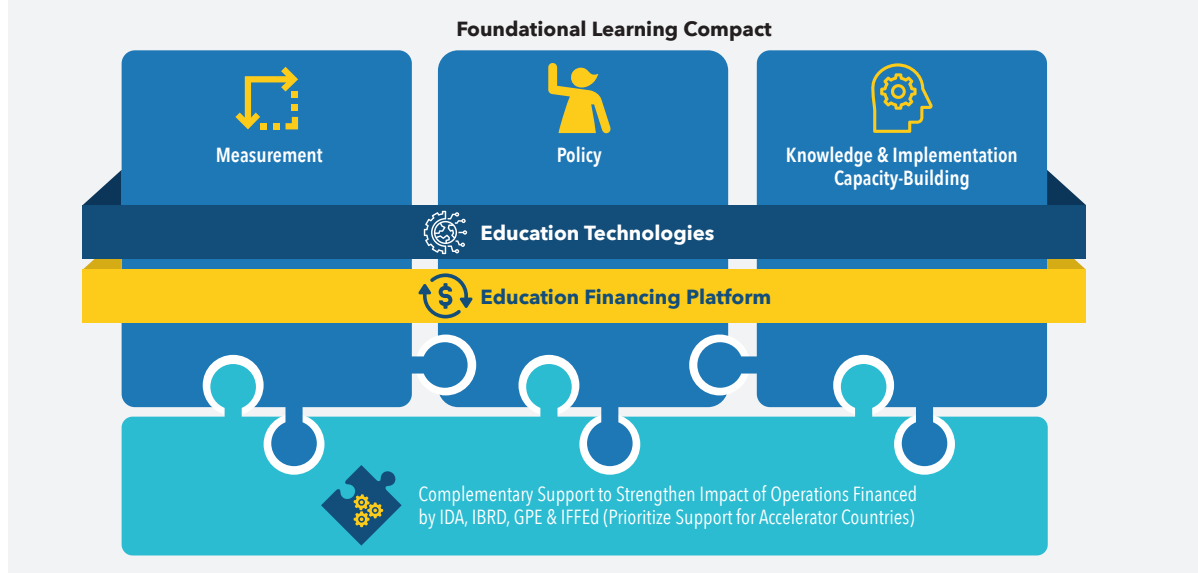
**As noted above, SABER-UF has now been converted**, with the agreement of its current donors/partners, into the "anchor" MDTF of the FLC Umbrella. This will allow better connection between its many initiatives and the other key activities planned under the FLC.

The FLC is designed to support country-specific and global efforts to pursue systemic and sustained improvements in education systems that lead to better education outcomes for all. To allow monitoring of impact of trust fund resources, the FLC is anchored in two key outcome indicators: Learning-Adjusted Years of Schooling (LAYS) and Learning Poverty (both explained above). The FLC is designed around early childhood, primary, and secondary education. The key indicator for early childhood and primary education activities will be to reduce Learning Poverty through targeted actions focused on improving foundational learning, while secondary education activities will focus on sustained improvements in education systems to achieve learning for all measured through increases in LAYS.

To support the achievement of these ambitious goals, the FLC is designed around three pillars (Measurement, Policy, and Knowledge and Implementation Capacity-Building), two cross-cutting themes (EdTech and Education Financing Platform), and a country-specific window where these different areas come together in support of better country outcomes (see Figure 3).



**Figure 3. The Foundational Learning Compact design**



The Measurement pillar, which includes the Accelerator program, improves country capacity to measure learning and other education outcomes as well as their drivers. The Policy pillar, which includes the Literacy Policy Package, develops resources to inform and support reforms. The pillar for Knowledge and Implementation Capacity-Building distills the best evidence on what works in education and aims to improve the quality of education bureaucracy. All three pillars require sustainable approaches to financing and smart uses of new technology. To drive better outcomes, these various efforts must come together at scale in an “instructionally coherent” manner through Country-Level Operationalization. All these efforts will be guided by the Education Approach described above.<sup>5</sup>

The public goods developed under the SABER-supported initiatives (GCLO, GEPD and EDPLs) can be deployed to support the work under the Accelerator program, financed in part through the FLC. With the Accelerator Country designation, the Bank is recognizing a few countries (or subnational regions) that have evidence-based plans and substantial political commitment to accelerate the reduction of Learning Poverty. The Accelerators are expected to demonstrate substantial success in alleviating Learning Poverty and, thus, offer inspiration to one another and to other countries to demonstrate how improving foundational skills can occur relatively quickly. The Bank and the global education community need to celebrate, learn from, and support their efforts as much as possible. For example, the Accelerator program intends to implement the GEPD with each government and is under discussions about potentially applying the “policy linking” exercise in some Accelerators.

<sup>5</sup> The FLC supports, like the Education Approach, a mindful and strategic approach to all the issues that influence learning from teacher’s professional development to stopping violence against children.







# Program Highlights (2019-2020)

During 2020, SABER continued to serve client needs through the development and implementation of global public goods related to the SABER initiatives at the country level to accelerate foundational learning and achieve better outcomes. At the same time, progress was limited by the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, during 2019-2020 SABER-UF accomplished the following as a result of its initiatives (more details in Annex 2):

## Global Comparability of Learning Outcomes (GCLO):

- Updated and expanded the previous version of the Harmonized Learning Outcomes (HLO) Global Dataset, by including the Programme for International Student Assessment for Development (PISA-D), and Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) countries. Released PISA 2018, which provides more recent data for 80 countries and economies and the addition of two new countries, Belarus and Brunei Darussalam.
- Created the Learning Poverty database with data from 116 countries over 20 years. Learning Poverty database has been expanded, including the results of PASEC 2019, SEA-PLM 2019, and TIMSS 2019. Created country two-pagers on Learning Poverty for a nonexpert audience.
- Created the Global Learning Assessment Database (GLAD) of 481 learning assessments (the Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education [LLECE], the Program for the Analysis of Education Systems [PASEC], the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study [PIRLS], the Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study [TIMSS]).
- Improved awareness and use of data among researchers and development partners, by releasing a public GitHub Repository with the full harmonization code used to construct the [GLAD](#) and the [Learning Poverty](#). Blog posts (see Annex 3) and interactive data visualizations have been produced using the GLAD database.
- Collaborated with UIS, development partners, and country candidates (Ghana, and The Gambia) on moving forward the discussions on assessment of content alignment and identified Ghana and The Gambia for the policy linking pilots. Discussions with counterparts in these countries led to government approval of the Policy Linking pilots' online implementation in 2021.
- [COVID-19 simulations](#) for Learning Poverty and Learning Adjusted Years of Schooling have been produced using this GCLO as their main input. In addition to global and regional estimates, this resource has also been used in over 40 country-specific learning loss simulations. See Annex 3 for a list of some of the global, regional, and country narratives built with the simulation tool that have been published.
- UIS has requested the co-branding of the Learning Poverty measure, and has proposed to include it in the SDG monitoring framework. The announcement will be made in March 2021 at the time of the UIS database update

## Global Education Policy Dashboard (GEPD):

- Developed data collection instruments and training materials. The three instruments—[School Survey](#), [Survey of Public Officials](#), and [Policy Survey](#)—were developed through streamlining existing instruments, psychometric analyses, and design of new questionnaires. The team also created all necessary training and field materials, which have been used in Jordan, Mozambique, Peru, and Rwanda. All are available in multiple languages.



- Digitized and automated procedures to save time and cost in data collection. All instruments have been programmed in Survey Solutions in multiple languages. The processing of data and the calculation of indicators is automated. Data collection was completed in Rwanda, Jordan, and Peru. The remaining countries (Ethiopia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic [PDR], Madagascar, Morocco, Mozambique, Pakistan, Ghana, Senegal, and a country in Eastern Europe) are expected to be completed once schools reopen.
- Finalized numerous dissemination materials, including the [GEPD Reference Guide](#) (which describes in detail the initiative, instruments, and indicators), the [GEPD Implementation Brief](#), and the [GEPD Technical Note](#). These materials can be found in the [new GEPD website](#), created to report data in different layers and to provide drill-down and comparison options.
- Advanced on the phasing in of the GEPD in countries. Selected the initial set of countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Jordan, Lao PDR, Madagascar, Morocco, Mozambique, Pakistan–Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan–Punjab, Peru, Rwanda, Senegal, and a country in Eastern Europe) in the first half of 2019. Implemented the GEPD in Jordan, Peru, and Rwanda, and partially implemented it in Ethiopia and Mozambique, until fieldwork was interrupted by COVID-related school closures. Once schools reopen, implementation of the GEPD will continue in the initial set of 13 countries.
- Linked the Dashboard to other initiatives such as the Accelerator Program, EdTech Readiness Index, and the work on assessments, to take advantage of the complementarities between projects while scaling up the initiative. For instance, it is proposed that the GEPD will be implemented in each of the Accelerators to strengthen the planned activities by providing timely data. In the case of the EdTech Readiness Index, its instruments were designed so that they could be deployed jointly with GEPD ones.

### Education Policy Design Labs (EPDLs):

- Before COVID-19 hit, the team tested the initial protocol for EPDL clinics, as originally planned, with the country education team of the Democratic Republic of Congo in June 2019. This included scripted meetings and workshops.
- Due to COVID-19, the implementation of the EPDLs as they were originally envisioned shifted. The clinics were applied with modifications in Bangladesh, Jordan, and Palestine in 2020. The following tools and resources were produced: a pilot script, mental models for the education sector, and interactive dashboards using harmonized data and analytics.
- Some of the EPDLs' elements have been tested with the Education Team, and over 40 country teams have used this framework, dashboards, and accompanying simulation tool to help them engage with counterparts and strengthen an evidence-based narrative on the potential impact of COVID-19 on learning. This work has also been used to leverage several other initiatives from the Education GP and other development partners such as UNICEF, UNESCO, Save the Children, the Save Our Future the campaign, and so on. See Annex 3 for a list of the global, regional, and country narratives built with the simulation tool.
- Given the new COVID-19 context and the engagement opportunities created by the Accelerator Program, the team has been under discussions with FCDO and the BMGF on redesigning the emphasis and focus of the EPDLs going forward to better align the resources and tools with this new context and opportunities.





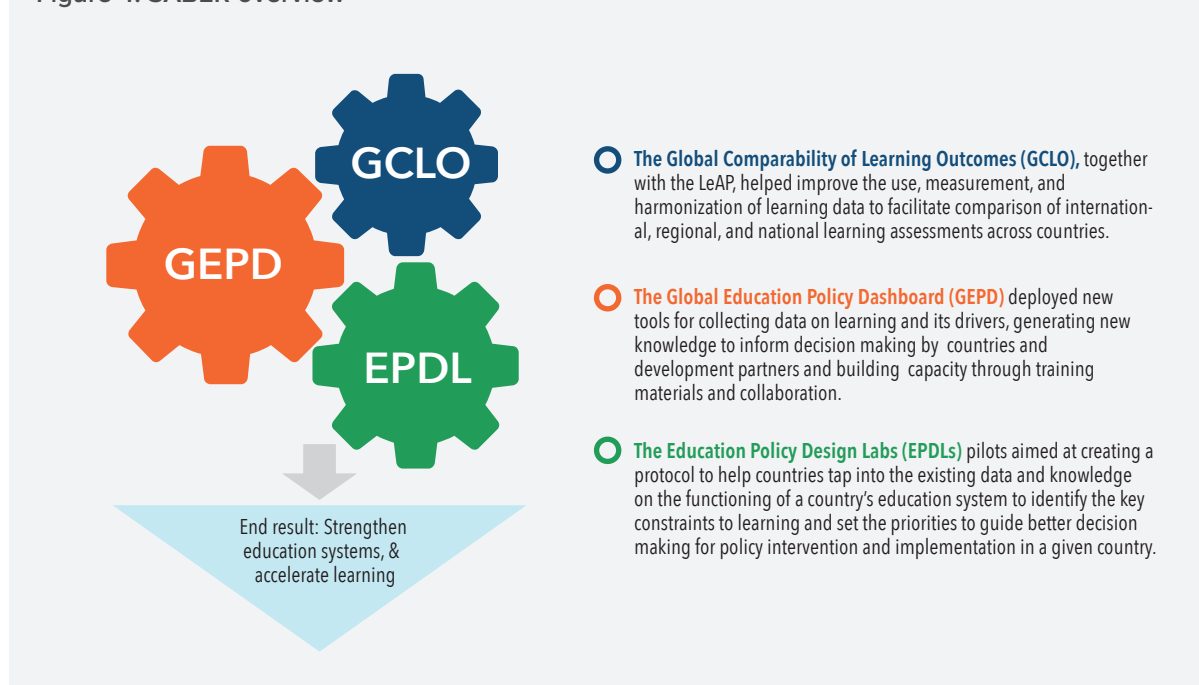




# SABER Initiatives in Action

The three initiatives under the SABER-UF Program are described below with a retrospective view to account for the progress made during 2019 and 2020. These initiatives are intrinsically interrelated, and aim to support countries strengthen their education systems and improve the quality of their learning outcomes through improved measurement and use of the data (see Figure 4). More recently, some of these tools are helping teams strengthen an evidence-based narrative on the impact of learning losses associated with COVID-19.

