

The Covid-19 impact on inclusion and equity in education

The Future of Equity and Inclusion in Education: Turning COVID-19 Challenges into Opportunities

8th Policy Forum: Strength through Diversity

18 March 2021

Manos Antoninis, Global Education Monitoring Report



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



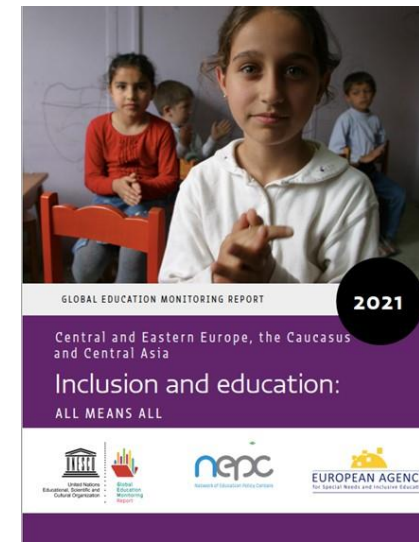
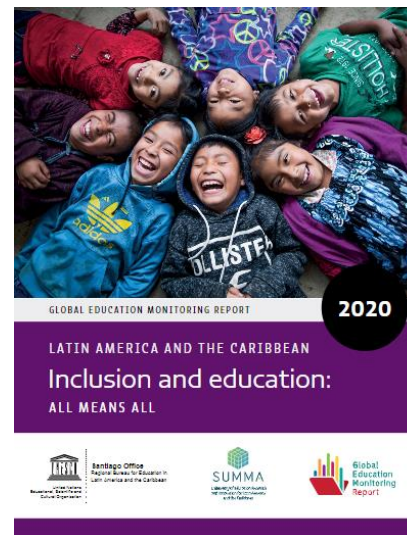
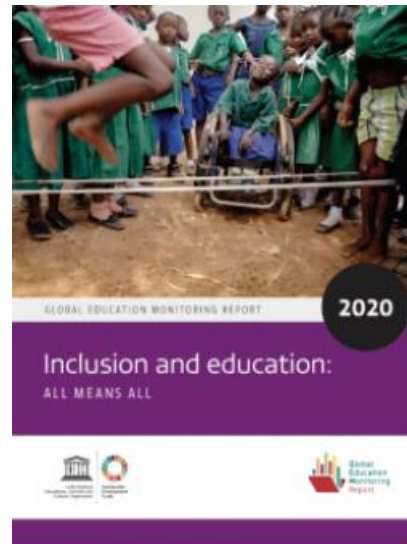
Global
Education
Monitoring
Report

Who we are

Editorially independent report
hosted/published by UNESCO
since 2002

A global mandate
since 2015 to monitor:

- education progress in SDGs
 - strategy implementation to 'hold all partners to account'
- 2020 Report on inclusion



2020 report resources

en.unesco.org/gem-report/report/2020/inclusion

- Full report in English French Spanish Arabic
- Latin America and Caribbean with 29 country case studies
- Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia with summary in 30 languages and with 30 education system profiles



PEER

Countries follow different paths to achieve their education targets. Having access to comparable information on choices made in different systems can enrich education planners' and decision makers' perspectives on how to overcome their challenges. Systematic and comprehensive information on national education legislation, policies and programmes on issues central to achieving SDG 4, our global education goal, is necessary to inform policy dialogue at sub-regional, regional and international levels.

- Ecuador
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eswatini
- Finland
- Gambia
- Ghana
- Guatemala
- Guyana
- Hong Kong, China
- India
- Ireland
- Italy
- Jordan
- Kiribati
- Lao People's Democratic R
- Lesotho

AUSTRALIA

OVERVIEW

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AUSTRALIA

INCLUSION

1. Definitions
2. School Organization
3. Laws, Plans, Policies and Programmes
4. Governance
5. Learning Environments
6. Teachers and Support Personnel
7. Monitoring and Reporting

