

Targets and Metrics for Improving Learning Opportunities and Outcomes

A new Global Compact on Learning is galvanizing a wide range of actors to work together to help an estimated 259 million children escape the low-learning trap.

The Global Compact on Learning has adopted three global targets to be achieved by 2015. These targets align with the Education for All and Millennium Development Goal agendas adopted by the global community as well as other donor and national education strategies.

The targets are intended to show what can be achieved in the next three years using data systems that have already been piloted and build momentum for improving learning opportunities and outcomes beyond 2015.

1. Improve school readiness, particularly for young children from poor, vulnerable and marginalized groups by increasing the proportion of children attending pre-primary programs by 15%.

Beneficiaries: 31 million

High-quality pre-primary programs are an important avenue through which young children gain skills for success in school. To support this target, countries must also reduce the proportion of children reaching school age having suffered from malnutrition before the age of five, as nutritional deficits can lead to learning deficits. Parent education, home visiting, and non-formal child care arrangements also support early learning and should supplement center-based programs to ensure that all children have a healthy childhood and begin school ready to learn.

2. Halve the proportion of children unable to read at the most basic level by the end of grade two.

Beneficiaries: 185 million

Based on regional and international assessments, an estimated 40% of students in developing countries are not learning the appropriate skills for their age group. If universal primary education is achieved, an additional 67 million students will enter the classroom. Yet, without an explicit focus on learning, the proportion of non-learners will likely increase. Halving the proportion of children unable to read would mean that 80% of current students and incoming students enrolled in primary education are in school and learning.

3. Eliminate the gender gap and increase overall enrollment in quality secondary education by 10%.

Beneficiaries: 43 million

Relevant, high-quality secondary education that equips youth with the knowledge, skills, and capacities they need for life and work must be an available and expected option for students finishing primary school. Low and low-middle income countries, in their efforts to expand access to secondary school, must eliminate the gender gap, providing at least 34 million more girls access to post-primary education opportunities. Better data and measurement systems are needed to understand learning achievement of youth, in both formal and non-formal post-primary education programs.

All children in school and learning well is the ultimate vision of the Global Compact on Learning. Every child has the right to: a good foundation for succeeding in school beginning at birth; transition successfully to primary school at the appropriate age; learn well to progress through each grade; and complete an education with the skills necessary for life and work.