Figure 4. SABER overview

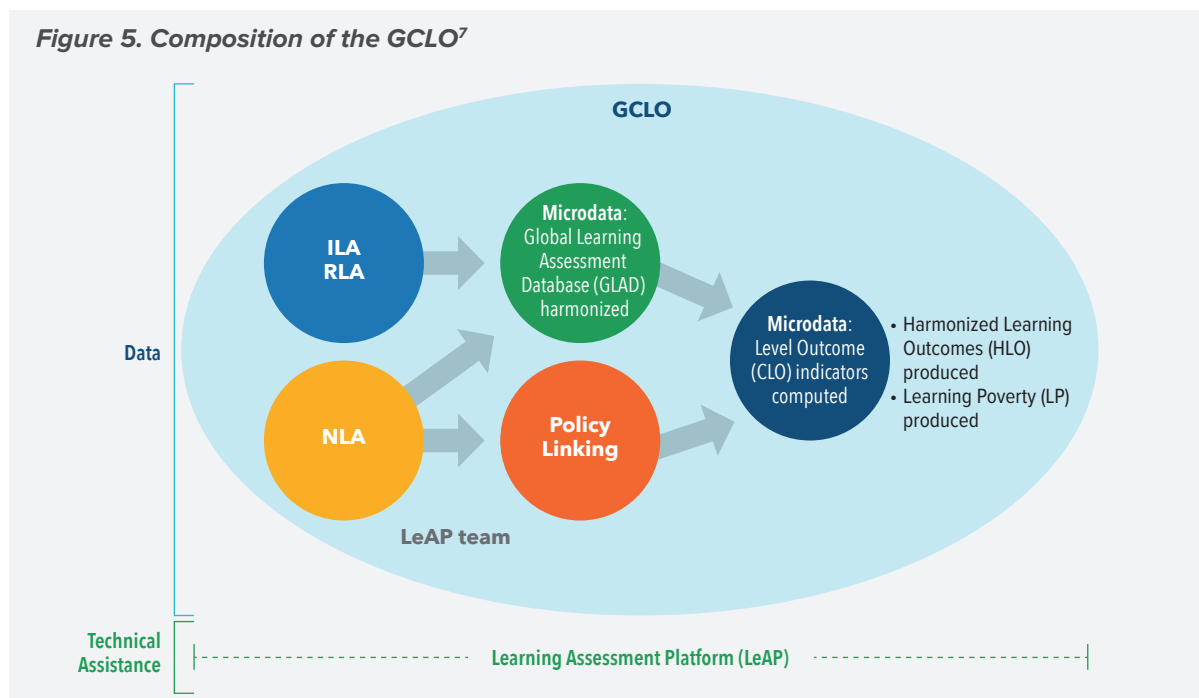


## | 1. Global Comparability of Learning Outcomes (GCLO)

**The Global Comparability of Learning Outcomes (GCLO) initiative** is a collection of harmonized learning -assessment datasets at the student and country level. It is the most comprehensive exercise to date linking existing international, regional, and national learning assessments to harmonize learning data (see the World Bank's Global Data Set on Education Quality in the references). The GCLO has covered 183 countries with data from 2000 to 2020 on levels of student learning in reading, mathematics, science, and problem solving from international, regional, and national learning assessments to make these data from different assessments comparable across countries.

To strengthen the global comparability of existing data, the WBG supported the Global Learning Assessment Database (**GLAD**) harmonization during 2019-2020, from which **Country Learning Outcome (CLO)** indicators have been derived, as well as the comparable learning indicators such as the **Harmonized Learning Outcome**

(HLO), and **Learning Poverty (LP)**.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the WBG has been working with development partners and UIS on **Policy Linking Pilots**, which will facilitate countries' reporting on global education targets using a version of the Angoff standard-setting methodology that aligns existing national large-scale learning assessment results with global reading and mathematics learning standards, as expressed in the Global Proficiency Framework (GPF). See Figure 5.



The primary input to the production of the **HLO indicator** is the **Global Learning Assessment (GLAD)** harmonization, from which the **Country Learning Outcome (CLO) indicators** are derived. The HLO constitutes the basis for one of the critical components of the HCL: the **Learning Adjusted Years of Schooling (LAYS) indicator**. The same harmonization process is also used to produce the **Learning Poverty (LP) indicator**.

## Highlights of Activities and Outputs

During the second half of 2019, the WBG organized the process for producing the GCLO around **four main components**: (1) access of existing and new learning assessments, (2) storage of data, (3) production and processing of both the microdata and country-level indicators, and (4) dissemination.

- *Access and Storage of Microdata and Indicators*: The EduAnalytics team has actively worked with internal and external partners to expand the collection of learning assessments used in this process, including both cross-national and national learning assessments (NLAs). See Annex 2 for the data inputs that feed into the GCLO during 2019-2020.

6 During 2019-2020, the GLAD harmonization was created for microdata archival and harmonization, and it gradually expanded to update and improve the quality, coverage, and methodological soundness of the HLO, LP, and Learning-Adjusted Years of Schooling (LAYS) indicators; and to strengthen alignment between the WBG EdStats Application Programming Interface (API) and the UIS database on school enrollment. This work program provided open access to the derived indicators and supported methodological documentation (including the code used to compute indicators), as well as a series of short nontechnical notes to improve the understanding and use of data of newly derived indicators and their policy relevance by nontechnical specialists across the globe.

7 ILA: International Learning Assessment  
RLA: Regional Learning Assessment  
NLA: National Learning Assessment

- *Production of Harmonized Microdata (GLAD) and Indicators (CLO, HLO):* From data processing and production, the EduAnalytics team mapped out its data flows and adopted specific standards, such as the use of GitHub, to ensure the documentation and full reproducibility of the WBG's numbers as well as the modularization of the institution's processes. The main objective of this effort is to facilitate documentation, automation, and reusability of the available information. The first step in this process has been GLAD's pilot for grades 4, 5, and 6 and a standardized way to derive country-level indicators. This secondary database, the CLO, is the primary input to the production of the HLO (see Annex 4). This modularization of the WBG's processes with the creation of the GLADs and CLOs has facilitated repurposing the WBG's data infrastructure and systems to produce the LP indicator, ensuring consistency and comparability across different measures (such as the HLO and LP) and significant economies of scope. All the code used to harmonize the [GLAD](#) and produce the CLOs is already in the public domain<sup>8</sup> through the WBG GitHub account.

A very similar approach has been used for the computation of the HLO and LP measures, now significantly simplified, since their inputs are readily available from the same workflow. The WBG has also created GitHub repositories for both measures, to improve documentation and facilitate the reproducibility: [LP GitHub Repository \(public\)](#)<sup>9</sup> and [HLO GitHub Repository \(private\)](#). The WBG expects to make the HLO repository available in the public domain by the second half of 2021, at the time of the next update.

- *Dissemination of Microdata and Indicators (DDH, APIs):* In terms of dissemination, the WBG has made both the HLO and LP indicators available through the WBG API, it has deposited the [LP database in the Development Data Hub](#),<sup>10</sup> and it has created [country briefs](#) for the LP, in which both the HCI and the LAYS are presented.<sup>11</sup>

## Progress toward Results

The SABER-UF Results Framework has been updated for the three outputs corresponding to the GCLO's outcome "Global comparability of learning outcomes is strengthened," as follows:

### **Output 1: Updated and expanded version of the HLO indicator.**

The WBG included PISA-D and PILNA countries in the database, and completed the GLAD of 481 learning assessments (LLECE, PASEC, PIRLS, SACMEQ, TIMSS) with data from 120 countries from 2000 to 2016. The WBG also released PISA 2018, which provides more recent data for 80 countries and economies and the addition of two new countries, Belarus and Brunei Darussalam.

The 2020 HCI update brought 20 new countries (8 come from EGRAs, 8 from PILNA, 3 from PISA and PISA-D, and 1 from TIMSS-equivalent assessment) and more recent data points for 95 countries (see Annex 5). For more recent data points, 75 are from PISA 2018, 7 from PISA-D, 7 from EGRAs, and 6 from PILNA. The addition of 20 new countries takes the percentage of school-age population covered by the database to 99 percent.

During this period, the Learning Poverty database has also been updated, especially with the inclusion in December 2020 of data from the SEA-PLM 2019, TIMSS 2019, and PASEC 2019. In September 2020, the new HCI was launched. The HLO database has been recently used to produce learning loss estimates due to COVID-19. The harmonized databases are also a critical input to the dashboards produced to help teams have a strategic conversation on how they can accelerate learning.

8 <https://github.com/worldbank/GLAD>

9 <https://github.com/worldbank/LearningPoverty>

10 <https://datacatalog.worldbank.org/dataset/learning-poverty>

11 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/brief/learning-poverty>



**Output 2: Improved awareness and use of data among government officials.**

The WBG released a public GitHub REPO (repository of data and code) with the full harmonization code used to construct the GLAD.

There have been discussions with donors to revisit the indicators on support for large-scale learning assessments, with important linkages to skills and jobs. It is expected that the activities outlined above would produce the following deliverables:

**Output 3: Implementation of Policy Linking Toolkit in two pilot countries.**

The team conducted discussions with select WBG country teams (Ghana, Nigeria, and The Gambia) on implementing policy linking pilots. Existing assessments have been requested from the governments of Ghana and The Gambia in order to conduct the test content alignment review against the GPF to assess the feasibility of policy linking. Moreover, technical inputs have been provided to the Policy Linking Toolkit and the updated GPF, developed under the leadership of UIS and USAID. More information on Policy Linking Pilot below with more details on Progress towards Results.

## Challenges and Lessons Learned

**Challenges**

At present, there is uncertainty about the ability to measure learning in the near future using international and regional assessments, given that it is not clear how the calendar and future dates of the international and regional learning assessments will be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. International/regional assessments are typically administered to students at school.

Another challenge is financial sustainability of this initiative. Seed funding has been used to start up the documentation and reorganization process. However, data curation and documentation are costly. The WBG is mitigating this risk by combining the use of new technologies such as GitHub, which significantly reduce the cost of documentation with an active strategy to diversify the number of products that can be derived from the same platform (for example, using the same workflow to produce both the HLO and the Learning Poverty measures). Costs can be shared as multiple products are developed using the same platform.

Another substantial risk is the lack of access to the microdata, especially in the context of NLAs. This is a critical issue given the WBG's interest in going beyond a simple average, as the institution unpacks this indicator across other domains such as gender, urban-rural, socioeconomic status, and geography. The WBG's strategy is for the Learning Assessment Platform (LeAP),<sup>12</sup> the EduAnalytics team, and other related teams to work closely with the country Task Team Leaders (TTLs) to educate them and the WBG's counterparts about the importance of disseminating the microdata of NLAs.

Coordination with other development partners, especially UIS, to ensure alignment of country numbers and priorities in the measurement agenda, constitutes another challenge. The WBG has two strategies in place to manage this:

- The first strategy is full methodological transparency on how the WBG's numbers are being calculated using tools such as GitHub, where both the code and data are made available to anyone.
- The second strategy has been the design of a MoU between the WBG and UIS, where Education Data Generation and Exchange is one of the main pillars. This MoU aims to contribute towards an authorizing environment under which both the WBG and UIS can work together on this agenda.

<sup>12</sup> The Learning Assessment Platform (LeAP), launched by the WBG in February 2019, supports national and international assessment efforts in its client countries by improving the availability, quality, and comparability of learning data. It aims to help countries strengthen their learning assessment systems, enabling them to implement assessment of student learning more efficiently and effectively. This World Bank platform provides resources, tools, technical assistance, and the medium for knowledge exchange on the key topics of learning assessment.

### Lessons Learned

So far, the WBG has curated and harmonized over 3,500 learning assessments covering multiple countries, years, grades, and subjects. It is critical to work towards the standardization of different elements of this process, in order to ensure both economies of scale and scope to strengthen the sustainability of this effort and the usage of all this data.

Learning assessment data, especially NLAs, are incredibly underutilized and poorly documented. Development partners could work more systematically in helping countries to better document and use NLAs.

## Policy Linking Pilot

The Policy Linking Pilot project supports the SABER UF's objective of strengthening global comparability of learning outcomes.<sup>13</sup> This work focuses on piloting the Policy Linking toolkit, a UIS and USAID-led effort to operationalize the methodology to report on international benchmarks, such as SDG 4.1.1, based on national large-scale assessment results, in two countries. If the pilot is demonstrated to be successful, this methodology can facilitate reporting on SDG 4 and other international learning indicators by countries that do not participate in regional or international large-scale assessments (e.g., PASEC, LLECE, PIRLS or TIMSS) but have relevant national large-scale assessment that meet certain conditions, such as sufficient content alignment with respect to the Global Proficiency Framework (GPF).

In this way, Policy Linking has close linkages to the activities on Harmonized Learning Outcomes (HLO), as both aim to improve global comparability of large-scale assessments through different methodologies. The value-added of the policy linking methodology is in helping countries to develop the local capacity to express their national assessment results in terms of proficiency levels, understand the principles and implementation of standard-setting assessment methodologies, and to align some of the content of future national assessments to the GPF to enable reporting on international benchmarks.

### Highlights of Activities

The activities of the Policy Linking Pilot are disaggregated by the project's preparation and implementation stages.

#### Preparation stage

In terms of the preparation stage, the main activities conducted have been:

- **Discussions with selected World Bank country teams and identification of two countries for Policy Linking pilot.** The LeAP team identified four Sub-Saharan African countries with recently implemented national learning assessments, but with no firm plans to take part in an international large-scale assessment (Ghana, The Gambia, Nigeria, and Kenya). In addition, an information session about the GPF and Policy Linking was also held with country teams from the Middle East and North Africa region. Discussions with three World Bank country teams<sup>14</sup> working on these countries focused around the motivation for policy linking pilot and the implementation requirements, including assessment of content alignment between the national assessment and GPF. These discussions on assessment of content alignment allowed the LeAP team to identify two countries—Ghana and The Gambia—for the policy linking pilots.

<sup>13</sup> Support for this initiative was provided as a reallocation of funds from the initial allocation for the participation of The Gambia in the Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Éducatifs de la CONFEMEN (PASEC) 2019 assessment, when it became clear that this participation was not feasible based on the timeline and allocated budget.