1. Definitions

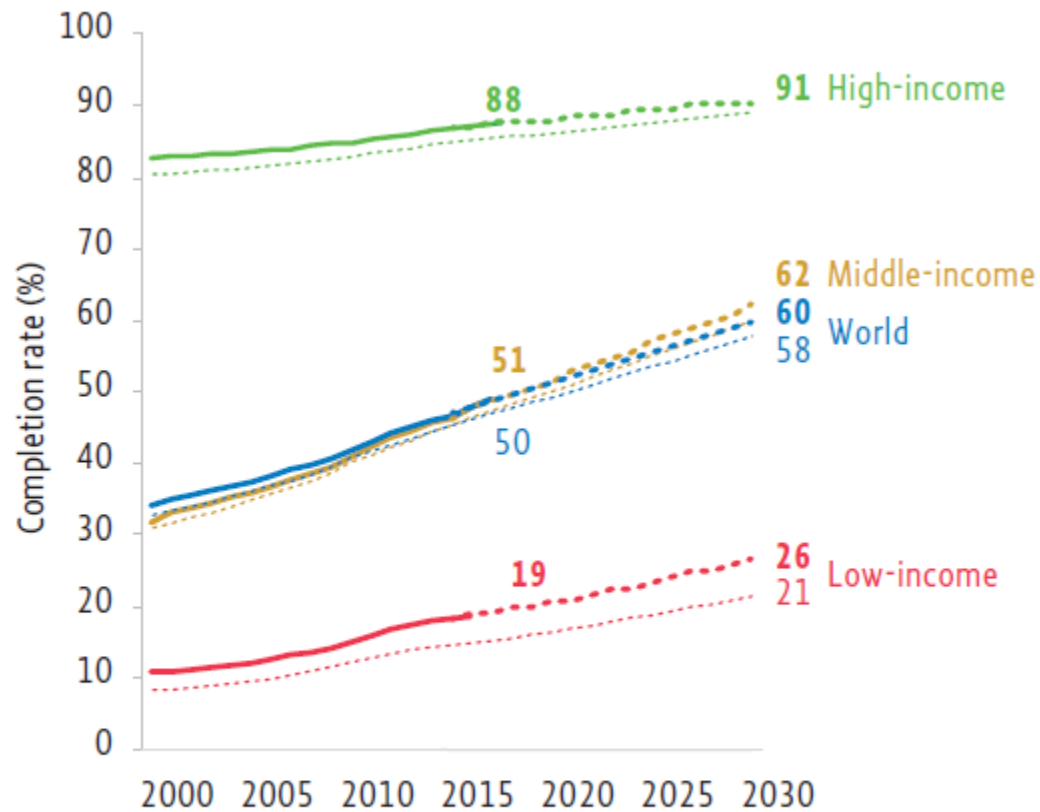
Inclusive education

While there is currently no agreed definition of inclusive education in the country, it is accepted that the meaning of the term has changed to one that now includes the provision of high quality education for all students. In this respect, the Council of Australian Governments (2011) maintains that an "inclusive and accessible educational culture based on the principle of universality will assist students of all abilities [...] to meet the diverse educational needs of all students" (p. 54). Provincially, in Queensland (2018), the government states that "students experience inclusive education when they can access and fully participate in learning, alongside their similar-aged peers, supported by reasonable adjustments and teaching strategies tailored to meet their individual needs" (p. 5). The government identifies the following groups to be considered for inclusive education: rural and remote students, students with disability, cultural and linguistically diverse students, students with mental health needs, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, LGBTQ+, students in out-of-home care, refugee students and gifted and talented students. The Department of Education and Training (DET) of Northern Territory states that inclusive education "is about how we develop and design our schools, classrooms, programs and activities so that all children and students can learn and participate together" (p. 1). In Victoria, inclusive education means that "all members of every school community are valued and supported to fully participate, learn, develop and succeed within an inclusive school culture" and in Tasmania, inclusive schools demonstrate respect and support for diversity through the school's inclusive beliefs, actions and structures: "In these schools everyone is welcome, has a sense of belonging and is engaged in respectful learning experiences" (p. 4). Finally, in South Australia (2019) students experience inclusive education when "they can access and fully participate in learning alongside their similar-aged peers, supported by reasonable adjustments and strategies, tailored to meet their individual needs" (p. 2).

The world was not equitable before COVID-19...

Neither **between** countries...

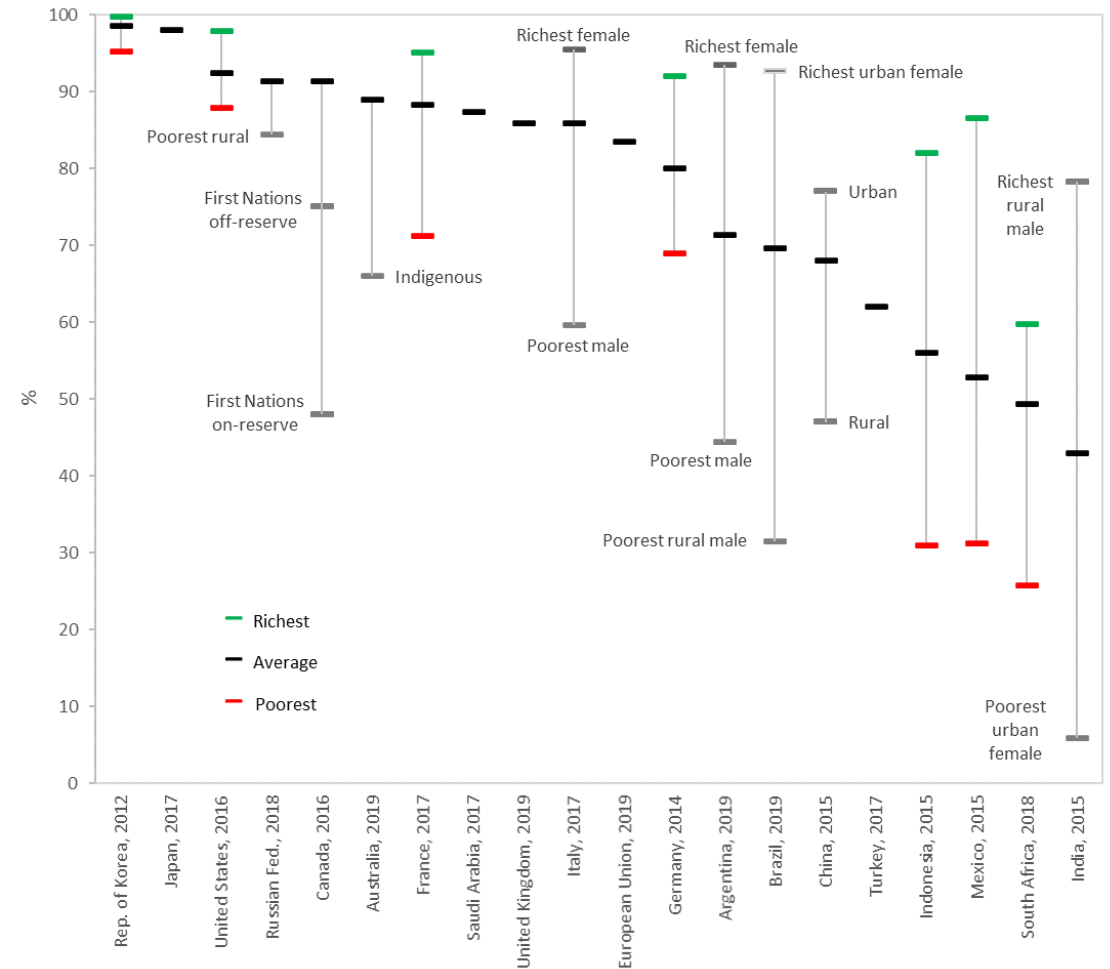
**Secondary completion rate, by income group
2000-2030**



Source: GEM Report team estimates and projections.

...nor **within** countries

**Secondary completion rate, G20 countries
2019 or most recent year**



Inequalities fed the Covid-19 education crisis

A period of tough decisions: applying the **do no harm principle in education**

Distance learning opportunities expanded but imperfect substitutes; and not only due to infrastructure

Pace of change required too abrupt for teachers and parents to respond



Uncertainty over context

Continued closures or re-opening – and what hybrid models?

How to reopen equitably by grade levels, areas, demographic groups, student needs?

