

HIGHLIGHTS

Identity, background and ability dictate education opportunities.

In all but high-income countries in Europe and Northern America, only 18 of the poorest youth complete secondary school for every 100 of the richest youth. In at least 20 countries, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa, hardly any poor rural young women complete secondary school.

Discrimination, stereotyping and stigmatization mechanisms are similar for all learners at risk of exclusion.

While 68% of countries have a definition of inclusive education, only 57% of those definitions cover multiple marginalized groups.

Despite progress, many countries still do not collect, report or use data on those left behind.

Since 2015, 41% of countries, representing 13% of the global population, have not had a publicly available household survey to provide disaggregated data on key education indicators; the region with the lowest coverage is Northern Africa and Western Asia. Recent data from 14 countries using the Child Functioning Module suggest that children with disabilities constitute 15% of the out-of-school population. They face complex barriers. Those with a sensory, physical or intellectual disability are 2.5 times more likely to have never been in school as their peers without disabilities.

Millions are missing out on the opportunity to learn.

In middle income countries, despite a 25-percentage point increase in the past 15 years, only three quarters are still in school by age 15. Of those, only half are learning the basics, a rate that has been stagnant over the period. And many assessments overestimate how well students are doing: three quarters of students who did no better in multiple choice questions than random guessing were considered proficient in reading in a regional assessment of 15 countries in Latin America.

A key barrier to inclusion in education is the lack of belief that it is possible and desirable.

One in three teachers in 43 mostly upper-middle- and high-income countries in 2018 reported that they did not adjust their teaching to students' cultural diversity.

While some countries are transitioning towards inclusion, segregation is still prevalent.

In the case of students with disabilities, laws in 25% of countries (but over 40% in Asia and in Latin America and the Caribbean) make provisions for education in separate settings, 10% for integration and 17% for inclusion, the remainder opting for combinations of segregation and mainstreaming. In OECD countries, more than two-thirds of all immigrant students attend schools where at least half the students are immigrants.

Financing needs to target those most in need.

Across 32 OECD countries, socio-economically disadvantaged schools and classrooms are more likely to have less qualified teachers. Conditional cash transfers in Latin America since the 1990s have increased education attainment by between 0.5 and 1.5 years. One in four countries has some form of affirmative action programme to help the marginalized get access to tertiary education. About 40% of low- and lower-middle-income countries have not taken any measures to support learners at risk of exclusion during the Covid-19 crisis.

Teachers, teaching materials and learning environments often ignore the benefits of embracing diversity.

Some 25% of teachers in 48 education systems report a high need for professional development on teaching students with special needs. Just 41 countries worldwide recognize sign language as an official language. In Europe, 23 out of 49 countries do not address sexual orientation and gender identity explicitly in their curricula.