<sup>14</sup> Discussions with the Kenya country team were not held to ensure inter-agency coordination, as USAID was already moving forward with the policy linking pilot in that country.

- **Discussions with counterparts in Ghana and The Gambia to obtain government approval for Policy Linking pilots.** The LeAP team has engaged in conversations with representatives and technical experts from the Ministries of Education and National Assessment Agencies in Ghana and The Gambia regarding the rationale and implementation requirements of the Policy Linking pilots, particularly their implementation via virtual workshops in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of these discussions, policymakers in the two countries have approved the Policy Linking pilots' online implementation in 2021.
- **Contribution of technical inputs for the Policy Linking Toolkit.** The LeAP team has met regularly with the inter-agency group working on the Policy Linking Toolkit. As part of this inter-agency work, the team has reviewed technical documents and provided feedback on the psychometrics of the policy linking methodology. It has also provided inputs for the quality assurance review of the Policy Linking workshop implementation. Likewise, the team contributed to the revision and updates of the GPF in 2020, which was presented during the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning (GAML) meeting in October 2020.

### ***Implementation stage***

In terms of the implementation stage, the main activities conducted have been:

- **In Ghana,** the LeAP team has worked with counterparts and the World Bank country team to develop a timeline for implementation, supported the identification of project focal points in the government (Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Services, and National Council for Curriculum and Assessment), and selected and hired an international firm for conducting the Policy Linking pilots. The Policy Linking content facilitator and panelist online training and online workshops would start in February 2021, and final reports are expected to be drafted by end of March 2021.
- **In The Gambia,** the LeAP team has started to work on a timeline for implementation that will be proposed to the Ministry of Education. This timeline proposes to hold the Policy Linking pilots in 2021 after concluding the project implementation in Ghana. The LeAP team also prepared and shared with the World Bank country team terms of reference (ToRs) that will be used to carry out a competitive selection and hiring of a firm for this project. Finally, the LeAP team has requested information (national assessment reports, assessment booklets, assessment micro data and analytics) from the Ministry of Education that will inform the preparation of the Policy Linking training and workshop.

In addition to the Ghana and The Gambia pilots, colleagues from USAID are planning to conduct similar Policy Linking workshops in Kenya and Djibouti in 2021. The LeAP team facilitated inter-agency coordination by informing the World Bank's Kenya and Djibouti country teams about USAID's plans. As a result, World Bank country teams have supported their USAID counterparts in the dialogue on policy linking with the governments and national assessment agencies in Kenya and Djibouti.

### **Progress toward Results**

The COVID-19 pandemic made it impossible to carry out in-person policy linking workshops, and thus caused some delays in implementation of envisioned activities. However, the inter-agency working group was able to adjust the methodology by switching to remote (online) workshop delivery. Thus, the team expects to complete the Policy Linking Pilot project by the summer of 2021. In Ghana's case, final reports reviewed and approved by the World Bank and the Ministry of Education are expected by April 2021. In the case of The Gambia, the proposed timeline includes completion of the final reports by June 2021, but this is still conditional on timeline approval by the Ministry of Education. See Box 1 for the impact of Policy Linking in Ghana and The Gambia.



### Box 1. Impact/result stories of Policy Linking: Ghana and The Gambia

Engagement with countries on the content of their national assessment and learning standards, as well as their alignment with the GPF was very informative and fruitful for both the national assessment agencies and the inter-agency working group. For both **Ghana** and **The Gambia**, the contrast between current contents of national assessments and the reading and mathematics learning standards described in the GPF has motivated constructive discussions regarding plans for the next round of national assessment studies. Counterparts in both countries have recognized the need to ensure that their next national assessment framework is more closely aligned with these international learning standards and proficiency benchmarks to keep monitoring learning in a globally comparable manner. The assessment content review has also informed the World Bank team's inputs into the revisions and updates of the GPF and areas for improvement to scale up the work on Policy Linking in the future.

This engagement has also provided the team with knowledge that fed into other recently created global knowledge products. For instance, the forthcoming ***Primer on Large-Scale Assessments of Educational Achievement*** book, to be released in March 2021, describes Ghana's national learning assessment characteristics and discusses the relevance of the reporting on SDG 4 and other international learning benchmarks.

## Challenges and Lessons Learned

### Challenges

The main implementation challenge was the result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which delayed the Policy Linking pilots' implementation in 2020. Fortunately, the inter-agency group developed an online adaptation of the workshop, which was first piloted with the I-CAN citizen-led assessment tool. The team has been incorporating the online implementation protocols proposed by the Policy Linking inter-agency group for the workshops in Ghana and The Gambia.

Another challenge is the lack of specialists and firms trained in the implementation of Policy Linking workshops. While psychometricians are aware of the principles behind standard-setting methodologies, few are well-versed in the Global Proficiency Framework and in how to benchmark national assessment results. This challenge was reflected in the few qualified firms and individual specialists that applied to the competitive selection for this project in Ghana.

Likewise, the LeAP team noted national assessment agencies' low level of awareness about the GPF.

### Lessons learned

Given a pandemic such as COVID-19, quick adaptation through the use of technology is key to continuing with workplans that include workshops and similar activities.

Also, there is a need to train more psychometricians and assessment firms on the implementation of Policy Linking methodologies, so that more countries can use this methodology to report on international benchmarks with national assessment results. An inter-agency effort to create appropriate curriculum and integrate it into training of psychometricians could assist in this regard.

Finally, UIS and other international partners can have a targeted communication campaign to promote the GPF, particularly among countries not participating in international learning assessments, and explain the advantages of aligning some content of national learning assessment to this framework. Coordinated inter-agency planning and dialogue will also be essential to ensure that countries implement Policy Linking workshops in future national large-scale assessment projects.

## | 2. Global Education Policy Dashboard (GEPD)

The *World Development Report 2018* argued that the learning crisis has multiple causes: poor service delivery in schools and communities, unhealthy politics and low bureaucratic capacity, and policies that are not aligned toward learning for all. To confront the crisis and improve learning for all, countries need to know where they stand on these three key dimensions—practices (or service delivery), policies, and politics. But providing such a systemwide overview requires better measurement. Many of these drivers of learning are not captured by existing administrative systems. And although new measurement tools capture some of those aspects well, no single instrument pulls together data on all these areas. This gap leaves policymakers in the dark about what is working and what is not. The Global Education Policy Dashboard aims to help fill this gap.

### Response: Shining a light on learning and its drivers

The World Bank, with support from the BMGF, the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) (now the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, or FCDO), and the Government of Japan, launched the Global Education Policy Dashboard (GEPD) to measure learning and its drivers in basic education around the world. In doing so, the GEPD quantifies the depth of the learning crisis, highlights gaps between current practice and what the evidence suggests would be most effective in promoting learning, and gives governments a way to set priorities and track progress as they work to close those gaps. The goal of all this is to improve learning and attainment for all children.

The GEPD collects and reports information not only on the quality of the key school-level drivers of learning (prepared learners, quality teaching, learning-focused inputs, and the skilled management that pulls them together), but also the deeper systemic drivers in policies, politics, and bureaucratic capacity. Its indicators are comprehensive (in that they holistically cover the most important drivers of learning at scale), but also focused (so that they can focus stakeholders' attention on what really is most important). Three data collection instruments are used to report on nearly 40 dashboard indicators that, operationalizing the WDR 2018 framework, provide a snapshot of how the education system is working. These three instruments (School Survey, Survey of Public Officials, and Policy Survey) were created by streamlining (and building upon) existing tools to reduce the time and cost required for data collection, enhance their technical rigor, and develop new measures, where needed. The resulting dashboard offers a unique set of benefits:

- *Innovative framework* – To tackle the learning crisis, and to achieve and sustain learning gains at scale, countries need to know where they stand on all dimensions—Outcomes, Practices, Policies, and Politics. The GEPD's framework is the first to report on all these aspects.
- *Comprehensive set of indicators* – With nearly 40 indicators (and over 200 sub-indicators), the information provided by the GEPD provides a full picture of how the system is working and provides a unique way of identifying bottlenecks.
- *Cutting-edge knowledge* – The dashboard reflects the latest research on education. Concepts such as growth mindset, importance of coaching, coherence of policies, school leadership, socioemotional skills, and integration of EdTech into the curriculum, among others, are captured in the GEPD. In areas where further research is needed, like the impact of socioeconomic factors in the school or the assessment of curriculum quality, the GEPD is working to push the knowledge frontier with measurement innovations.
- *Automated processes* – From the moment that the government confirms participation to the publishing of indicators, a suite of resources and the automation of important steps enable the implementation process to require very little staff time, saving both costs and time to deliver.

- *Value added for operational work* – The information provided by the GEPD is a great starting point for bringing evidence into policy discussions, whether in developing an Education Sector Plan, identifying priorities for an intervention, or monitoring progress on a project. All of the information is presented in an easy-to-use GEPD website.

The GEPD has already been implemented in multiple countries and will continue to do so until reaching an initial set of 13 countries. Of these 13, seven are Accelerator countries. Where the GEPD has been implemented already, country staff and counterparts have highlighted the benefits of the GEPD in offering a comprehensive view of the system to identify areas for action and allowing for monitoring of progress in the short and medium term.

### **Contribution: Leveraging GEPD for smarter policy and capacity building**

For participating countries, the GEPD offers a unique source of information on the alignment of the education system toward learning for all. But the benefits of participating go beyond simply offering information. The dashboard provides countries and development partners with the opportunity to link policy to evidence and build capacity along the way. Potential benefits of participating in the GEPD vary from country to country, but the three examples highlighted below offer a sense of how the GEPD is engaging with countries to maximize benefits. See Box 2 for the impact of the dashboard in Peru, Ghana and Jordan.

### **Education Systems Technical Advisory Board**

This group consists of 15 experts on education performance, reform, management, and analysis. The Technical Advisory Board (TAB) serves as a barometer for the relevance and impact of the initiatives under the GEPD, both within the WBG's program and within the global development landscape. The second TAB meeting was held in September 2020 to provide an update on the dashboard's progress and the way moving forward, especially given the constraints posed by the COVID-19 pandemic (see Box 3).

### **Work: The GEPD today and moving forward**

The GEPD project reached numerous milestones in the first two years after its November 2018 launch. On the technical front, the team operationalized the WDR 2018 framework to outline a comprehensive set of indicators to shine a light on learning and its drivers. To report on these indicators, the team worked extensively on streamlining and building upon existing instruments to construct three new instruments that would capture the latest research. The process included extensive psychometric analyses, the design of new questionnaires (for school management, bureaucratic capacity, and others), and the introduction of many innovations to reduce time and cost. Training materials were developed to facilitate the use of the instruments in the field. The GEPD surveys were tested in the field (Mozambique and Peru) within a year of the start of the project. This field testing allowed the team to refine the instruments and develop automated processes to collect (with a tablet-based Survey Solutions platform), process (with R software), and report (with a Drupal-based dashboard website) the indicator information. Drawing on all these resources and technical innovations, the GEPD was fully implemented in Peru, Jordan, and Rwanda, and it was partially implemented in Ethiopia and Mozambique before the fieldwork was disrupted by COVID-19 school closures. Once schools can reopen, implementation of the GEPD will continue in the initial set of 13 countries.

### **Progress toward Results**

This progress matches the outlined outputs in the SABER-UF Results Framework. The progress toward the three outputs corresponding to the GEPD's outcome "The Global Education Policy Dashboard (GEPD) is being used by governments to track education system performance, and data has prompted evidence-based debate about policy direction," is as follows:



## Box 2. Impact/results stories: Peru, Ghana, and Jordan

In **Peru**, availability of the dashboard data coincided with the preparation of two projects to support investment in human capital—a Development Policy Loan and an Investment Project Financing—. While Peru has a vast amount of data available to draw on for program design, the GEPD adds value by combining a robust conceptual framework with a streamlined set of indicators on factors that have been shown to matter for learning. The GEPD also offered much-needed data as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded in Peru, as it was the only data source for information related to availability of handwashing facilities, soap, and water at schools throughout the country. The government quickly adapted and integrated the relevant GEPD questions into the country’s regular monitoring system, and it used the information gathered to respond appropriately to the pandemic.

In **Ghana**, the GEPD is proving a timely tool to build capacity. As the government embarks on the creation of its own accountability dashboard as well as a set of harmonized instruments to collect information nationwide, the GEPD is being leveraged to facilitate this process. The GEPD is informing the creation of these instruments, the framework and indicators that will compose the national accountability dashboard, and the procedures that will be used to collect the information. In Ghana, the plan is that through the deployment of the GEPD, the government will be able to identify 1) key indicators to include in its accountability dashboard (the set of indicators has not yet been defined), 2) ways of refining their data collection efforts (improving questions on user experience, inclusiveness, etc.), and 3) serving as a base for new data collection efforts that may need to be developed (as was the case of the NIB harmonized classroom observation tool, which was developed based on Teach and included questions on inclusiveness from the GEPD). Data collection was delayed due to COVID-related closures, but the process is expected to continue in the new academic year.

In **Jordan**, the GEPD is strengthening local efforts at monitoring quality, as most of the data collected through the dashboard is not captured by the standard Education Management Information System (EMIS) nor by the school mapping system. One example of value-added is the GEPD’s early-learner assessment, which assesses the literacy, numeracy, socioemotional, and executive function skills of children as they enter primary school. The Ministry is using this indicator as a baseline and monitoring tool for the newly introduced policy that added KG to compulsory education. It is also using this assessment as the first input as it develops its own early-learner assessment.