Challenge for education authorities to:

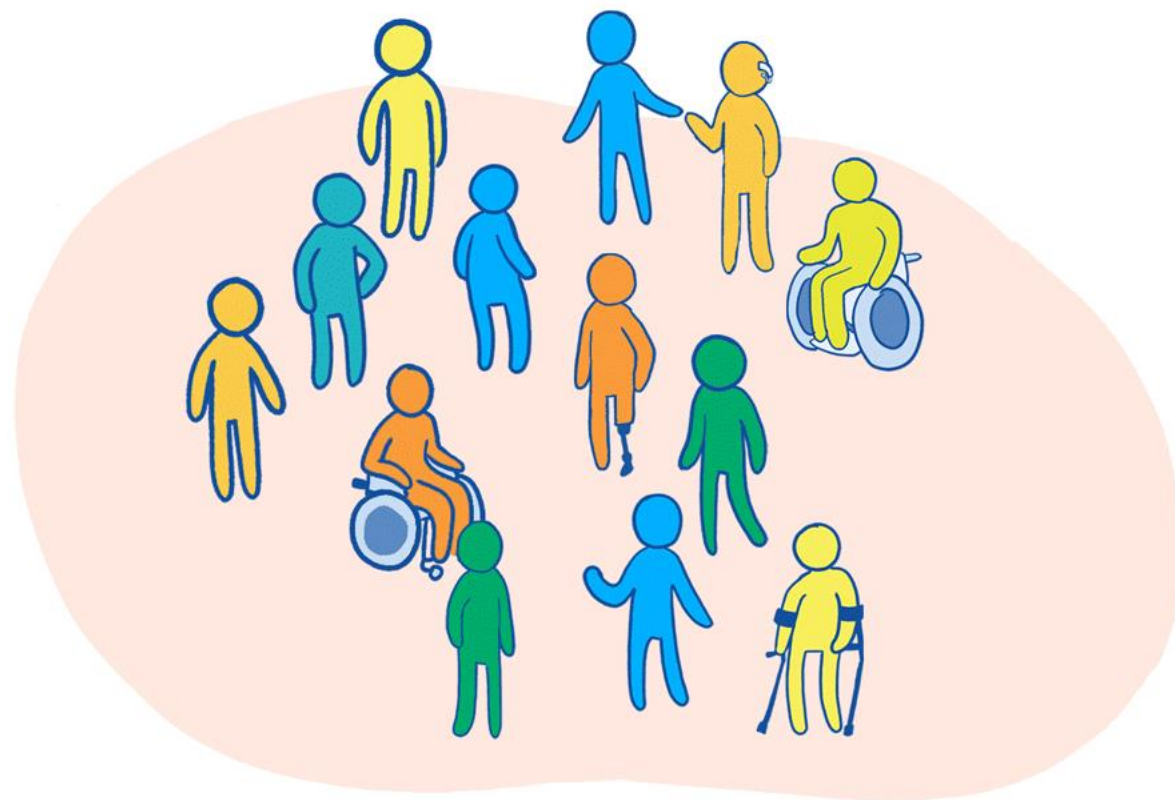
- ▶ **coordinate (health and safety);**
- ▶ **manage (communications); and**
- ▶ **innovate (teaching and learning)**



Uncertainty over emphasis

Challenges and opportunities

- ▶ **Consider not only academic but also social-emotional learning and mental health needs**
- ▶ **Consider not only straightforward subjects but also those that require physical contact or complex sequence**
- ▶ **Re-design core schooling aspects? Individualized progress/assessment of learning, year-round schooling etc.**



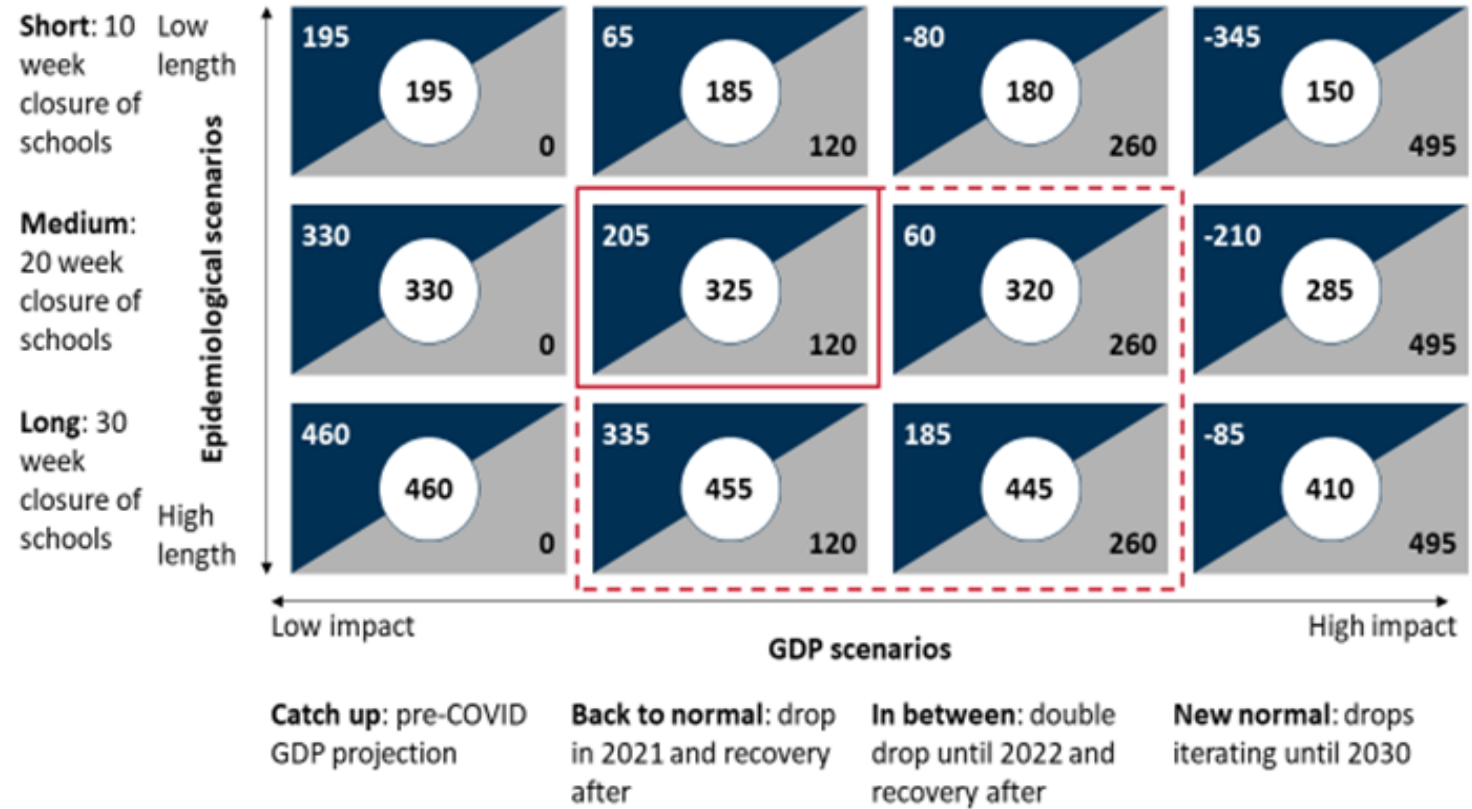
Uncertainty over cost

Two factors determine education recovery costs:

- 1. Length of closures**
- 2. GDP scenarios**

Covid-19 will increase costs (infrastructure, health, teachers)

...but upfront spending for remediation could help reduce this cost by up to two-thirds



Uncertainty over impact

Data collection systems challenged: various data sources, each casting light to different aspects

▶ **Indirect assessment based on past data**

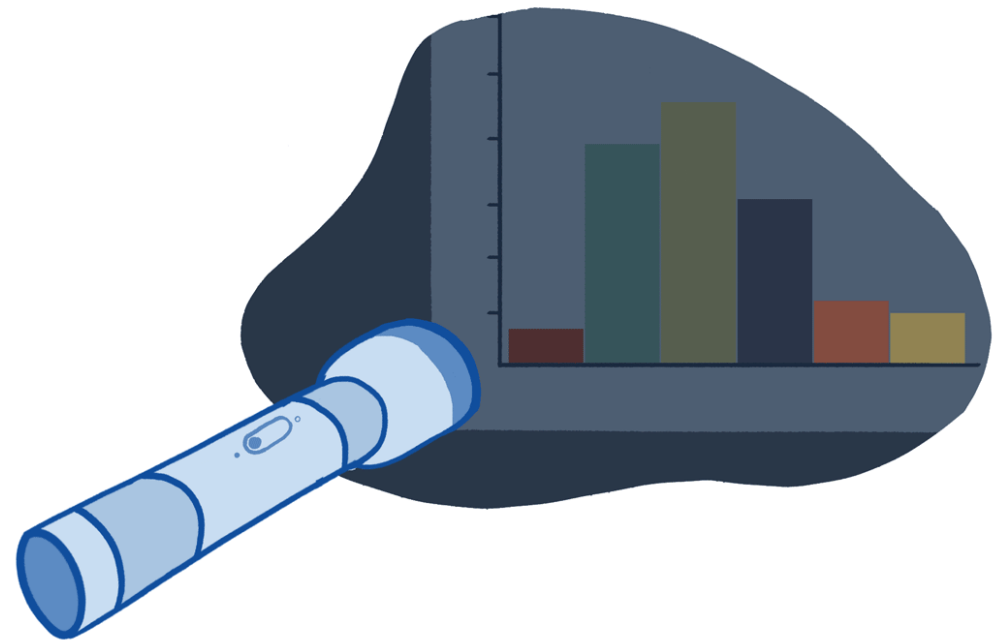
▶ **Direct assessment based on:**

- **Administrative data/online systems**
- **Phone surveys**
- **Subjective views**

...

- **Anecdotal but insightful media coverage**
- **Research on multiple topics:**

from psychological impact to home support to peer effects



Access and equity

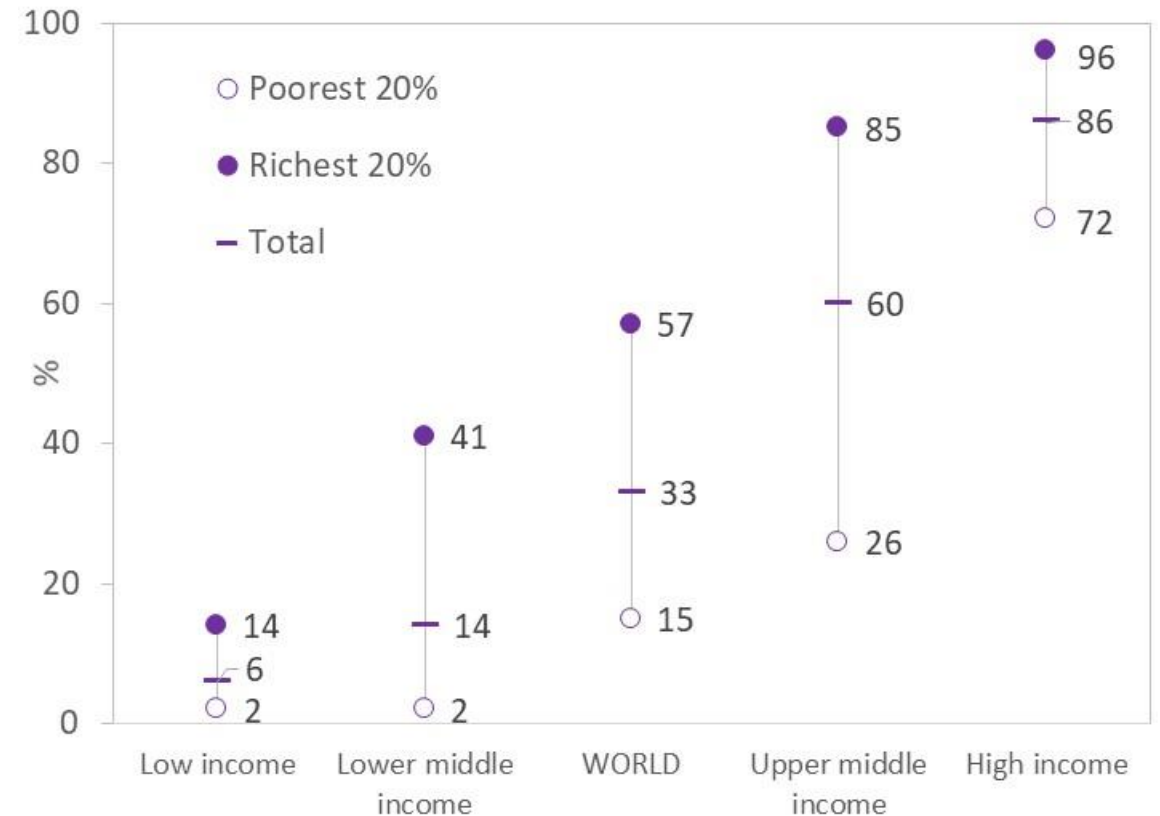
Internet, devices and living conditions

Large disparities even in richest countries (e.g. Canada), in access to (cheap/fast) internet, devices, and appropriate living conditions

