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## [So long, 2018! Round-up of essential takeaways on global education policy](#)

### [Blog](#)

Education and development

***We look back at last year's developments by featuring insights from key reports and events that will be influencing the international education landscape in the coming year. Among the main issues, the urgent need to address the global learning crisis - according to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics more than 617 million children and young people still lack basic literacy and numeracy skills.***

The ongoing refugee and migrant crisis calls for additional policy efforts to tackle the challenges it presents for education systems. At the global level, a key issue is that refugee education remains underfunded (GEM Report, 2018). Finally, making available timely and robust data at a national, regional, and international level is fundamental to the progress towards SDG 4, from pre-primary to tertiary and adult education level.

### **Global Education Meeting**

Closing a year of critical developments in international education policy, the first [Global Education Meeting](#) convened in December in Brussels, Belgium, to assess progress made towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda since its adoption in 2015. Echoing the potential consequences of the current learning crisis, the high-level event focused on the following themes: 1) Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and gender equality in education; 2) Ensuring the right to education for migrants and refugees; 3) Rethinking the role of teachers in a changing landscape; and 4) Skilling and re-skilling for life and work. Among the outcomes of the event, the [Brussels Declaration](#) highlights the key messages and commitments adopted.

### **SDG 4 Data Digest: Data to Nurture Learning**

Launched in December, the [SDG 4 Data Digest 2018: Data to Nurture Learning](#) highlights the importance of monitoring learning, from early childhood education to adult literacy programmes, offering a series of good practices to inform the learning indicators of SDG 4. Published by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), a key objective of this publication is to help governments use data effectively to ensure the provision of quality education. The Digest emphasizes the work of the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning ([GAML](#)) working with countries to develop indicators and

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methodological tools to measure progress toward SDG 4. The Digest also advocates for more participation in major international or regional assessments, which would be a cost-effective decision for donor and governments. As estimated by the UIS, “solid data on learning to gauge whether approaches are working or whether reforms are needed could improve education spending efficiency by 5%, saving \$30 million each year in the average country and paying for the cost assessments hundreds of times over.”

## **Global Education Monitoring Report 2019**

Migration and displacement are key issues in the international political agenda. Following the adoption of the [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration](#) (2018), the latest [GEM Report](#) offers a series of case studies as well as practical recommendations to all actors in the field seeking to address education and migration issues. According to the report, about 1 in 8 people are internal migrants, living outside their region of origin; about 1 in 30 people are international migrants, and about 1 in 80 are displaced by conflict or natural disasters. The report identifies the ways in which population movements affect the provision of and access to quality education, and the implications for individual migrants and refugees as well as for the hosting communities.

## **OECD Education at a Glance 2018**

With a chapter dedicated to SDG 4.5 (equity in education), the 2018 edition of [Education at a Glance](#), published in September, pays special attention to how variables such as gender, educational attainment of parents, the immigrant background, and regional location may have an impact on learning outcomes. Among the main findings, the report highlights that while the gender gap may favour girls in education, it still favours men in the labour market. As for the teaching profession, the gender imbalance persists: most of pre-primary teachers but fewer than one in two instructors at the tertiary level are female. Although there is still difficulty in recruiting male teachers due mostly to the loss of prestige of the profession and the low salaries, the report highlights that between 2005 and 2017 (on average across OECD countries with available data) salaries declared for primary and secondary teachers with 15 years of experience have increased by 5% to 8%.

## **2018 IADB Report on the Teaching Profession**

Published in July 2018 by the Inter-American Development bank, [“Profession: Professor in Latin America, How was prestige lost and how to recover it?”](#) presents a historical and political analysis of seven Latin American countries – Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru – on the issue of decreasing teacher prestige in the region. The book focuses on two key aspects: the historical factors that may explain the phenomenon throughout the last century, and what countries studied are doing to change that trend. Better wages, professional development opportunities, and adequate working conditions are fundamental, but further improvements in attracting, selecting and preparing candidates are also needed.

## **The Regional Roadmap for the Implementation of SDG4-E2030**

During the last Regional Meeting of Ministers of Education of Latin America and the Caribbean (Cochabamba, Bolivia, July 2018), participating countries approved the [Cochabamba Agreements and the Regional Roadmap for the Implementation of SDG4-E2030 in Latin America and the Caribbean](#). The Roadmap will serve as an instrument to support governments in the region with their efforts toward achieving SDG 4, specifically in the design and implementation of regional actions in

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education. The Cochabamba Agreement settles the creation of a mechanism for implementing the Roadmap, steered by the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC/UNESCO Santiago) and composed of representatives from South America, Central America, and the Caribbean, plus regional and civil society organizations.

## **2018 RISE Conference**

The [RISE Annual Conference](#) took place in June 2018 at the Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford. The two-day event brought together more than 170 attendees, including high-profile academics and policy makers. Speakers presented research from the field around issues ranging from teacher motivation and curriculum to financing and information and assessment. A special panel on Global Indicators for Education took place on the second day, with keynote speakers including Roy Carr-Hill (UCL Institute of Education), Silvia Montoya (UNESCO), and Kirsty McNichol (Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade). RISE (Research on Improving Systems of Education) is a multi-country research programme that aims at understanding what works best for education systems in the developing world in order to overcome the learning crisis. The conference report provides an overview of presentations and discussions.

## **OECD Education Policy Outlook**

The [OECD 2018 Education Policy Outlook](#) highlights two main trends in education policy between 2008 and 2017: bridging gaps from early on to increase equity and quality, and equipping students with essential skills for today and the future. Through a reflection on “what works” in education, the report looks at current challenges and opportunities in education policymaking, and presents an evidence-based analysis to contribute to further policy developments. The 2018 edition starts from the students’ perspective to compare and analyze the most recent developments in education policy systems, ranging from pre-primary to higher education and lifelong learning.

## **2018 World Development Report**

Although published in October 2017, the World Bank’s [2018 World Development Report](#) was a key resource throughout this year as for the first time, it was entirely devoted to education. Under the theme “LEARNING to Realize Education’s Promise”, the publication identifies some of the persisting challenges: for instance, the latest international learning assessments show that in spite of a steady progress to provide access to education to all, many children still lack foundational literacy and numeracy skills when they finish school. The report offers three main policy solutions to tackle the issues identified: 1) assess learning effectively so that schools start working for learners; 2) act on the evidence gathered, taking into account the potential system-level technical and political barriers to learning; and 3) mobilizing actors and tracking progress, so that the system works for learning.

## **What to look forward to in 2019**

Following the Global Education Meeting in Brussels (December 2018), the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed January 24 as the [International Day of Education](#) to celebrate the role of education for peace and development. UNESCO will ensure the annual observance of the event in partnership with other major education actors.