**“**Overall, the experience has been excellent having Jordan as one of the first countries to fully implement the dashboard. The dashboard was already designed and needed some adaptations for Jordan, for example the tool requires video filming teachers but that is not allowed in Jordan; and the Jordan education team had the opportunity to influence the sampling to request that the results be representative in a certain way looking at rented vs. owned schools, and having geographic representation not only at the national but also at the regional level. Then the Bank did the training of the enumerator during a two-week mission. The work of data collection was undertaken by a private sector company in Jordan that received the Bank training, so there has not been a need for capacity building on the government side. Due to COVID-19, two validation meetings had to be done online, one with the Minister and another with the Queen Rania Foundation; then the Bank presented to disseminate the results of the dashboard analysis to development partners and to the Minister, and the results were well received.”

**Dina N. Abu-Ghaida,**  
Lead Economist at the WBG

**Output 1: Draft the GEPD, with the complete set of indicators.**

- Drafted dissemination materials like the GEPD Reference Guide, GEPD Technical Note, and GEPD Implementation Brief to present in a user-friendly approach all the information pertaining to the initiative, indicators, and measurement approach.
- Finalized the three instruments—the School Survey, Survey of Public Officials, and Policy Survey—which are available in multiple languages and are fully programmed for tablet-based data collection.
- Drafted a memo for each of the analytical questions outlined in the milestones to flesh out how the GEPD team is incorporating them into the work.
- Developed and tested the field manual, terms of reference (ToRs) for survey firms, data collection protocols, and other training materials in the field (most are available in multiple languages).
- Developed a website to report data in different layers and to provide drill-down and comparison options.<sup>15</sup>

**Output 2: Pilot the GEPD in five countries with existing data and in eight countries with new data.**

- Selected the initial set of countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Jordan, Lao PDR, Madagascar, Morocco, Mozambique, Pakistan—Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan—Punjab, Peru, Rwanda, Senegal, and a country in Eastern Europe), after consultation within the Bank and with counterparts, and communicated to partners (FCDO, BMGF, and the Government of Japan) in the first half of 2019.
- Pre-piloted the GEPD in Mozambique and Peru.
- Implemented the GEPD in Peru, Jordan, and Rwanda. The team also partially implemented the GEPD in Mozambique and Ethiopia, but fieldwork was interrupted by COVID-related school closures. Once schools reopen, implementation of the GEPD will continue in the initial set of 13 countries.

**Output 3: Expand coverage to at least 15 countries during the phase-in and enable scale-up.**

- Linked the dashboard to other initiatives such as the Accelerator Program, EdTech Readiness Index, and the work on assessments to continue to leverage the GEPD to strengthen other projects while also scaling up the initiative.
- Held numerous conversations with countries that were interested in the GEPD and could potentially co-finance (Bosnia, Madagascar, and Senegal). While conversations were disrupted by COVID-19, they will be resumed once there is more clarity on when in-person fieldwork will become feasible.
- Developed all training materials, which have been used in Jordan, Mozambique, Peru, and Rwanda.

**Challenges and Lessons Learned****Challenges**

The team has addressed a number of the challenges that the GEPD confronted as the data collection fieldwork commenced. Through the two pre-pilots in Mozambique and Peru, the GEPD team was able to identify key aspects of the fieldwork protocols that could be improved to reduce time, costs, and data quality problems. These include the specification of guidelines for interviewee replacements, approaches to assessing students in a group setting, best practices for when and how to interview/assess teachers, programming of certain questions and modules, and protocol for assessing children with disabilities, among others.

<sup>15</sup> The website has been fully developed, made available in multiple languages, populated with available data, and a domain has been acquired ([www.EducationPolicyDashboard.org](http://www.EducationPolicyDashboard.org)). The website was not live as of middle February 2021.

### Box 3. 2020 Technical Advisory Board Meeting

A Technical Advisory Board (TAB) Meeting was convened on September 23, 2020, to update on the GEPD's progress since last TAB meeting in 2019, including a closer look at the data collected and a discussion on the GEPD moving forward, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting consisted of technical experts from the WBG, the BMGF, and FCDO (formerly DFID), as well as relevant policy makers and advocates on education performance, reform, management, and analysis from the TAB. Prior to the meeting, participants received the GEPD Reference Guide, Technical Note, Implementation Brief, Public-Facing Surveys, and Country Results presenting the data for the three countries with complete results: Peru, Rwanda and Jordan.

Participants recognized the team's progress in designing and implementing the GEPD. The TAB recommended that data comparisons be conducted at the country-level with existing data sources—the team clarified that it regularly does these comparisons prior to each country's stakeholder validation. The TAB also highlighted the importance of defining the nature of the interaction among indicators—the team will plan to conduct quantitative and qualitative analyses to answer this question for the broader set of indicators as well as each individual one.

Given the constraints added by COVID-19, the TAB suggested innovations that could be leveraged to collect data in the short term while schools are affected by the pandemic, such as conducting assessments via phone or sending enumerators to students' households if they are not yet back to school. The TAB also suggested that the team should consider surveying parents to better understand their ability to support learning in the current context. The team is piloting a version of the 1<sup>st</sup>-grade direct assessment remotely in Pakistan (Punjab), and will also coordinate with the assessment team at the WBG's Education GP on the possibility of piloting remote assessments for 4<sup>th</sup>-grade students. Aside from the assessment adaptations that may be used in the short term, the team will continue working on COVID-related adaptations and, as security and financial constraints allow, will integrate the suggestions for innovating on data collection methods.

Regarding the presentation of the project, the TAB asked the team to consider linking the dashboard website to other websites that may be more frequented by education stakeholders at the country-level. The TAB also suggested the inclusion of country-comparisons to strengthen the GEPD Country Reports. The GEPD team will explore the best ways to address these suggestions once the website is live (in the case of the first one) and sufficient data is available for country comparisons (in the case of the latter).

With respect to the narrative of the project, the TAB encouraged the GEPD team to consider creating a transitory version of the GEPD instruments that could be used to collect a reduced number of indicators during COVID, when collecting data in-person proves challenging, and also during other education disruptions that could arise in the future. The TAB also suggested developing additional resources on how to use the dashboard to build back better after the pandemic. The team will potentially reach out to individual TAB members to explore how to best address these comments.

The TAB finally raised the need to build partnerships and linkages with teams beyond the dashboard to amplify the impact of the project, such as a stronger collaboration with the team leading the creation of the LPP Policy Academy, as the training materials and other GEPD resources could be leveraged for helping countries build stronger monitoring systems. A deeper look at the overlap with the indicators monitored by the Global Education Advisory Board was also suggested. Likewise, particularly for the EdTech angle, a linkage with the EdTech Hub was also mentioned. On the partnership front, the team is currently working, and will continue working, on linking the dashboard initiative with other projects, teams, and organizations with the goal of amplifying its impact and usability.



**TAB members:**

- ◉ Luis Crouch, Chief Technical Officer, RTI International
- ◉ Jorge Ferrao, Rector, Pedagogic University
- ◉ Pamela Grossman, Dean, Graduate School of Education–University of Pennsylvania
- ◉ Sean Harford, National Director, Education, Ofsted
- ◉ Susanna Loeb, Director, Annenberg Institute for School Reform
- ◉ Silvia Montoya, Director, UNESCO Institute of Statistics
- ◉ Karthik Muralidharan, Professor, University of California, San Diego
- ◉ Jean Philbert Nsengimana, Founder/CEO, IDEX Africa
- ◉ Ritva Reinikka, Director (Retired), Human Development–Africa Region–WBG
- ◉ Sara Ruto, Director, People’s Action for Learning Network
- ◉ Justin Sandefur, Senior Fellow, Center for Global Development
- ◉ Tarek Shawki, Minister of Education & Technical Education
- ◉ Rossieli Soares, Secretary of Education, São Paulo
- ◉ Jakob Svensson, Director, Institute for International Economic Studies (IIES)
- ◉ Miguel Szekely, Director, Centro de Estudios Educativos y Sociales
- ◉ George Werner, Former Minister of Education of the Republic of Liberia

However, the most significant challenge the initiative now faces is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on dashboard implementation. The school closures disrupted ongoing data collection efforts in two countries, Mozambique and Ethiopia, where teams were in the field at the time, and it postponed the data collection that was imminent in two other countries. The risks of in-person data collection remain high as schools reopen, and so it may be some time before that data collection can resume. To address these challenges, the team considered using remote data collection strategies, but remote methods would not be work for much of the School Survey—the 1<sup>st</sup>-Grade Direct Assessment, 4<sup>th</sup>-Grade Assessment, Teacher Assessment, Inputs and Infrastructure module (which is based on observation), and the Classroom Observation module. Even if it were possible to implement these remotely for some schools and households with good connectivity, the impacts on sampling would bias the national estimates. For these reasons, the team decided to not pursue a remote data collection approach, and simply prepare the initiative to return to the field as soon and as safely as possible once it is feasible to do so.

### ***Lessons Learned***

Using the Peru pre-pilot to improve the fieldwork protocols has resulted in many innovations that enabled the team to implement the GEPD in Peru without encountering significant problems and to meet the objective of collecting all data in less than one school day (four hours).

The pre-pilots also provided valuable data on how long it would take to implement the questionnaires and on where further streamlining was needed. These lessons were incorporated before the full implementation of the GEPD in Peru. The most notable example of this process is the streamlining of the Survey of Public Officials, which was cut by a third after the pre-pilots based on the experience and the feedback from the field. The GEPD team will continue to check the usefulness of individual questions and other issues once data are available for more countries.

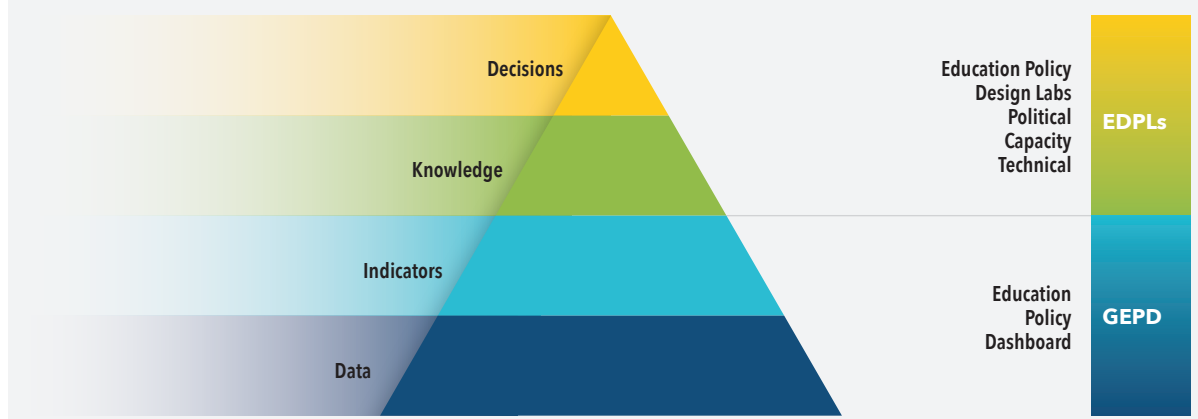
## **| 3. Education Policy Design Labs (EPDLs)**

**SABER created the Education Policy Design Labs (EPDLs)** to complement the GEPD and provide a systematic approach for policy makers and stakeholders to better prioritize reforms, policies, and investments aimed at improving a country's learning outcomes, and for governments to apply to education policy decision making. EPDLs are country-specific; they incorporate the best national and international available information and knowledge for each country, including data from initiatives like the GEPD, HCI, and HLO, guidance from country and thematic education experts, and outputs of system and design thinking clinics.

The EPDLs and the GEPD are interrelated initiatives that complement one another (Figure 6). While the GEPD (showcased in the previous section) generates new data on gaps in drivers of learning—including countries' political commitment and bureaucratic capacity, quality of policies, and service delivery in education—the EPDLs use all available information (from the GEPD and other sources) to help decisionmakers identify the binding constraints to learning in their country and select interventions that can loosen these constraints.

### **Highlights of Activities and Outputs**

- Developed an initial protocol for EPDL clinics, including scripted meetings and workshops. This protocol was tested with the Democratic Republic of Congo's country team in June 2019, to identify the main binding constraints for the education sector, discuss the root causes of those, and initiate a discussion on potential priority areas for action.
- Created a case study using Fishbone Analysis to facilitate the discussion of the root causes and prioritization to tackle Learning Poverty (see Figure 7 in Annex 6).

**Figure 6. Relationship between the EPDLs and the GEPD**

- Created a template for what would be defined as the EPDL package. The objective of this package is to provide the team with a summary of the outcome of the EPDL clinic, including a visual representation of the discussion that took place using a Fishbone Analysis.
- Created a template for a benchmarking exercise of selected critical indicators discussed during the clinic. These indicators were organized around Tier I (outcome) and Tier II (output) and were selected due to their relevance during the clinic (see Figure 8 in Annex 6).
- Conducted system analysis of the underlying assumption of the GEPD, and created a visual representation using System Thinking tools (see Figures 9 and 10 in Annex 6 with examples).

## Progress toward Results

Due to COVID-19, MoEs and World Bank Education teams have shifted their attention to the process of school closures, deployment of mitigation actions, and production of Education Sector response plans. Given this context, the implementation of the EPDLs as they were originally envisioned has shifted.

The EPDL clinics were developed in the DRC in 2019 as originally planned, and then, after the pandemic hit, the clinics were applied with modifications in Bangladesh, Jordan, and Palestine in 2020. The following tools and resources were produced: a pilot script, mental models for the education sector, and interactive dashboards using harmonized data and analytics. While focusing on project preparation, the team was able to create a narrative based on the fact that effective decision making needs to bring together both tacit and explicit knowledge; identify methods in the design which can be used to facilitate the co-creation and alignment within teams and across stakeholders; and identify and develop methods, tools, and analytical resources for country teams to use for discussion and decision making.