(%)	Bottom quartile	Top quartile
No internet access	4.2	0.2
<1 device per member	63	56
Only use tablets/phones	24	8

59% of rural communities have adequate broadband access

Access to internet at home



Source: ITU and UNICEF

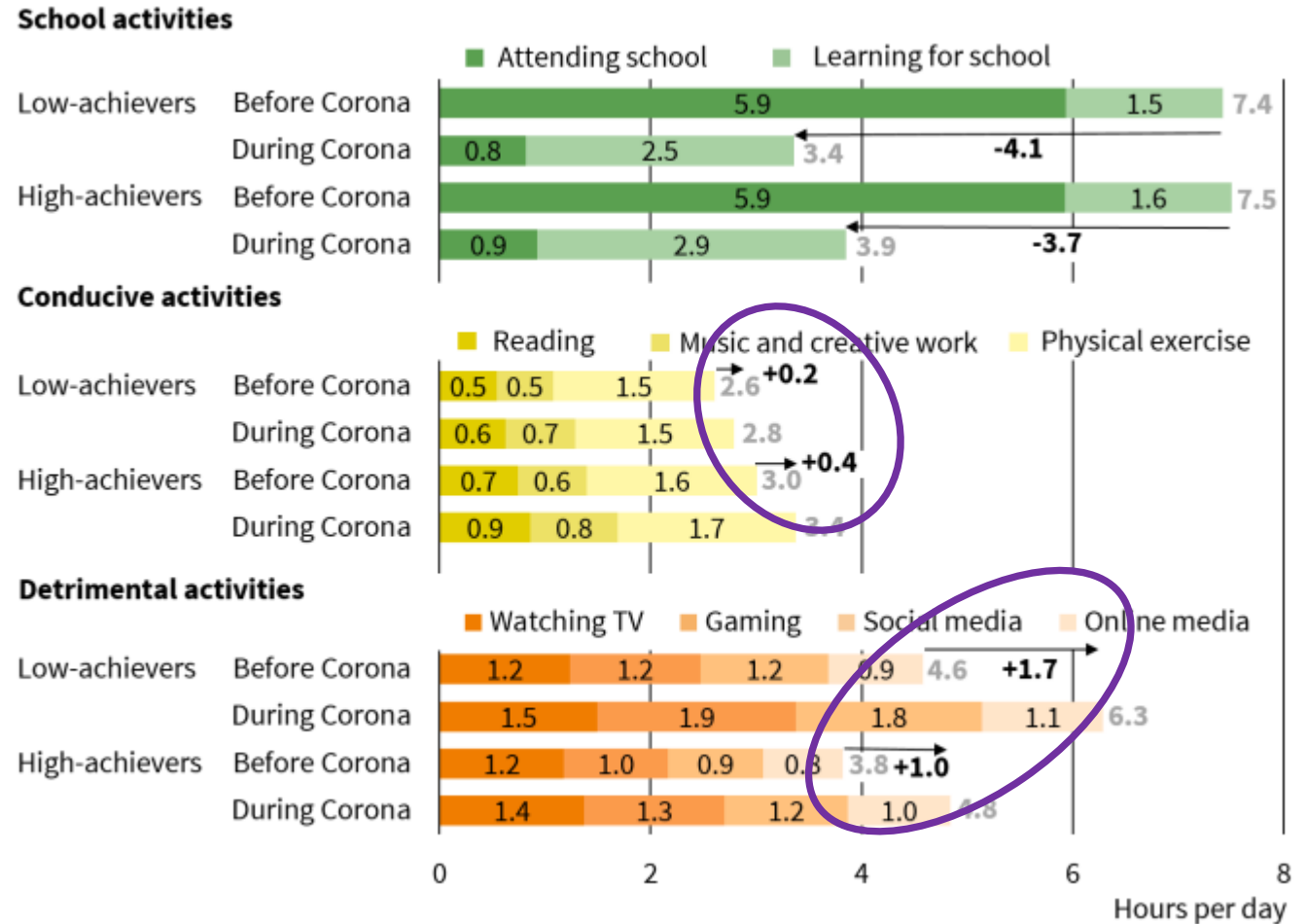
Access and equity

School attendance: online surveys

In Germany:

- ▶ **Much less time on education**
- ▶ **Low-achievers spend more time on detrimental activities**
- ▶ **Parents said child learned much less: 72% if low-achiever and 58% if high-achiever**

Various issues to deal with: self-motivation, home inputs etc.



Access and equity

School attendance: phone surveys

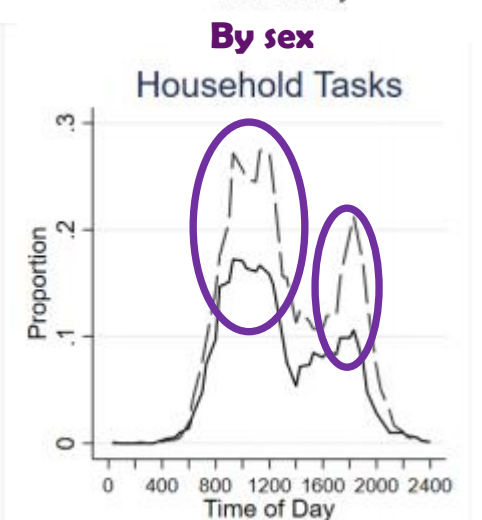
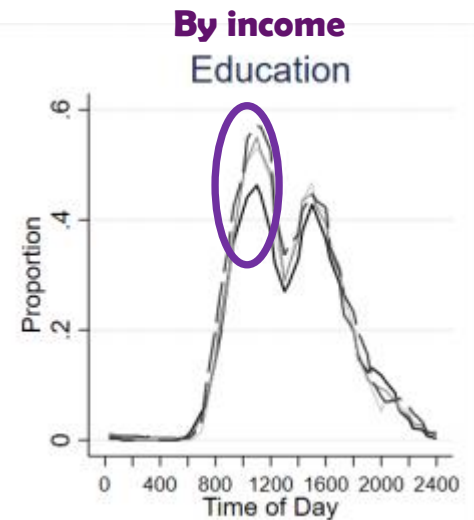
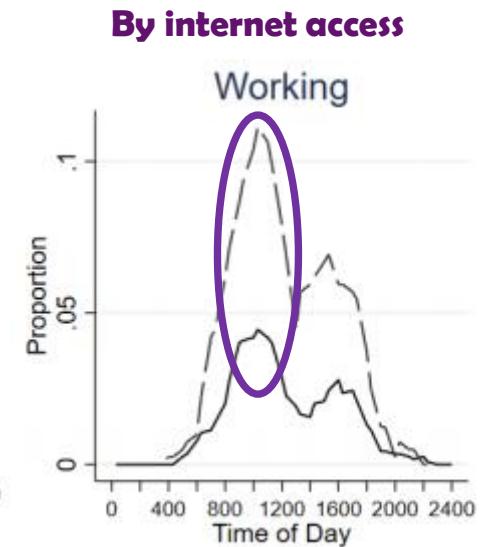
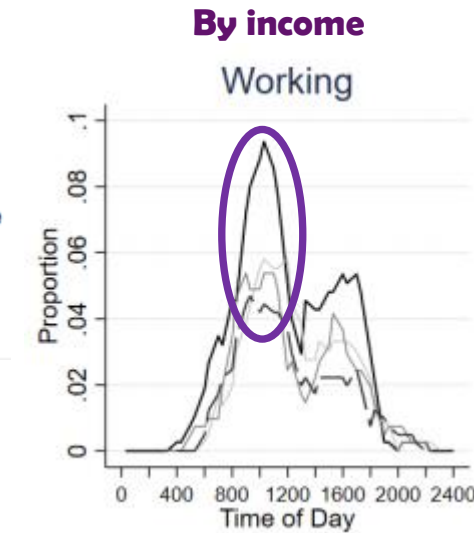
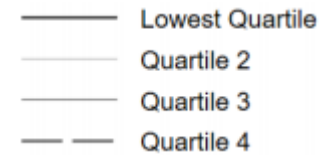
Substituting normal household surveys

