

## **The World Development Report (WDR) 2018: LEARNING to Realize Education's Promise**

### **A statement by the Global Campaign for Education on the World Bank's first-ever WDR focused on education**

*The Global Campaign for Education (GCE), a civil society movement that promotes education as a basic human right in over 100 countries, calls for greater funding for free, quality, inclusive public education for all.*

On September 26, 2017, the World Bank released the first-ever World Development Report (WDR) focused on education. GCE applauds the highlights on public, universal, quality education; however, it expresses strong concerns about key aspects missing from the report, and urges the World Bank to advocate more boldly for increased global education funding.

*The World Development Report 2018 (WDR)—LEARNING to Realize Education's Promise* emphasises the need for equity in learning outcomes, to make schools work for learners, and to better align actors so that systems work for learning. GCE welcomes the first-ever WDR to focus on education and applauds policymakers' increasing attention to education; however, GCE is concerned that this WDR does not go far enough in supporting all aspects of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 or the full Education 2030 Agenda. Similarly, despite recognising the centrality of teachers to quality education, there is a lack of consistency on support for trained, professional teachers. Further major areas which need much more attention include access to education for all students at all levels, adult literacy, inclusive education, gender equality and – crucially – funding for public education systems.

The Education 2030 Agenda points to clear financing benchmarks: countries must allocate at least from 4-6% of GDP and at least from 15-20% of public expenditure to education, while the international community must reverse the decline in aid to education.

*"If we want the right to education for all to be a reality, including 12 years of free, quality education, we need urgent action to realise increased and sustainable domestic budgets. Tax justice, at both national and international levels, is fundamental to this. The World Bank's silence on financing is a missed opportunity and risks being interpreted as a disincentive to increase national education budgets and international cooperation,"* states Camilla Croso, GCE President.

David Archer, GCE Board Member and ActionAid's Head of Participation and Public Services, found that the report *"should be a cause for celebration, but despite some useful observations the focus is too narrow to be of real value in helping us accelerate progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 4. The WDR focuses on improving equity in learning outcomes – and particularly the assessment of those outcomes – but does surprisingly little to break new ground on these issues."* A more in-depth reaction from David Archer can be found [here](#).

Jennifer Rigg, GCE Board Member and GCE-US Executive Director, stated, *“As advocates for quality, universal education, we praise the World Bank and World Development Report authors for highlighting the importance of quality public schools for all, and for emphasising concerns about public funds going to for-profit, private education providers. We are concerned, however, that this report simply does not go far enough in recommending increased funding for education. We urge the World Bank to remedy this problem immediately and request that Finance Ministers and policymakers strengthen grant funding for quality, inclusive, public education.”*

GCE acknowledges the importance of the first ever WDR on education. Notwithstanding, while the report makes a strong call for a learning agenda, GCE underlines that SDG 4 and the Education 2030 Agenda go far beyond a focus on learning and assessments, to embrace inclusion, equity, non-discrimination, human rights education, and education for sustainable development, within the context of lifelong learning. This agenda is the result of years of multilateral negotiation, and has galvanised unprecedented support from 196 Member States, UN agencies, CSOs and other social actors.

We urge the World Bank to continue to embrace this common cause, and to fully support teachers, students, parents, and schools, while taking a stronger role in urging Finance Ministers and policymakers to increase sustainable, public funding for quality, inclusive, and free public education systems. This is particularly vital in the lead up to the February 2018 replenishment of the Global Partnership for Education. We also call on advocates and campaigners to urge World Bank governmental representatives to take stronger stances and place higher priority on funding quality, public education.