Some of the EPDLs' elements have been tested with the Education Team, and over 40 country teams have used this framework, dashboards, and accompanying simulation tool to help them engage with counterparts and strengthen an evidence-based narrative on the potential impact of COVID-19 on learning. This work has been used to also leverage several other initiatives from the Education GP and other development partners. To date, results from the simulation tool have been cited by The Economist, Bloomberg, and a number of development patterns and education advocacy campaigns to present the learning losses associated with COVID-19, such as UNICEF, UNESCO, Save the Children, the Save Our Future the campaign, and Gordon Brown open letter of the international community. More importantly, this tool has been taken-up by over 40 country teams who have used it in the context of COVID-19 response operations and policy dialogue with government counterparts, for example Bangladesh, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, India, Indonesia, El Salvador, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia,



South Africa, Turkey, Vietnam, and Western Balkans. See Annex 3 for a list of the global, regional, and country narratives built with the simulation tool.

This global effort has also been used in the context of collaborations with Government counterparts, such as the Ministry of Education from Chile, who used the tool to produce a joint report with the World Bank Education Regional and Global teams that was successfully launched by the Minister of Education on August 27, 2020 and has been well received by the media and the World Bank CMU. The take-up of both country teams and counterparts shows the value of such approach. Going forward, the team plans to build on this experience to apply some of the tools and principles of the EPDLs to help country teams have a structured conversation on how they can accelerate learning.

The SABER-UF Results Framework has been updated for two of the three outputs corresponding to the EPDLs' outcome "Education Policy Design Labs (EPDLs) are being used by policy makers and task teams to identify binding constraints in the education systems and priority areas," as follows:

***Output 1: Development of methodological guidelines and associated database with pilots from the education rapid assessment tool.***

- Delivered a workshop with the Democratic Republic of Congo Education Team, including workshop preparation, session facilitation, and the report to the team summarizing the main agreements.
- Engaged with other development partners, such as the IAEE, GPE, FCDO (formerly DFID), and USAID, on the design of the clinics and how to bring alignment across other ongoing initiatives.

***Output 2: Development of an interactive dashboard.***

Initial dashboards and business intelligence tools created.<sup>16</sup> The tools for benchmarking and diagnostic countries (to understand where countries stand and what can be done) are the same as the ones produced under the GEPD.

***Output 3: Replicate the clinics in three country settings:***

The team ran clinics with the country teams of Bangladesh Rohingya, Jordan Refugee, and Palestine (ECD project).

Given the new COVID-19 context and the engagement opportunities created by the recently launched Accelerator Program, the team has discussed with FCDO and the BMGF the redesign of emphasis and focus of the EPDLs going forward to better align the resources and tools of this initiative along the lines of those contexts.

## Challenges/Lessons Learned

### Challenges

The EPDL is a methodology to identify binding constraints and what should be prioritized for governments to reach specific learning objectives; the participatory nature of this approach also helps to build alignment and a shared understanding on the root causes of the problems that need to be tackled. It is not a methodology to build consensus or agreement on what learning objectives should be pursued.

COVID-19 has shifted the priorities of virtually all Ministries of Education towards the immediate response to the crisis associated to school closures, in detriment of addressing the longer-term challenge of how countries

<sup>16</sup> Five types of dashboards were created to: benchmark learning and schooling against relevant country groupings; understand how much progress can be made by improving schooling and learning; understand inequalities in schooling; understand inequalities in learning (horizontal inequalities), and understand vertical inequalities in learning (learning distribution within country). See [https://dataviz.worldbank.org/t/EdStats/views/LearningTarget\\_GN/dsh\\_simul?%3Aiid=1&%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&%3Aembed=y](https://dataviz.worldbank.org/t/EdStats/views/LearningTarget_GN/dsh_simul?%3Aiid=1&%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&%3Aembed=y).

can tackle the learning crisis. Moreover, countries face significant learning data gaps which makes some of the elements of the EPDL hard to implement.

All of this reflects a change in the context under which this activity was operating. Back in 2018, when this program was first envisioned, the main elements that motivated this work were the learning crisis (documented in the 2018 WDR), the World Bank Human Capital Project, and initiatives such as the GEPD (a sister initiative of the EPDLs). As of end of 2020, the context was significantly different: countries were highly mobilized in their responses to COVID-19; the World Bank and UIS had announced the Learning Poverty measure; and the World Bank launched its 'Ending Learning Poverty' initiatives such as the Accelerator Program and the FLC.

<b><i>What has changed: Before and Now</i></b>	
<b>Emphases in 2018</b>	<b>New elements as of end-2020</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World in a Learning Crisis</li> <li>• Human Capital Project</li> <li>• Global Education Policy Dashboard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COVID-19: A crisis within a crisis</li> <li>• Learning Poverty and Global Target (including Country Targets of local ownership)</li> <li>• Accelerator Program, FLC</li> </ul>

### ***Lessons Learned***

A prerequisite for EPDLs is the existence of clear educational objectives, with measurable indicators and potential targets. After COVID, given the design support as well as the tools and resources from the clinics, there are four types of overall lessons learned: there is a need to (i) build a narrative to address the COVID-19 response around the objective(s) or Learning Target to tackle as part of a Bank operation—data and indicators are not sufficient for decision making; (ii) work on design, define issues, and do prioritization based on what is the problem to be solved (theory of change or TOC) before moving to the procurement and the selection of particular technological solutions; (iii) create and test tools and resources; and (iv) promote country team engagement, including defining the existing level of interest and commitment required. In terms of the design, the Learning Poverty measure, the global Learning Target, the Accelerator Program, and the FLC all give focus to learning. In addition, simulation tools are increasingly more popular today as a valid and useful tool to help countries create scenarios for different policy responses.

This change in context due to COVID-19 requires a re-assessment of the strategy going forward, building on the lessons learned to date. Around 50 country and regional briefs have been produced using the COVID-19 simulation tool (with country specific parameters) in the framework of the EPDLs in partnership with UNICEF (see Annex 3). The interest in these simulations which are becoming increasingly more accepted—especially in countries where data is not very abundant—points to the fact that the EPDLs can still be relevant in the new reality given the pandemic, but have to be framed around the above factors.



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# Financial Highlights

As of December 31, 2020, a total of US\$5.28 million of paid-in contributions during the reporting period has been allocated to approved initiatives (GCLO, GEPD, and EPDLs) to support the initial phase of the new SABER program, and US\$3 million (57 percent) have been disbursed. An additional US\$0.14 million has been committed for implementation of program activities, but not yet disbursed due to the COVID-19 pandemic; thus, the available uncommitted funds as of December 31, 2020, were about US\$2.1 million (40 percent of total receipts).

The table below provides more details and the status of contributions.

**Table 1. SABER UF TF—Financial Status (as of December 31, 2020)**

	US\$
<b>Funds Committed by Development Partners</b>	<b>\$5,283,535</b>
BMGF	\$2,574,469
FCDO (formerly DFID)	\$2,709,066
<b>Funds Received from Development Partners</b>	<b>\$5,283,535</b>
BMGF	\$2,574,469
FCDO	\$2,709,066
<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>\$3,024,561</b>
<b>Total Funds Committed</b>	<b>\$137,593</b>
<b>Funds Available for Commitment</b>	<b>\$2,121,381</b>



# Looking Ahead—Plans for the Next Period

The **SABER initiatives presented above have helped identify** critical education policy gaps by providing a framework to analyze and strengthen education systems' performance, and have helped harmonize learning outcomes to track the key drivers of learning and help policy makers with better decision making.

With school closures and a global recession, the COVID-19 pandemic now threatens to make education outcomes even worse in the midst of a growing learning crisis. It is, however, possible to counter these shocks and to turn crisis into opportunity. In responding to the pandemic, education systems have been forced to rapidly implement innovations in remote learning at scale. Countries have an opportunity to “build back better” if they can use the most effective crisis-recovery strategies as the basis for both near- and long-term improvements. The WBG will continue to support an action-oriented agenda in research and innovation to accelerate remote learning of foundational skills taking into account updated COVID simulations. The institution looks forward to continuing to support country-specific and global efforts to pursue systemic and sustained improvements that transform education systems given the new reality, that lead to better education outcomes for all through the FLC.

Following are the **work plans for each of the initiatives under SABER as main anchor TC of the FLC for 2021** in connection with the Results Framework:

## Global Comparability of Learning Outcomes (GCLO):

- Release LLECE 2019 in the summer of 2021. This is apart from the additions mentioned in the section on GCLO.
- Expand the GLADs to the early grades using the MICS Foundational Learning Modules, EGRAs and EGMAs. Incorporate the microdata of SEA-PLM 2019, TIMSS-2019, and PASEC 2019.
- Prepare the Learning Poverty country update in March 2021, and the Learning Poverty Regional and Global update in September 2020.
- The LeAP team expects to conclude the work on the Policy Linking pilots in Ghana and The Gambia in 2021. If additional funds are available, other countries could be supported in implementing such Policy Linking workshops. The team will also continue supporting the inter-agency group developing the Policy Linking toolkit, and drawing out the lessons learned from the Policy Linking pilot on how and under what conditions this methodology can be useful to provide global comparability of national assessment results.

## Global Education Policy Dashboard (GEPD):

- As of December 2020, the team was focusing its efforts in the short term in rolling out and disseminating the materials that have already been developed (described above). The rollout will take place at an event that presents the GEPD and the findings from the first wave of countries. During the upcoming event, the GEPD website (containing the aforementioned resources and data for those initial countries) will be made public. Additionally, the team is developing a dissemination strategy that includes online feature



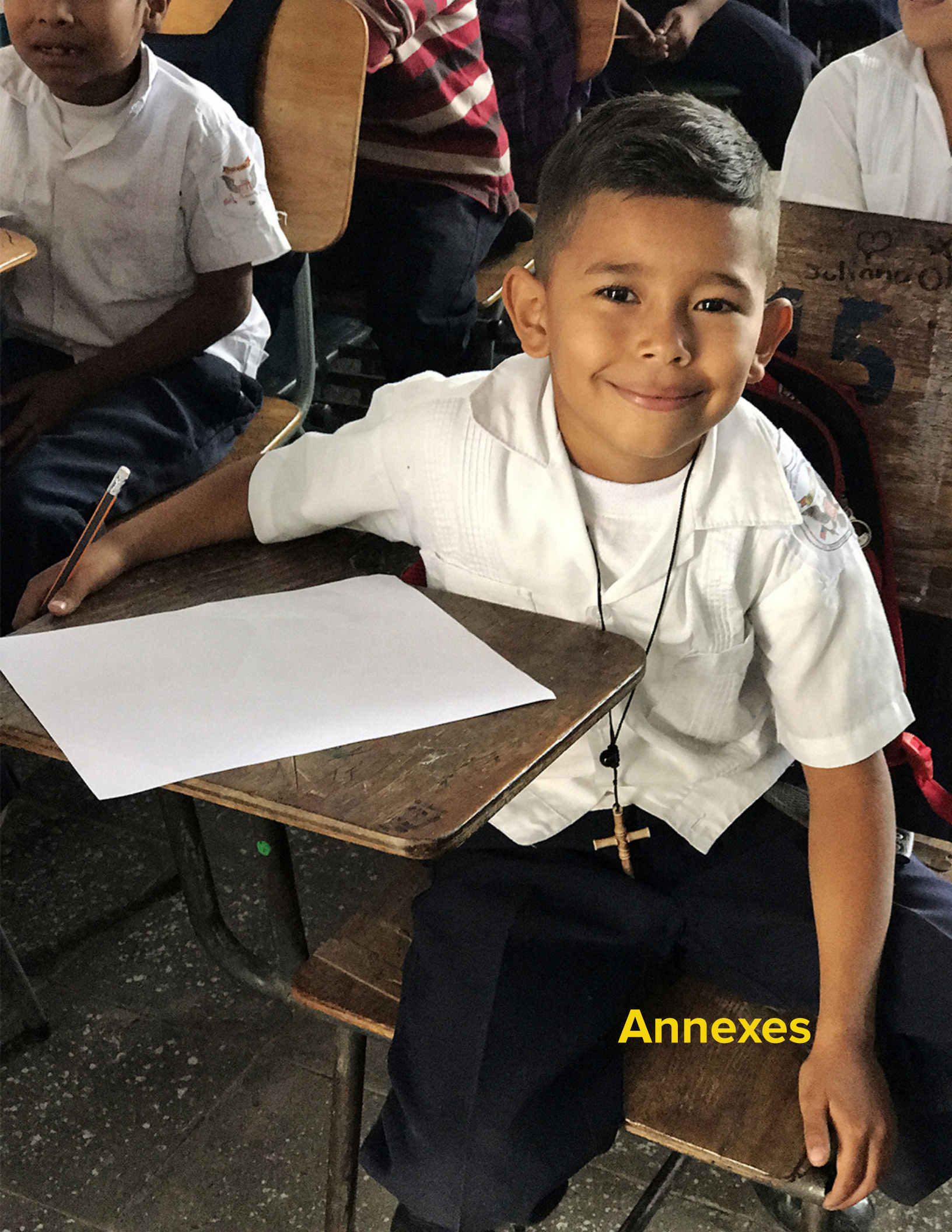
stories, blog posts, and social media promotion before and after the event. Beyond that, the envisioned work program for the next two years (2021-2022) revolves around four pillars:

- *Pillar 1 - Research and development* - The GEPD is enabling the piloting of new areas of measurement. Specifically, the team is developing instruments to measure and report on each of the following: EdTech readiness (in collaboration with Imaginable Futures); socioemotional skills (in collaboration with LEGO Foundation); student learning, calibrated to Global Proficiency Framework (in collaboration with UIS); socioeconomic background; and curriculum quality and alignment.
- *Pillar 2 – Continuing implementation and monitoring progress in participating countries* – The GEPD will collect the first round of data in countries where it was not possible to do so prior to school closures. In some of the countries where there is a round of data already collected, the GEPD will be re-applied to monitor progress in those countries and validate the GEPD surveys as tools that can be used for that purpose. In those countries, a second round of data collection will be conducted approximately two years after the first round.
- *Pillar 3 - Facilitating scale-up* – The GEPD team will continue innovating to facilitate the scale-up of the GEPD and its independent implementation by partners and countries themselves. Key to this effort is the development of an online training course.
- *Pillar 4 - Scaling up* – The GEPD will work on reaching more countries beyond the initial set of 13. A particular focus is placed on reaching FLC Accelerator Countries that are not currently included in the GEPD; these countries can greatly benefit from the baseline and progress information that the GEPD can provide.