► Ecuador

- zero time spent doing schoolwork:
- 9% if they have internet; 23% if they have no internet
- poorest more likely to work than be in education
- boys and girls have distinct gender-segregated roles

► Mexico (Federal District)

- 23% of the poorest but <2% of the poorest discontinued education;
- of those who continued, only 6 in 10 did so over the internet



Quality and learning

General issues

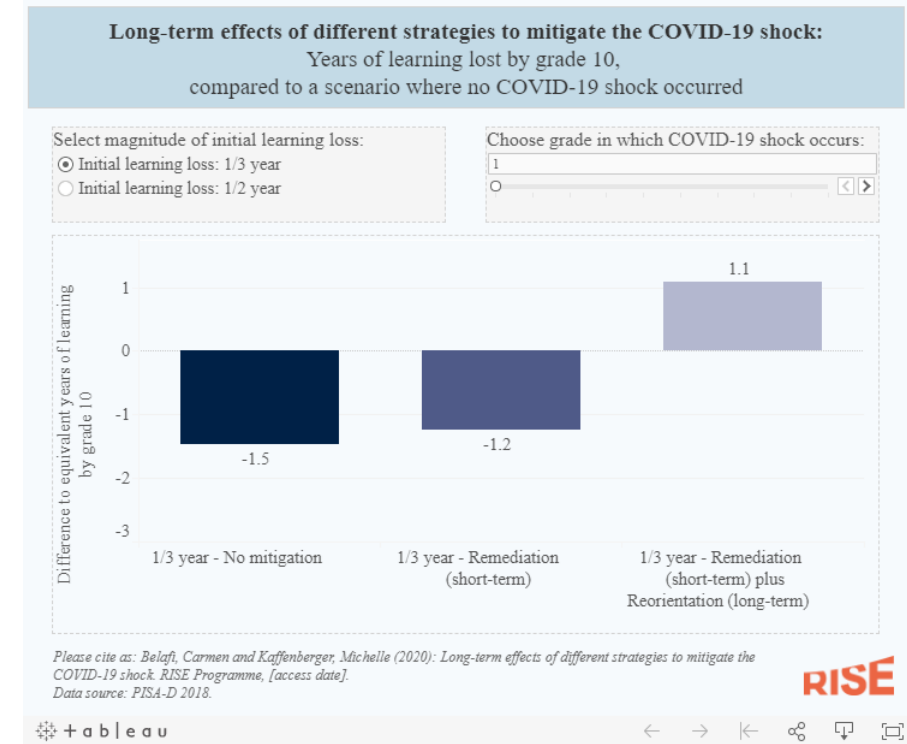
Long term impact:

...so far, projections on scenarios, little real data

Quantify relationship between duration/nature of disruption and magnitude of learning losses

- Impact of **distance learning** mechanisms
- Effects of schools meals and **income shocks**
- Country **capacity to monitor learning**

Learning losses due to school closures could continue to **accumulate** after children return



**A 1-month school closure
reduces long term learning
by more than 1-month**

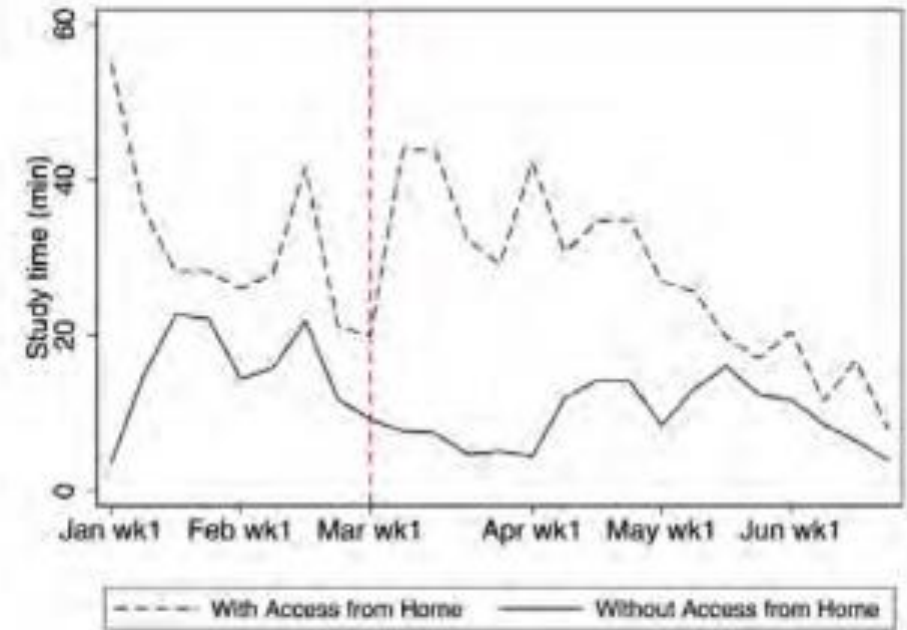
Quality and learning

Big data

Significant constraints in availability and use of such data to privacy regulations

