

Spotlight report series

On basic education completion and foundational learning in Africa

One in five primary school-age children in sub-Saharan Africa are out of school; their number is nearly as high as it was in 1990. Only two in three children in the region complete primary school by age 15. Among those who do, only three in ten achieve the minimum proficiency level in reading, meaning that barely one in five children do so overall.

African countries face multiple challenges affecting education. Poverty and malnutrition compromise early childhood development. Most children are taught in a language they don't speak at home. Conflict and instability undermine efforts to build robust education systems. The youth population is growing rapidly. The COVID-19 crisis risks exacerbating education inequalities. Redoubling efforts to move the needle in countries furthest behind is a shared responsibility. Putting the spotlight on national and international efforts in terms of access, equity, quality, learning and finance in basic education is a necessary step to achieve SDG 4.

The **Spotlight** series is a new partnership between the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report, hosted by UNESCO, and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), hosted by the African Development Bank. It will conduct analyses on the current situation and on the steps taken towards achieving **universal basic education completion and foundational learning in Africa** to ensure this issue is on top of policymakers' agendas.

Over the next three years, the Spotlight series will publish a report covering a dozen countries per year. The first of three annual publications is scheduled for June 2022. The series will serve as a peer learning and accountability tool to support governments and their

partners to take the right decisions, with a focus on equity. The series will complement and add value to existing analyses and review processes at three levels:

- national, such as education sector analyses, joint sector reviews and parliamentary control;
- regional, notably those of the African Union and regional economic commissions; and
- global, related to global coordination and financing in education.

GOALS

The Spotlight series has two goals:

- **Synthesise, analyse and clearly present comparative knowledge** on challenges and solutions regarding universal basic completion and foundational learning in Africa as a basis to support regional peer learning mechanisms and national, regional and global accountability mechanisms.
- **Support national and regional coalitions to use this comparative knowledge** to move national education systems, plans, policies and budgets — but also international support mechanisms — in the direction of achieving universal basic completion and foundational learning in Africa.

OUTPUTS

The Spotlight series will deliver three outputs:

- Easy-to-use, evidence-based **analysis** of selected countries' efforts to achieve universal primary completion and foundational learning outcomes:
 - four country reports per year; and
 - a regional synthesis report with an emphasis on comparisons across countries and over time, drawing on the four country reports and eight more country profiles.
- Support to new or existing formal **partnerships and peer learning mechanisms** to help prioritize actions for the achievement of universal primary completion and foundational learning outcomes.
- Support to new or existing non-formal **coalitions and advocacy mechanisms** with civil society and non-government organizations, teacher unions, parliamentarians and the media to hold governments and partners to account for the achievement of universal primary completion and foundational learning outcomes.

GOVERNANCE

ADEA's Executive Committee guides the Spotlight Series and serves as the overarching governing body. The strategic arrangement helps to raise the profile and ensure the relevance of the series.

Among other tasks, it will:

- support the design and manage key implementation issues;
- monitor the implementation of the annual work plan;
- review outputs produced;
- help establish linkages with regional processes;
- support the uptake of recommendations and encourage countries to participate.

a **Technical Review Group** of up to 12 members from:

- regional bodies (2)
- unions and civil society (2)
- academic community (3)
- international organizations (3)
- development agencies (2) to provide feedback on outputs.

Among other tasks, it will:

- provide feedback on the series' analytical outputs;
- advise the Secretariat and Steering Committee on effective linkages with other research, policy and planning processes.

a **support team** consisting of:

- a three-member **Secretariat**:
 - project lead
 - technical expert
 - communications and advocacy expert
- the **GEM Report team**, whose members will provide technical, project management and administrative support; and
- the **ADEA team**, which will support the governance, technical and advocacy aspects of the project.

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Developed by an independent team and published by UNESCO, the *Global Education Monitoring Report* is an authoritative reference that aims to inform, influence and sustain genuine commitment towards the global education targets in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework.



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