### Education Policy Design Labs (EPDLs):

- Moving forward, building on the experience from the four clinics that were run in the four pilots (Bangladesh, DRC, Jordan, and Palestine), apply some of the tools and principles of the EPDLs to help the Accelerator program's target-setting and investment case activities. The target-setting exercise should help foster a strong emphasis on a few outcome indicators that are easy to communicate and act upon. Focusing the government and education stakeholders on a small set of outcome indicators is one source of potential acceleration. Utilizing technical assistance, the government, the Bank team, and willing development partners will then review how existing activities and plans align with the evidence-backed interventions and the implementation capacity needed to improve foundational learning. The intended outcome of the exercise is greater alignment across the government and key partners towards an evidence-backed approach to reaching the government's targets related to Learning Poverty. The experience of the EPDLs and resources will help in providing technical assistance to support the government in the development of its investment case.





**Annexes**



# Annex 1: SABER-UF Trust Fund Results Framework, January 2019 – December 2020

Output(s)	Indicator(s)	2019 Milestones	2020 Milestones	2019-2020 Results
<b>Outcome 1: Global comparability of learning outcomes is strengthened*</b>				
<b>OUTPUT 1: Updated and expanded version of HLO Global Dataset</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful expansion of the HLO database to include other data sources</li> <li>Creation, curation and expansion of global Learning Poverty (LP) database</li> <li>Development of a sound and methodological system for regularly updating the HLO and for sharing the information the HLO has to offer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusion of data coming from national assessments, PISA-D, Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), and other regional and international assessments</li> <li>Inclusion of the global LP measure to the database</li> <li>Publication of country two-pagers on Learning Poverty</li> <li>Publication of code to replicate the LP measure</li> <li>Successful development of a microdata curation and dissemination system. A brief will be developed to outline the current composition of the HLO data as well as the specifics of the curation and dissemination system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integration of PISA 2018 reading, science, and mathematics, national assessments and other assessments. A memo will be developed to report the latest composition of HLO dataset</li> <li>Inclusion of PILNA countries to the Learning Poverty database</li> <li>Publication of country two-pagers on Learning Poverty</li> <li>Publication of code to replicate the Learning Poverty measure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The team has updated and expanded the previous version of the HLO Global Dataset, by including the Programme for International Student Assessment for Development (PISA-D), Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) countries, and PISA 2018. 20 new countries have been included in the HCI 2020 update, and 95 countries had a more recent data point.</li> <li>The team has created the LP database with data from 116 countries over 20 years, and country two-pagers on Learning Poverty for a nonexpert audience</li> <li>The team has completed the Global Learning Assessment Database (GLAD) of 481 learning assessments (LLECE, PASEC, PIRLS, SACMEQ, TIMSS, PISA) with data from 120 countries from 2000 to 2018</li> </ul>
<b>OUTPUT 2: Improved awareness and use of data among government officials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful development and dissemination of non-technical HLO materials to increase use of HLO database</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of documentation outlining non-technical explanations of HLO methodology and data that could be disseminated with national and regional counterparts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with government officials at national and regional level to disseminate the non-technical materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The team has created a public GitHub REPO (repository of data and code) with the full harmonization code used to construct the GLAD (<a href="https://github.com/worldbank/GLAD">https://github.com/worldbank/GLAD</a>).</li> </ul>

Output(s)	Indicator(s)	2019 Milestones	2020 Milestones	2019-2020 Results
<b>Proposed OUTPUT 3: Implementation of Policy Linking Toolkit in two pilot countries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparation of pilot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussions with select WBG country teams are conducted on implementing policy linking pilots</li> <li>Technical inputs are provided to the Policy Linking Toolkit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two countries whose assessments would be amenable to policy linking (via test content alignment review against the Global Proficiency Framework) are identified</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The team conducted discussions with select WBG country teams (Ghana, Nigeria, and The Gambia) on implementing policy linking pilots. Existing assessments have been requested from the governments to conduct the test content alignment review against the Global Proficiency Framework (GPF) to assess the feasibility of policy linking. Moreover, technical inputs have been provided to the Policy Linking Toolkit, developed under the leadership of UIS and USAID. These discussions on assessment of content alignment allowed the LeAP team to identify two countries—Ghana and The Gambia—for the policy linking pilots.</li> </ul>
	Implementation of pilot			N.A.

**Outcome 2: Global Education Policy Dashboard (GEPD) is being used by governments to track education system performance, and data has prompted evidence-based debate about policy direction**

<b>OUTPUT 1: Draft the GEPD, with complete set of indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful creation of a validated conceptual framework for the GEPD, including the full list of indicators and the information that will feed into them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document outlining the complete list of indicators, the final draft of questionnaires to be used in the field, and a reporting on the validation of instruments and indicators by the TAB and other experts. At the end of 2019, a brief will also be developed to re-examine key analytical questions surrounding the GEPD and its indicators (parsimony, predictive power, and cogency captured) using the available data.</li> <li>Preparation of the GEPD implementation package, including: field manual, terms of reference (TORs) for survey firms, data collection protocols, and other relevant resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the lessons learned after the pilot. Develop a lesson learned summary and a list of suggested changes for improvement of the GEPD framework. At the end of 2020, a second brief will be developed to re-examine the key analytical questions surrounding the GEPD and its indicators.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All documents specified in the 2019 Milestones are drafted. The three instruments have been developed. They are streamlined, ready, and field-tested. Aside from developing the necessary materials for training enumerators, collecting data, and processing the data, the team has developed the materials that will be made available to enhance the usefulness of the data. One of them is the GEPD Reference Guide, which describes all the indicators as well as the measurement approach. Other documents that have been drafted include a GEPD Implementation Brief, GEPD Technical Note, and a series of memos for each of the analytical questions outlined in the milestones. The analytical questions were revisited as part of the preparation of the second Technical Advisory Board; they will continue to be revisited as more data becomes available.</li> </ul>
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Output(s)	Indicator(s)	2019 Milestones	2020 Milestones	2019-2020 Results
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completion of all implementation resources for the pilot countries and other potential countries</li> <li>Realization of a user-friendly Global Education Policy Dashboard interface and outside the WBG</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draft of the GEPD interface developed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fill in the GEPD interface with the data from all phasing countries. Have the interface tested through Listening Labs, once there is data for two countries and the site is available in local languages. Share brief outlining feedback received and addressed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The team has created several field and training materials that are currently being used in the field. These include survey manuals, logistics guides, training presentations, agendas, ToRs, and other key protocols. Most of the documents are available in multiple languages. The website has been fully developed, made available in multiple languages, populated with available data, and a domain has been acquired (<a href="http://www.EducationPolicyDashboard.org">www.EducationPolicyDashboard.org</a>). Despite these advances, the Listening Labs (LL) have been postponed until the website is live, so that the website can be accessed by the LL users.</li> <li>The GEPD interface has been developed. Its design is more complex than originally anticipated, which is why it was finalized in November 2019 and its cost had to be covered by the Government of Japan. Given the recommendations from the TAB in relation to the need for this one to remain simple and to emphasize outcomes and practices, the team opted for developing a website that would allow for the data to be reported in different layers and allowing drill-down and comparison options. The website is now being adjusted for it to be available in multiple languages. The implementation of the Listening Labs will take place once the website is live (since this is needed for the website to be accessible during the Listening Labs).</li> </ul>

Output(s)	Indicator(s)	2019 Milestones	2020 Milestones	2019-2020 Results
<b>OUTPUT 2: Pilot the GEPD in 5 countries existing data and in 8 countries with new data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality of country selection process</li> <li>Fulfillment of phasing of the GEPD in 13 countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confirmation of the 13 pilot countries based on the amount of government interest for the project and its objective. The list will be reported on a memo that will include the rationale for each country.</li> <li>Pre-pilot of the GEPD in 2 countries and plan and commence phasing of the GEPD in new and data-existing countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completion of the 1<sup>st</sup> round of data collection in 3 out of 13 participating countries. These 13 countries include 8 new countries and 5 data-existing countries. The data will be made public on the GEPD interface, but country reports will be developed to report an overview of each country's data, evidence of the GEPD prompting debate in those countries, and validations and feedback received from stakeholders during the Stakeholder Validations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The countries were agreed upon and communicated to partners in the first half of 2019. The countries were selected on the basis of them being HCP countries and showing interest in what the GEPD offers. Seven out of the 13 countries are also Accelerator Countries.</li> <li>Both pre-pilots (in Mozambique and Peru) were completed in 2019. In terms of the phasing in, the work has advanced, and data collection has been completed in 3 countries (Jordan, Peru, and Rwanda). Additionally, data collection in Ethiopia and Mozambique has been partially completed, but COVID-19-related school closures interrupted the field work. As schools start to re-open, the team is preparing to resume data collection once it is safe to do so. In all countries with completed data collection, a stakeholder validation has been held to validate the data collected prior to dissemination.</li> </ul>
<b>OUTPUT 3: Expand coverage to at least 15 countries during the duration of the phasing and enable scale-up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country engagement to expand coverage</li> <li>Development of cost-saving resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guarantee that at least 1 of the 8 pilot countries agrees to co-finance the data collection effort. Develop a short note to report the number of countries with co-financing.</li> <li>Development of training materials that require at most 1-week training.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sign up at least 1 country beyond the original 13 to join the GEPD. Develop a short note to report the number of countries with co-financing.</li> <li>Development of data processing programs that can be used to automate processing of data and calculate indicators.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Several countries are considering co-financing the data collection effort, and the conversations are ongoing. These countries include Bosnia, Madagascar, and Senegal (not one of the 13 countries, but interested in GEPD). In the case of Madagascar, the country has confirmed that it will finance the cost of the school survey. Planning for data collection in Madagascar is already underway to initiate the field work when schools re-open.</li> <li>All training materials have been developed and have been used in Jordan, Mozambique, Peru, and Rwanda. The School Survey training lasts five days.</li> </ul>

Output(s)	Indicator(s)	2019 Milestones	2020 Milestones	2019-2020 Results
<b>Outcome 3: Education Policy Design Labs (EPDLs) are being used by policy makers and task teams to identify binding constraints in the education systems and priority areas</b>				
<b>OUTPUT 1: Development of methodological guidelines and associated database with pilots from the education rapid assessment tool</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful development of a validated methodological approach to set priorities and make policy decisions</li> <li>Completion of the piloting of the methodological approach to set priorities and make policy decisions in 5 countries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of the first draft of the rapid assessment tool as well as an initial draft of the instructions to conduct the System and Design Thinking clinics</li> <li>Application of the rapid assessment and the System and Design Thinking clinics in one country. For each country, a brief report will be developed outlining both: the results of the rapid assessment as well as the messages obtained through the clinics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of the final draft of the Priority-Setting and Decision Protocol, which will include the final draft of 1) the rapid assessment tool and 2) the protocol for the System and Design Thinking clinic. These final drafts will incorporate the feedback and lessons learned from the pilots.</li> <li>Application of the rapid assessment and the System and Design Thinking clinics in 4 countries. For each country, a brief report will be developed outlining both: the results of the rapid assessment as well as the messages obtained through the clinics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The team developed an initial protocol for EPDL clinics, which was first tested when delivering a workshop with the Democratic Republic of Congo Education Team in June 2019. The clinic includes the workshop preparation, session facilitation, and the report to the team summarizing the main agreements.</li> <li>The team ran clinics with the country team of Bangladesh, DRC, Jordan, and Palestine.</li> <li>The team has been engaged with other development partners, such as UNESCO-IAEE, GPE, FCDO (formerly DFID), and USAID on the design of the clinics, and how to bring alignment across other ongoing initiatives. The rapid assessment and the System and Design Thinking clinic were applied in the Democratic Republic of Congo, producing the documents already mentioned.</li> </ul>
<b>OUTPUT 2: Development of interactive dashboard(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of a library of benchmarking methods and data visualizations that can be used and re-used across different country engagements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete overview of existing benchmarking methods and data sources in order to craft the approach and content for an interactive dashboard. The approach, content, and an overall description of the sources will be outlined in a report.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a first draft of an interactive dashboard for users inside and outside the WB</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial dashboards and tools have been created.</li> </ul>
<b>OUTPUT 3: Enable replication of approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of resources to allow replication</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalization of a practical guidance note describing the steps and methodological aspects to implement the Protocol from Diagnosis to implementation of the System Thinking and Design Clinics, as well as the templates for automated stylized assessment reports and the set of diagnostic tools that could be deployed as part of the Protocol.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N.A.</li> </ul>

## Annex 2: Data Inputs for the GCLO

The WBG received Caribbean Secondary Education Examinations data for Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The WBG has reached out to the Minister of Education for Trinidad and Tobago to request Caribbean Secondary Education Examinations data for that country, as that will allow the development of the exchange rate between the Caribbean secondary education examinations and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), and thereby the inclusion of Caribbean secondary education examination data in the database.