Socioeconomic status cannot be inferred, except through proxies

A study based on user activity logs from an online learning platform in Japan shows that study time was larger for students with access from home



Average weekly study time by access to online platform from home
Ikeda and Yamaguchi, 2020

Quality and learning

Opinion surveys

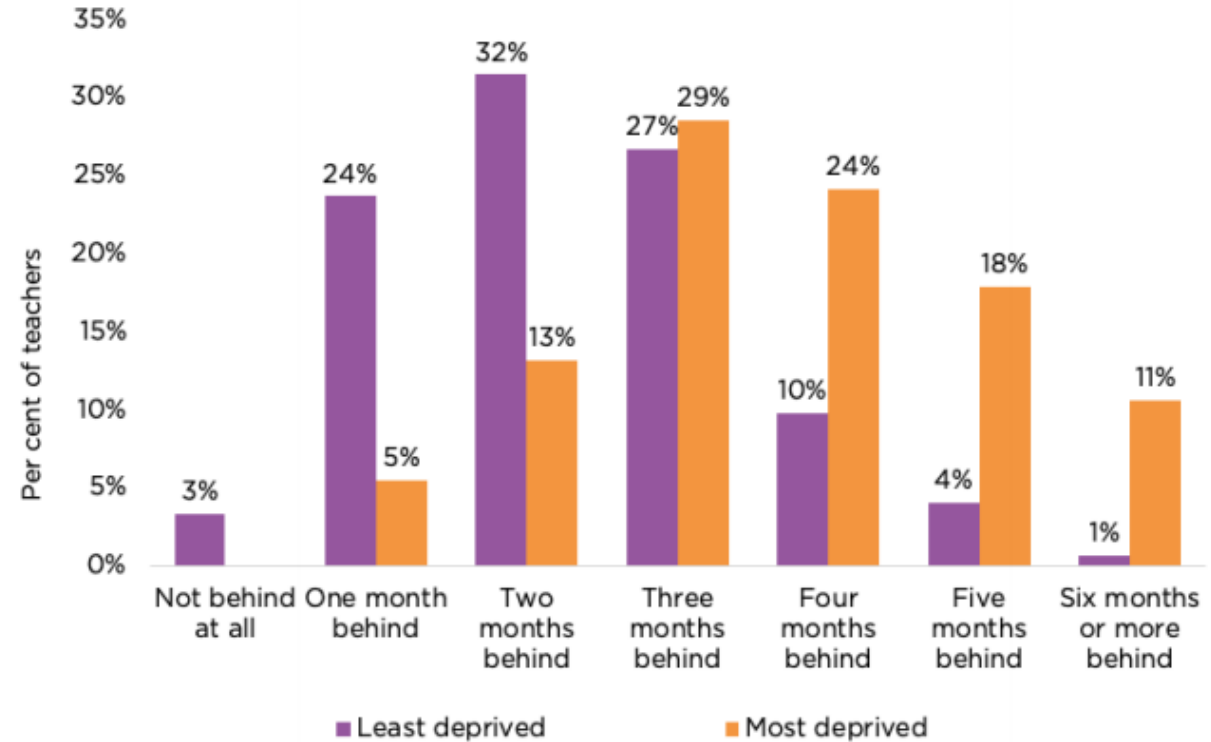
► United Kingdom

Survey of more than 2000 schools

e.g. three months behind in their studies after lockdown

e.g. learning gap between rich and poor pupils

grew by almost half (47%) between March and July



Financing for equity

► Evidence on budget impact just emerging

... but serious concerns given multiple priorities and recession.

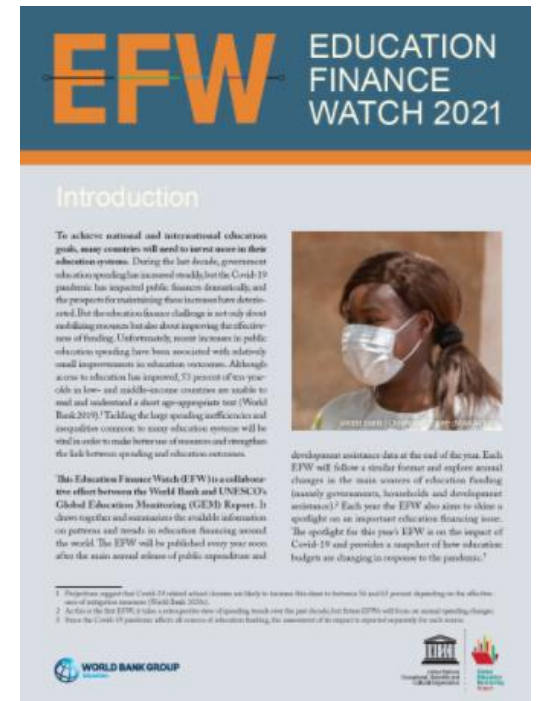
► Education not a major part of stimulus packages

According to UNESCO, education received 2% of stimulus package in 13 of G20 countries..

► Targeted measures are not very common

e.g. few measures on disadvantaged groups

- adaptation of support programmes to students with disabilities
- adaptation of school feeding through direct cash transfers or home deliveries
- some targeted measures on additional or remedial education costs
- some top-ups to child grants and other cash transfers



Policy Paper 44

January 2021

How committed? Unlocking financing for equity in education

It is difficult to agree how much countries should spend on education. The Education 2030 Framework for Action appealed to countries to spend at least 4% of their gross domestic product on education. Some people question even such a modest target because country contexts vary significantly. Different countries appear to achieve the same education results with very different levels of public expenditure. However, there is consensus that, if countries are to achieve the goal of 'inclusive and equitable' education by 2030, they need to spend their budgets, whatever their level, in ways that actively pursue these inclusion and equity objectives. This paper discusses four categories of financing policies that can support such equity objectives depending on how comprehensive they are, how targeted their coverage is and how much money they allocate. Mapping policies and programmes from 78 countries around the world shows that around 1 in 5 demonstrate a strong level of commitment to equity in education through these different mechanisms.

The international community's commitment in 2015 to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all as the fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4) is one of the clearest examples of the overall pledge to leave no one behind, contained in the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The unforeseen challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic risks exacerbating the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities and emphasizes the need for financing mechanisms to strengthen their focus on equity in education if countries are not to move further away from their 2030 targets.

