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Call to Action

Investing More, More Equitably and More Efficiently in Education

Building on the SDG4-Education 2030 commitments, the 2021 GPE's partners Call to Action on Education Finance, the Paris Declaration on Education Financing, and other existing frameworks on financing for development, this Call to Action on Educational Investment urges all countries and all partners to take concrete action both nationally and internationally.

Governments at the national level shall:

- Assume their responsibility for the adequate financing of education, working to identify and solve the main roadblocks to domestically agreed priorities and internationally agreed goals for education, especially those related to SDG4. Country leadership is key to achieve these goals.
- Increase the fiscal space for education and commit to ring-fencing funds to social protection and education systems. Following the Incheon and Paris Declarations, governments shall allocate at least 4-6% of GDP and at least 15-20% of total public expenditure to education, protecting public education budgets from the constrained fiscal environment resulting from the COVID 19 pandemic and the global economic crisis.
- Commit to protect and increase real investment per student and per school-age person towards an ambitious national benchmark established according to the national and regional context.
- Commit to reach an adequate tax-to-GDP ratio as required, through ambitious and progressive tax reforms with linked commitments towards financing educational investment.
- Commit to allocate educational investment more equitably and efficiently – starting with early childhood care and education – so that advances towards quality education for all are efficiently achieved. Establish specific goals with respect the percentage of educational investment going to the 40% and 20% of families with lowest income, to those living in rural or distant areas, children with disabilities or those especially vulnerable.
- Track and report on educational investment and its results in a disaggregated and systematic way, to make sure educational investment is equitably distributed, with special attention to those most vulnerable. Integrate gender responsiveness into public expenditure monitoring to identify the effects of education spending on girls and boys, reorient spending to redress imbalances and restructure expenditures to promote gender equality.
- Commit to investing in re-skilling and life-learning opportunities to help prepare both youth and adults for the economy of the future, and to spur new, decent job opportunities in the growing green and digital economies.



- Increase the efficiency of educational investment by reducing leakages; increasing delivery capacities of the education stakeholders and institutions; working across education partners in an inclusive manner; strengthening accountability frameworks; and improving teacher workforce development and management.
- Take action on linking sector planning and budget programming so that education plans have clear and realistic financing strategies with robust cost and revenue productions. Develop adequate and timely data to link and evaluate these plans with respect to expected outcomes.
- Commit to creating integrated, long-term policy and financing strategies aimed at boosting investment in education, such as through the use of Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs) and SDG-aligned budgeting strategies.

The international community shall:

- Prioritize global actions on taxes, supporting international reforms that can help countries expand tax-to-GDP ratios in a rapid and progressive way, shifting international financial institutions country-level dialogue to be bolder and more progressive on tax reforms, and ensuring global rules do not push countries into “race to the bottom” strategies in terms of taxes and harmful tax incentives.
- Promote global action on tax loopholes, including agreements on a global asset register, the reduction of illicit financial flows, unfair trade taxation, acting on tax havens and promoting a process for setting fair global tax rules.
- Act in support of innovative financial mechanisms like the International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd) which aims at leveraging significantly increased education financing for LMICs through regional and multilateral development banks.
- Work on scaling up existing successful smart aid financing and grants to support the poorest countries to increase fiscal space and address rising debt distress, which precludes significant borrowing in many cases, including LMICs.
- Support action on debt relief, restructuring, and in some cases, cancellation, for any countries spending more on debt servicing than education
- Find new solutions and mechanisms that can unblock funding and advance the case for a new allocation of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) and reallocation of existing SDRs to countries most in need to invest in education.
- Revise the international financial and debt architecture to ensure sufficient financing can be mobilized in support of long-term, sustainable development objectives, including by removing conditionalities that require cutting expenditure on education as a pre-requisite to attain new financing, and using innovative tools such as debt-for-education swaps.
- Urge the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other international financial institutions to remove obstacles such as public sector wage constraints that prevent increased spending on education; and



champion policies that will allow significant new recruitment of professional teachers wherever there are shortages.

- Create new norms and formulas to help Ministries of Finance and Governments as a whole factor in long-term returns to investment in education so that education spending is not seen purely as a consumption expenditure in medium term expenditure frameworks and other planning / budget documents.
- Agree on a new international collective approach to financing of education for refugees and other learners displaced by climate catastrophes. This must address the distinct education needs of displaced and refugee children.
- Fulfill the established benchmark 0.7% of donor Gross National Income (GNI) for official development assistance (ODA) and increase the proportion of such aid going to education and the availability of concessional loans and grants for education to 15% - 20% of portfolios and allocate these to the countries where the need is greatest.
- Ensure evidence-based monitoring of progress towards national, regional, and global benchmarks built on accountability, national ownership, participation, and transparency, within the SDG4-Education 2030 Steering Committee and the reformed Global Education Cooperation Mechanism (GCM).
- Help establish, facilitate, and sustain knowledge and peer learning networks and practice exchange on education spending, equity, and efficiency, bridging the gap between theory and practice.
- Support capacity development, strategic guidance, knowledge sharing and monitoring of efforts to integrate gender into education sector plans and budgets, including the gender focus of development assistance in education provided by the UN.

Like all TES flagships, the call to action will be promoted and championed in the coming months and followed up on and monitored under the SDG4 High-Level Steering Committee (HLSC), both through its data and monitoring and the finance technical committees, composed of Member States and expert partners.