The WBG also received data for the First International Mathematics Study (FIMS, 1961–65), the First International Science Study (FISS, 1966–75), the Study of Reading Comprehension (SRC, 1967–73), the Second International Mathematics Study (SIMS, 1976–89), the Second International Science Study (SISS, 1979–91), and the Reading Literacy Study (RLS, 1985–94) conducted by the International Association for Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). The WBG is currently working on including these data sets into the HLO database. Although these additions do not add the latest data points, including these historical data will advance research into educational trends.

In addition, the WBG received data for the Pacific Island Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA) for 15 Pacific Island nations (Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu) for the three rounds of PILNA in 2012, 2015, and 2018. Overall, the additions to the data allow the WBG to improve data for 15 countries and add 20 new countries to the dataset, expanding to a total of 183 countries/territories.

The WBG has also partnered with its recently launched LeAP initiative and has been reaching out to country teams to access and archive the microdata of NLAs. So far, the WBG has received the microdata for Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Brazil, and Ethiopia. Although at this point it might not be possible to produce the HLO equivalized country-level indicators, this information can be of value for triangulation purposes, as well as for the calculation of other country-level indicators.



## Annex 3: Global, regional, and country narratives built with the COVID-19 simulation tool that have been published

This resource page includes several links to reports, working papers, blogs, regional and country briefs prepared using the COVID-19 simulation tool that are publicly available.

### Webinars:

- [The Long-term Impacts of School Closures](#) (July 9, 2020)

### Working Papers:

- [Learning Poverty in the Time of Covid-19: A Crisis within a crisis](#)
- [Learning Poverty: Measures and Simulations](#)
- [Simulating the Potential Impacts of COVID-19 School Closures on Schooling and Learning Outcomes: A Set of Global Estimates](#)

### Regional Team Narratives:

- [Acting Now to Protect the Human Capital of Our Children: The Costs of and Response to COVID-19 Pandemic's Impact on the Education Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean](#) (March 2021)
- [EAP Economic Update: From Containment to Recovery](#) (Fall 2020)
- [EAP Economic Update: Human Capital Background Paper](#) (Marie-Helene Cloutier, João Pedro Azevedo, Diana Goldemberg)
- [South Asia Economic Focus \(Fall 2020\)](#) (Koen Geven and Diana Goldemberg)

### Country Team Narratives:

- [Bangladesh](#) (External Brief)
- [Brazil](#)\*
- [Chile](#) (Report)
- [Colombia](#) (Paper)
- ECA EDU-COVID19 Country Notes\*
- [El Salvador](#) (Education Brief)\*
- [Ethiopia](#) (Brief)\*
- [Mauritius](#) (Brief)\*
- [Indonesia](#) (Paper)
- [Kenya](#) (Brief)\*
- [Maghreb](#) (North Africa)\*
- [Mauritius](#) (Brief)\*
- [Madagascar](#) (Brief)\*
- [Pakistan](#) (Technical Note)
- [Philippines](#) (PISA 2108)\*
- [Russia](#) (RER)

- Turkey (PAD)\*
- Vietnam (Education Brief)\*
- [Western Balkans](#) (RER)
- Western Balkans (Paper)\*
- Zimbabwe (Brief)\*

\* These are internal documents, and currently are not available to the public

#### **External narratives:**

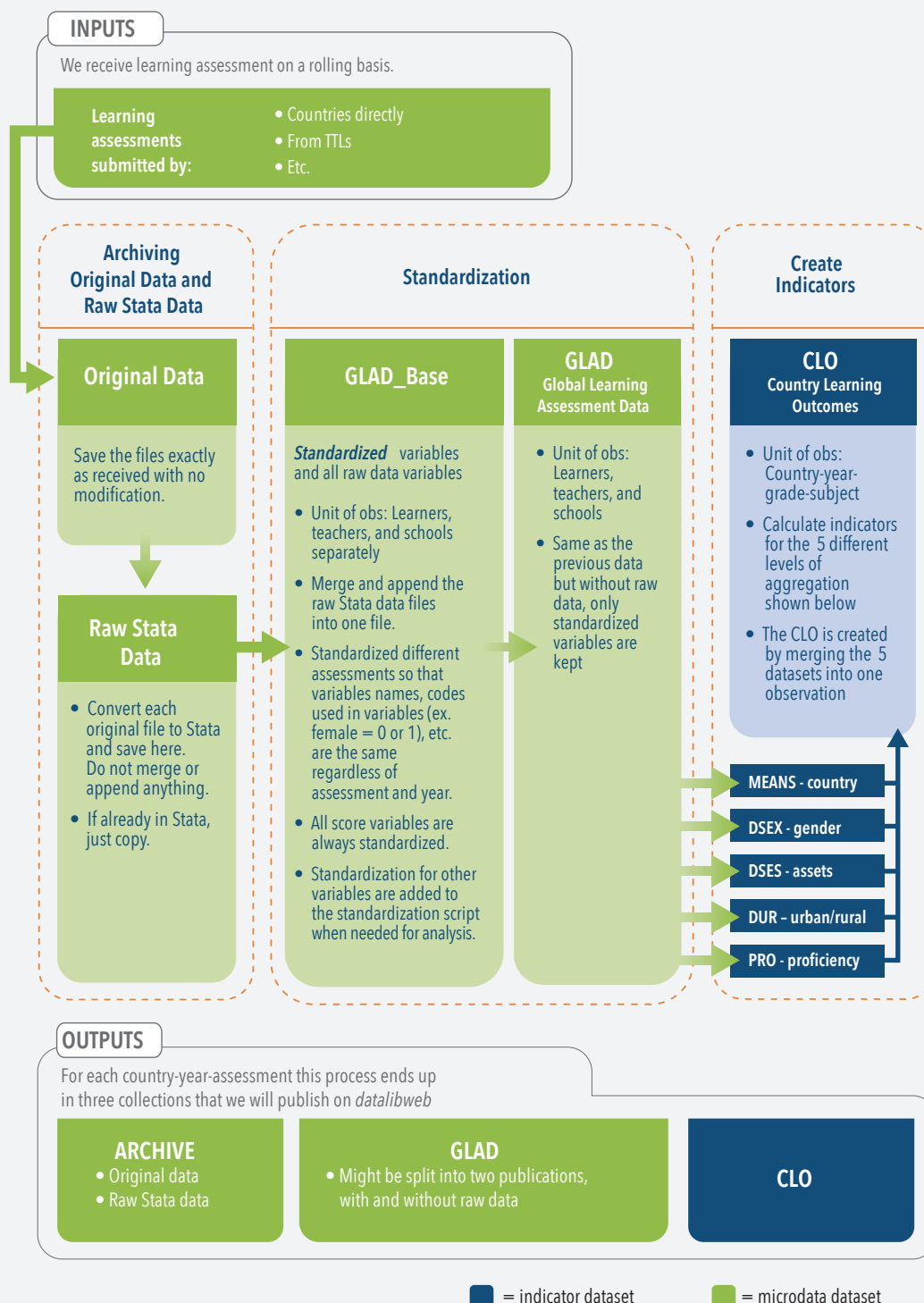
- [Save our Future campaign](#)

#### **Blogs:**

- [COVID-19 y la crisis educativa en América Latina y el Caribe: ¿cómo podemos evitar una tragedia?](#) by Jaime Saavedra and Emanuela Di Gropello (March 17, 2021)
- [How the SDG 4.1 Framework and Learning Poverty Can Help Countries Focus Their Education Policy Response to COVID-19](#) by Silvia Montoya and João Pedro Azevedo (February 25, 2021)
- [How could COVID-19 hinder progress with Learning Poverty? Some initial simulations](#) by João Pedro Azevedo (December 15, 2020)
- [Learning for All: Within-country learning inequality](#) by João Pedro Azevedo and Diana Goldemberg (November 12, 2020)
- [Learning for All: Beyond an Average Score](#) by João Pedro Azevedo and Diana Goldemberg (October 22, 2020)
- [Strengthening the fight against Pakistan's learning crisis](#) by Koen Geven, Amer Hasan, and Cristian Aedo (October 22, 2020)
- [The costs of COVID-19 in education in Latin America. Acting now to protect the future of our children](#) by Emanuela di Gropello (October 07, 2020)
- [Learning losses due to COVID19 could add up to \\$10 trillion](#) by João Pedro Azevedo, Amer Hasan, Koen Goeven, Diana Goldemberg, and Syedah Aroob Iqbal (September 10, 2020)
- [Possible scenarios for learning loss during the school lockdowns](#) by Syedah Aroob Iqbal, João Pedro Azevedo, Koen Goeven, Amer Hasan, and Harry A. Patrinos (April 13, 2020)
- [Mission: Recovering Education 2021](#) by Stefania Giannini, Robert Jenkins, and Jaime Saavedra (March 29, 2021)

# Annex 4: GLAD/CLO Work Process

*Data Flow used when a new Country-Year-Assessment is submitted*





# Annex 5: Updates to the HLO Database as of December 31, 2020

## Updates, including additions

Countries with Improved/New Data	New Countries	Remaining Countries
Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, DR Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hong Kong SAR, China, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Rep. of Korea, Kosovo, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macao SAR China, Macedonia FYR, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Moldova, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Tonga, Turkey, Tuvalu, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Zambia	Antigua and Barbuda, Belarus, Bhutan, Central African Republic, Brunei Darussalam, Commonwealth of Dominica, Cook Islands, Grenada, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Tokelau, Uzbekistan,	Anguilla, Andorra, Bahamas, Barbados, Bolivia, British Virgin Islands, Cabo Verde, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Korea Dem. Peoples, Libya, Maldives, Monaco, Montserrat, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia, Suriname, Turkmenistan

## Assessment source for country additions

Source	New countries
EGRA	Antigua and Barbuda, Central African Republic, The Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa
PILNA	Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Niue, Nauru, Palau, Tokelau
PISA	Belarus, Brunei Darussalam
PISA-D	Bhutan
TIMSS-equivalent assessment	Uzbekistan

