



APRIL 2012

# World Bank Education Sector Strategy 2020: LEARNING FOR ALL

## Strengthening Education Systems to Improve Learning

**The World Bank is off to a robust start in implementing its new Education Sector Strategy 2020: Learning for All.** A year after unveiling the strategy, the Bank is working to remove the barriers that limit educational opportunities for girls and other disadvantaged children; developing and applying new tools to help countries improve their education systems and outcomes; and supporting countries to deliver the learning and skills necessary for all people to live healthy and productive lives.

**The Bank's core objective is to help countries improve Learning for All.** Learning—not only schooling—is critical for children and youth to succeed. And learning for all—giving not just some but *all* children an opportunity to learn—is critical for a nation to prosper. The strategy calls for:

- ▶ **Investing early**, because the foundational skills acquired early in childhood make possible a lifetime of learning
- ▶ **Investing smartly**, because investments that prioritize learning and skills development—and their measurement, to inform reform—are most effective in producing results
- ▶ **Investing for all**, targeting girls and disadvantaged populations, because a nation can prosper only when all children enjoy an opportunity to learn.

**For the Bank, success in education has to do with strengthening countries' education systems.** It is pursuing this goal by (A) providing technical and financial support to countries, (B) developing knowledge, and (C) strengthening Bank staff capacities.

### A. Providing technical and financial support to countries

**In September 2010, the Bank pledged to increase its support of countries not on track to reach the education Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),** committing to top up its average annual IDA financing for basic education with an additional \$750 million over five years. By the end of Fiscal Year 2012, the Bank will be nearly halfway toward meeting this pledge.

### Main Messages

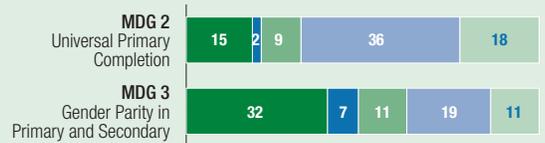
**Education should lead to more learning.** Key to results is measuring learning, evaluating what works in improving learning, and using this evidence to inform policy change and investments.

**Countdown to 2015.** The Bank is increasing support to the poorest countries to reach universal primary completion and gender parity in primary and secondary education.

**Gender equity in education merits high priority.** There are indisputable benefits to ensuring that girls and disadvantaged populations have an equal opportunity to learn and excel in order for households, communities, and nations to prosper.

**The World Bank is committed to being a strong, accountable partner.** The Bank is committed to open data in pursuit of results for countries, and will publish annually a performance report on the Education Strategy results framework.

### Education MDGs: Progress towards 2015



Total of 80 IDA and IDA-blend countries



### Bank-supported operations in FY11-12 show strong support for key themes:

- **Promoting equal access and improved quality of education for children disadvantaged by gender, income, disability, and other factors.** More than 25 projects in FY12 focus on disadvantaged children, and more than half of these projects aim to increase girls' opportunities to learn, through such measures as demand-side interventions including targeted scholarships and conditional cash transfers. Projects are also helping disadvantaged populations in other ways—enhancing the job skills of young women in Afghanistan and Ethiopia, for example, to prepare them to be competitive in the labor market.
- **Support for early childhood development.** In Mongolia and Bangladesh, project interventions are strengthening pre-primary education systems and increasing access for girls and rural children so that all children can have an equal start.
- **Assessing learning.** With support from the Russia Education Aid for Development (READ) program, the Bank is helping Tajikistan set up a National Testing Center, Angola implement a first-ever nationwide assessment, and six other countries strengthen their student assessment systems to inform teaching and increase learning.

## B. Developing knowledge

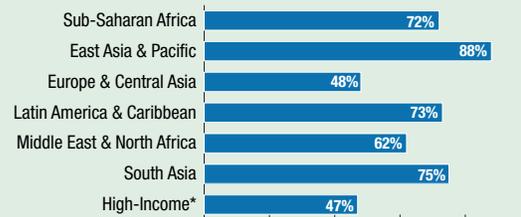
### New knowledge is reinforcing areas prioritized in the strategy:

- **Improving access to jobs.** Regional flagship reports have provided countries with knowledge and policy advice on how to address the shortage of labor market-relevant skills, ways to reform tertiary education systems to develop such skills, and how to improve learning at pre-primary and primary levels.
- **Promoting gender equality.** The companion piece to the 2012 World Development Report, *Getting to Equal: Promoting Gender Equality through Human Development*, highlights gaps in education for marginalized populations and details proven interventions that address equality. The purpose of the April 2012 Gender Colloquium is to bring together thinkers, researchers, and practitioners to discuss ways to address multiple sources of educational disadvantage, with a focus on gender.
- **Measuring results.** The Bank is stepping up its impact evaluations of projects as a way to help inform policymaking and increase resource effectiveness. For example, a recent study in Liberia showed higher early grade reading

outcomes when teachers received intensive training on reading instruction, while an evaluation in India found that providing information effectively to parents improved school accountability and learning outcomes.

- **Strengthening education systems.** The Bank's new SABER (Systems Approach for Better Education Results\*) initiative underpins its support for Learning for All and is being widely applied around the world to help countries examine and improve their education systems.
  - Under SABER, the Bank is collecting policy and institutional data covering 13 critical policy domains, including Teacher Policies, Student Assessment, and Early Childhood Development. SABER case studies, country reports, background papers, and policy notes are expanding the global evidence base in the various policy domains.
  - SABER tools are beginning to influence sector strategies and project design in many countries. In the Kyrgyz Republic, three SABER domain tools (School Autonomy and Accountability; Student Assessment; Teachers) helped to shape project design. In Nigeria, the Bank worked with the government to apply four SABER domain tools to develop the upcoming State Education Program Investment Project.

### Share of countries in region applying SABER



\* High-income countries are OECD countries (excluding Chile, Mexico, Republic of Korea, and Turkey, which are included in World Bank regions) as well as Kuwait, Oman, and Singapore.

## C. Strengthening Bank staff capacities

### A comprehensive World Bank education staff learning program will be launched on May 2, 2012.

The program will support education staff to strengthen their capacity to implement the new education strategy and develop cutting-edge knowledge and skills in technical and operational topics in order to deliver high quality advice and services to country partners.

\* Formerly System Assessment and Benchmarking for Education Results.