The role of public institutions in equity-oriented processes in education has received less attention than the actual results in monitoring SDG 4. This is not surprising. It is easier to observe inequality, especially with the supply of household surveys and learning assessments in recent years. By contrast, monitoring equity-oriented processes, notably policies and programmes, in a comparative way is plagued by vast differences in context and has therefore rarely been done systematically until now.

Indeed, multiple policies can be deployed to affect equity in education (OECD, 2007). A recent review of European countries' approaches identifies five sets of policies. First, countries may pursue policies that facilitate stratification. They may encourage special schools, school choice, restrictions in admission, and placement into separate school tracks or repetition on the basis of low academic results. Second, they may instead promote following the same standards throughout the system. Third, countries may seek to actively support schools and students at risk of falling behind to compensate for their disadvantage. Fourth, they may promote the provision of early childhood services, which are known to be particularly effective for vulnerable groups that otherwise are not prepared for school. Finally, countries can use financing mechanisms to promote equity (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2020) (Figure 1).

However, this complexity should not prevent efforts to better understand how countries promote equity in education. The purpose of this policy paper is to encourage such a discussion, unpicking just the last of these five sets of policies countries have at their disposal to promote equity in education financing. The paper uses country examples from a new layer of country-specific information made

Recommendations on inclusion – 1

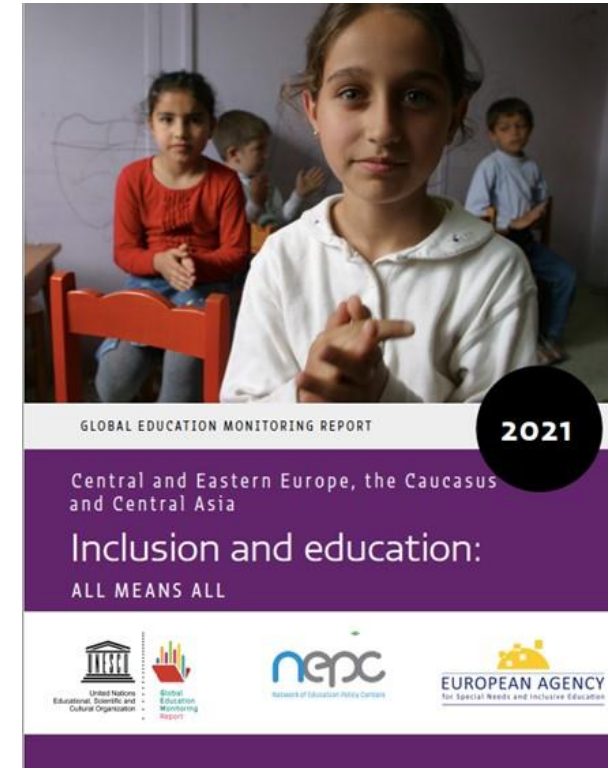
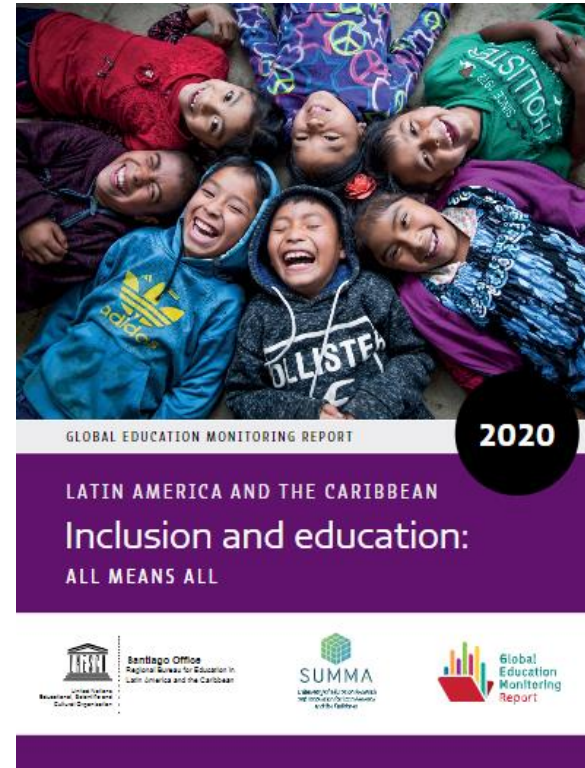
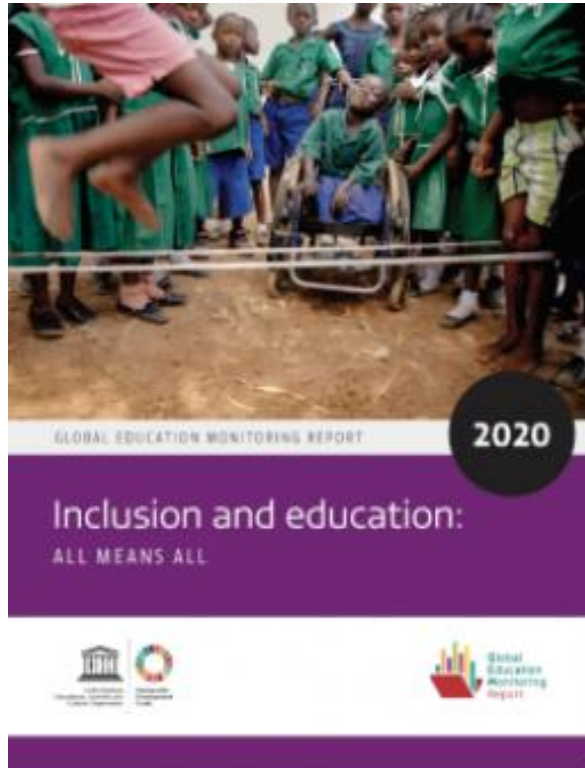
- **Widen the understanding of inclusion**
Who are the new excluded?
- **Target financing to those left behind**
Remediation is top priority; more teachers?
- **Share expertise and resources**
Coordinate infrastructure purchases
- **Engage in meaningful consultation**
Listen to parents and school boards
- **Ensure cooperation across government**
Health but also school meal, home support



Recommendations on inclusion – 2

- **Make space for non-government actors**
Be responsive to issues they raise
- **Apply universal design to fulfil potential**
Online approaches not suited for all
- **Prepare all teachers to teach all students**
Consider their role outside classrooms
- **Collect data with attention and respect**
Learning needs to be monitored
- **Learn from peers**
Always relevant!





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