# Annex 6: EPDLs tools and resources

Figure 7. Fishbone Analysis to Illustrate a Case Study

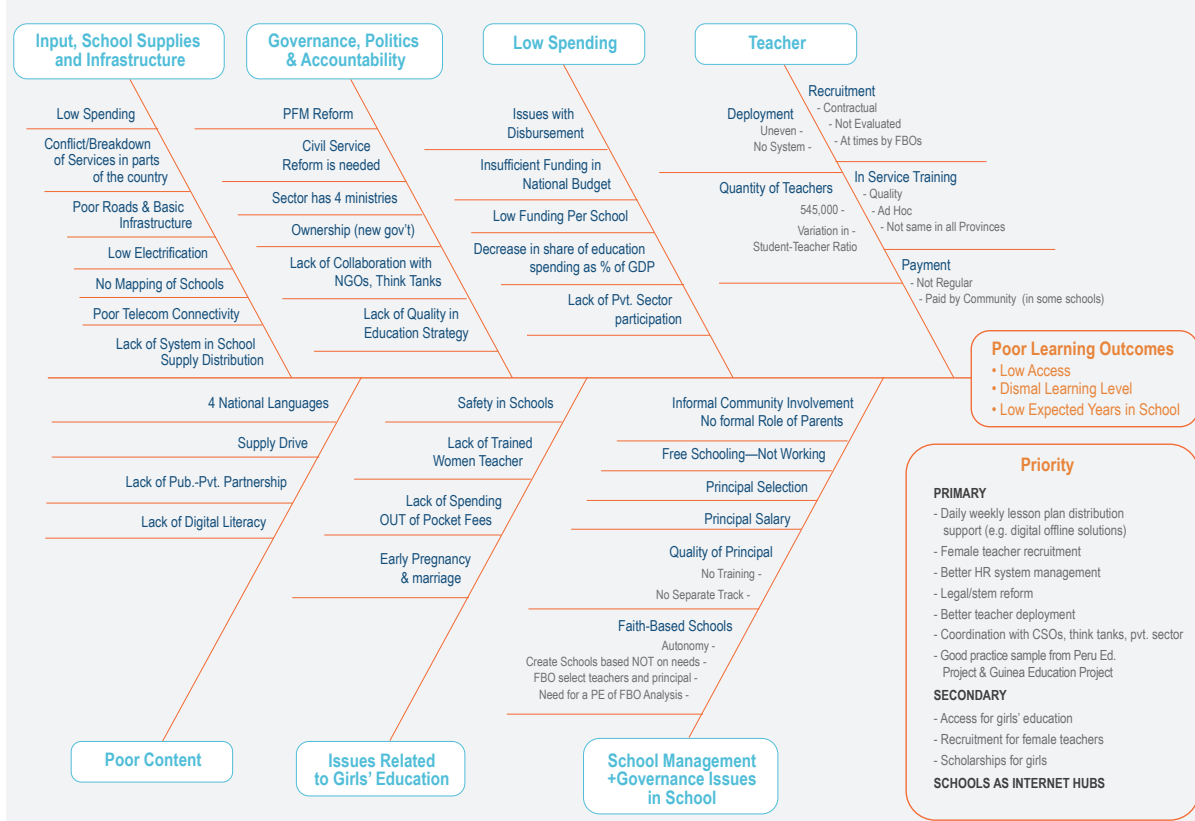
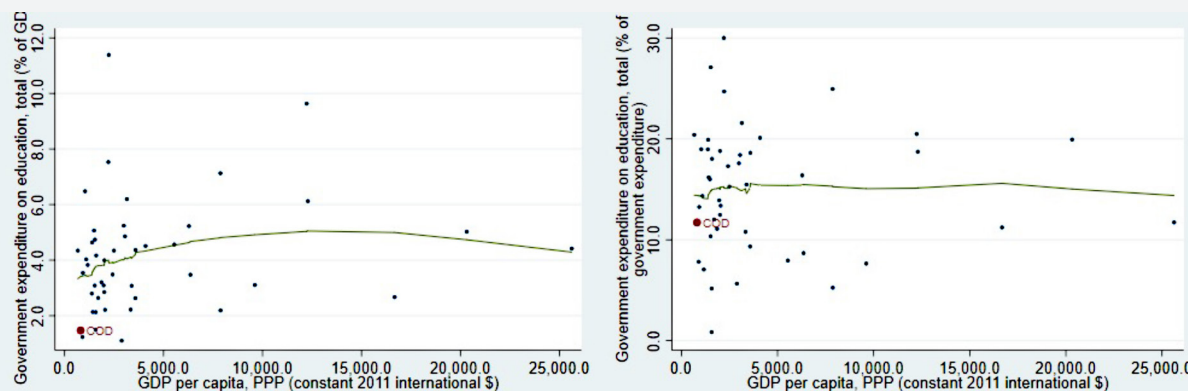
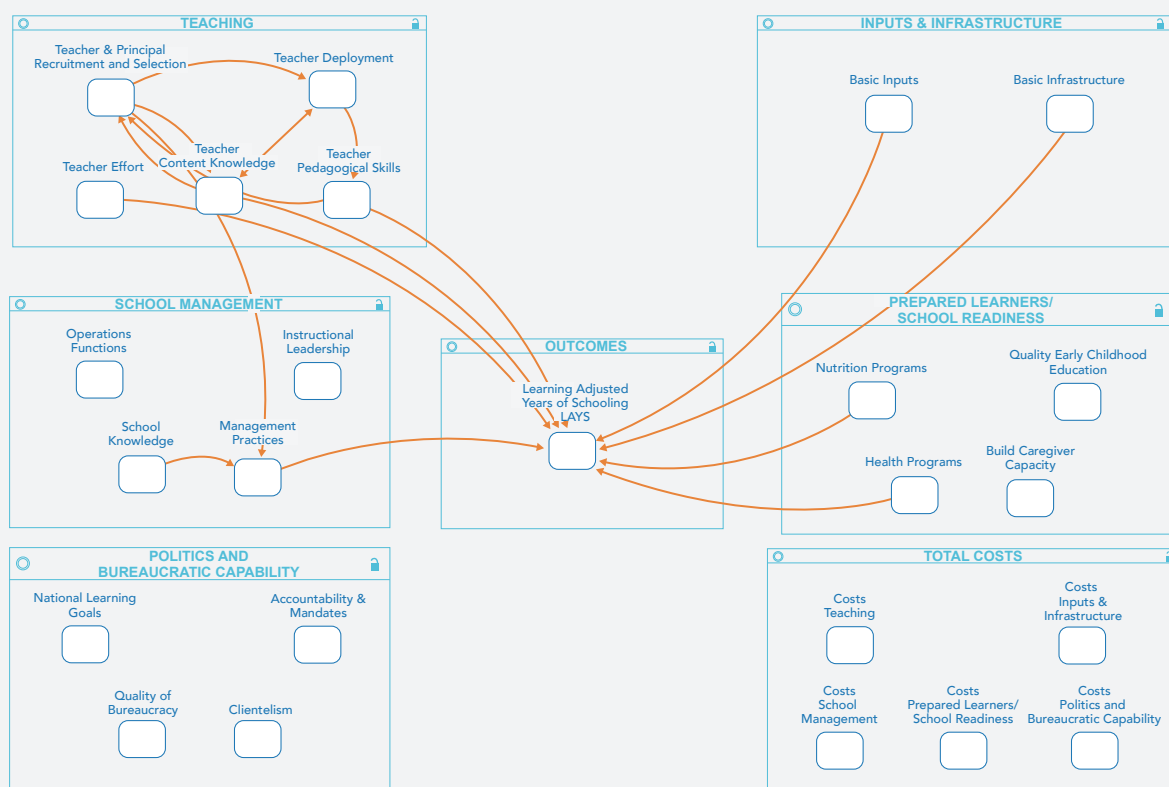
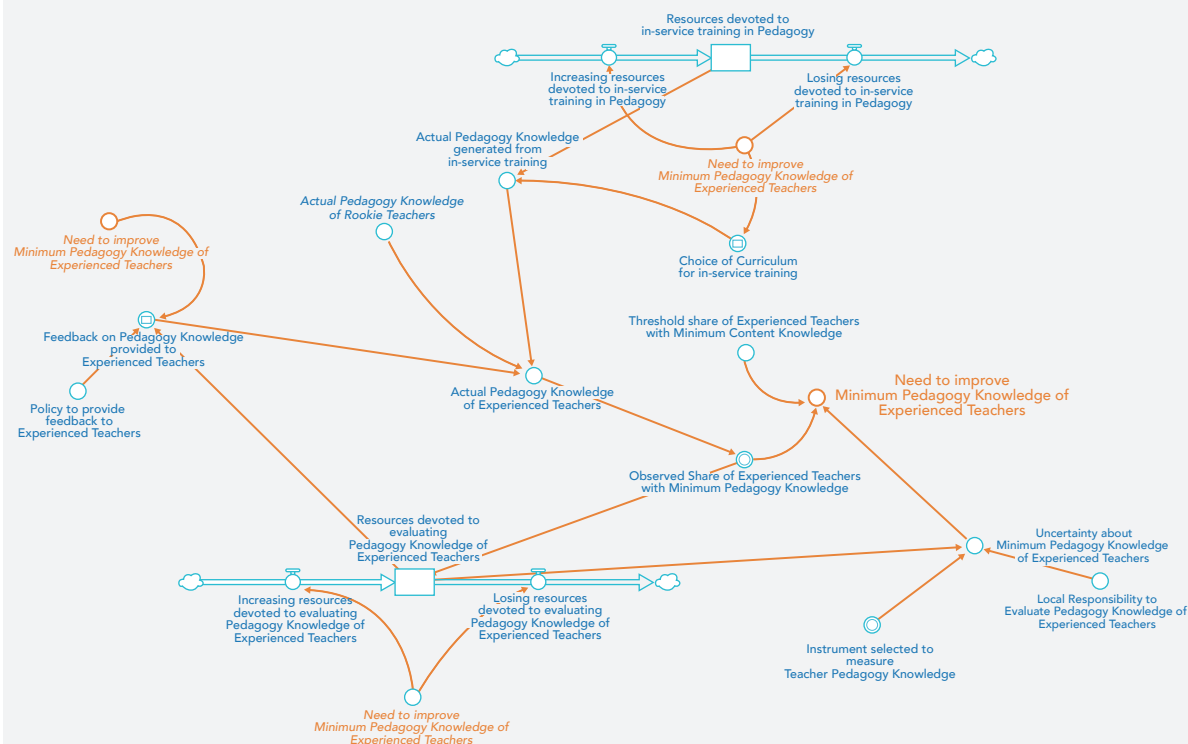


Figure 8. Illustration of Benchmarking Tools



Source: WDI using latest available data as of 29 Apr 2019  
 Highlight country: Congo. Dem. Rep. (COD); latest available information: 2017; value 1.5  
 Variable names: SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS, NY.GDP.PCAP.PP.KD;  
 Region == SSF; n=46

Source: WDI using latest available data as of 29 Apr 2019  
 Highlight country: Congo. Dem. Rep. (COD); latest available information: 2017; value 11.7  
 Variable names: SE.XPD.TOTL.GB.ZS, NY.GDP.PCAP.PP.KD;  
 Region == SSF; n=46

**Figure 9. The Wiring: Making Explicit Links between Different Elements in the Education System****Figure 10. Building Understanding for Each Separate Element in the Education System (i.e., Pedagogy Knowledge)**

## Annex 7: SABER Management

The governance of the WBG's SABER provides expert leadership, appropriate guidance, support, and the structure necessary to ensure that this initiative can achieve its overarching goals of improved education system analysis and performance. The underlying principles of this multilayered governance structure are transparency, efficiency, and technical leadership in the field.

**SABER-UF Council of Funders:** Membership in this group includes the donors to the SABER Umbrella Facility (SABER-UF), namely, FCDO (formerly DFID) and BMGF. This group provides the broad strategic leadership and financial support necessary to sustain the SABER Trust Fund and, through a yearly meeting, ensures progress and sets directions for future strategic priorities. An annual report and results framework highlighting achievements under the activities in the UF are shared once a year and discussed with the group during an Annual Meeting of this body.

**Education Global Practice Management Team:** The WBG's Education GP Management Team is led by its Global Director. This Management Team provides the technical guidance necessary to ensure SABER priorities are in line with operational realities and needs within the WBG. This group's feedback and guidance are critical for informing priorities from the country/regional perspective, and it will serve as the conduit between the teams under the SABER-UF and the country education teams. General SABER updates are provided to the Management Team by the Global Engagement and Knowledge (GEAK) Unit Manager.

**SABER-UF Secretariat:** This group comprises the WBG's Education GEAK and two staff members who manage SABER's overall activities. The Secretariat's main responsibility is to administer the program, including its day-to-day operations, portfolio, and related procedures and programs, monitoring and evaluation, communications and partner relations, and training. In addition, this group is responsible for the expansion of the SABER program, including through increased web presence, products, and SABER engagements and tools.



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Cover: “6th grade student Gévauline Elegbede in class” by GPE/Chantal Rigaud

Page IV: “A teacher and his students in class” by GPE/Paul Martinez

Page 4: “A girl stands in class” by GPE/Kelley Lynch

Page 12: “Students in class” by GPE/Kelley Lynch

Page 15: “Fazel Kandahari High School, Afghanistan” by GPE/Chantal Rigaud

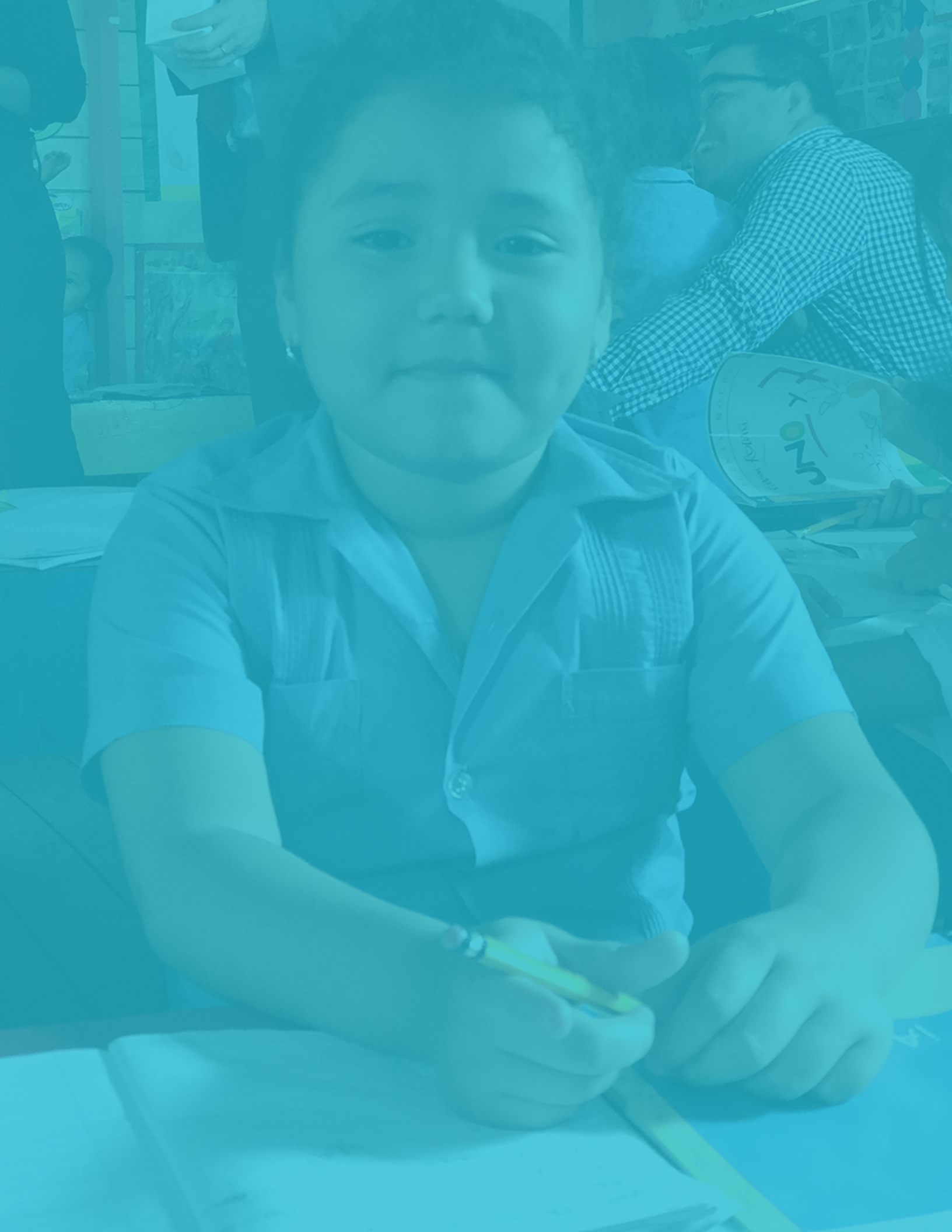
Page 16: “Education in Afghanistan” by GPE/Jawad Jalali

Page 34: “Education in Guinea” by GPE/Adrien Boucher

Page 36: “Igihozo Kevin, 11, studies at home due to coronavirus-related school closures” by UNICEF/Kanobana

Page 39: “Tim Hines School, Honduras” by GPE/Carolina Valenzuela

Page 55: “Tim Hines School, Honduras” by GPE/Carolina Valenzuela



# Transforming Education Systems:

Accelerating Foundational  
Learning for Everyone

**SABER ANNUAL REPORT 2020**  
Retrospective Review

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