



Commitment to Action

Ensure Foundational Learning as a key element to Transform Education

1. Low learning levels – the barrier children face

- a. The pre-COVID learning crisis has been made even more severe by the pandemic. Currently it is estimated that, globally, six out of every ten children suffer from learning poverty: they are unable to read and understand a simple text by the age of ten.

2. Foundational learning – why it is important

- a. The share of children unable to read with comprehension at age ten is a signal of the overall quality of education in a country. Foundational learning¹ provides the building blocks for all other learning, knowledge, and higher order skills that children and youth need to attain through education.
- b. Foundational learning is critical to enable all children to reach their full potential and participate in society.
- c. Ensuring foundational learning for all contributes to productive citizenship, sustainable development, inclusive growth, gender equality, national cohesion, peace and prosperity, and bolsters progress on all other Sustainable Development Goals.

3. Transforming education through foundational learning – a commitment to action

- a. We commit to taking urgent and decisive action, where learning levels are low, to ensure all children, including the most marginalized², to realize their full potential.
- b. We commit to reducing the global share of children unable to read and understand a simple text by age ten, by half, by 2030. This commitment requires achieving national SDG 4 targets³ in each country.
- c. To ensure recovery and accelerate learning, we will work immediately to enroll all children and keep them in school, particularly marginalized girls; increase access to remedial and catch-up learning and teach children at their current learning levels; support teachers, giving them the tools that they need; and support the health, nutrition and psycho-social well-being of every teacher and child.
- d. We will work together to close the education resource gap, and enable the investments, leveraging technologies and other reforms, needed to effectively advance foundational learning.

¹ Foundational learning refers to basic literacy, numeracy, and transferable skills such as socio-emotional skills.

² Marginalized children include but are not limited to the poorest children, girls, children with disabilities, and children in conflict and crises.

³ This is consistent with, and will enable, achievement of other agreed global and national targets on foundational learning including SDG 4, and the global SDG4 milestone targets on girls' education (40 million more girls in school, and 20 million more girls learning to read by age 10, in LICs and LMICs by 2026). The latest report on the national SDG 4 benchmarks countries have set is available here, <https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/node/3617>