Educational planning methodology

The COVID-19 crisis has affected over 1.5 billion students around the world. Basic issues relating to access, completion, learning and equity have been brought to the forefront of the education agenda, even in those countries that had previously achieved Education for All. Education stakeholders around the world have mobilized to find solutions, highlighting the importance of knowledge-sharing and information exchange to identify and build on promising practices and to ensure that #LearningNeverStops.

As part of its activities to support educational planners, policymakers and managers enhance the use of evidence to inform decision-making processes, diagnose their education system issues, focus policy dialogue and build consensus on priorities, the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) has developed the Policy Toolbox.

What is the Policy Toolbox?

The Policy Toolbox is an online public-good, a searchable catalogue comprising more than 500 policy options organized under 49 identified policy issues related to Access and Completion, Learning, and Equity and Inclusion. Developed in line with [IIEP's mission](#) to make applied knowledge on educational planning and management accessible to policy-makers and stakeholders, it aims to provide users with a quick and informative overview of policy options, with a specific focus on gender, children with disabilities, minority populations and displaced populations and host communities. In addition, it encourages users to explore further the sources on the proposed policy options and inspire them to take action by evaluating which policy options can be adapted to respond to their own educational challenges and needs.

An iterative development

Between 2018 and 2019, a team of researchers[1] analyzed an extensive amount of resources composed mainly of grey literature – to create a catalogue of initiatives and programmes implemented in countries around the world for each of the 49 policy issues identified. Following the analysis, 20 issues affecting pupils' levels of learning were identified, and corresponding policy

options researched. The issues covered topics such as:

- constraints related to resources at school, such as the provision of teachers and pedagogical materials;
- matters impeding adequate instruction time, such as factors hindering students' attendance as well as institutional and management shortcomings;
- barriers inhibiting adequate teaching and learning processes, such as aspects affecting curriculum retention, pedagogic management and school climate.

Since new evidence on successful initiatives, programmes and policies is regularly produced, the platform encourages users to share feedback as well as provide additional insights about initiatives that have been implemented or researched in their own countries.

Lessons learned through the Policy Toolbox on how to ensure students' learning processes

From the issues and policy options analyzed, here are five main takeaways for policy makers on how to ensure learning for all children, especially the most marginalized:

1. **"Every learner matters and matters equally"**[2]: In order to provide equitable learning opportunities for all, education stakeholders should embrace diversity and ensure that all children feel welcomed, valued and supported. Integrating this principle into education policies and legal frameworks, will help ensure that education systems cater to every child, providing each one with the opportunity to learn. Differences between children and their learning abilities should be acknowledged as an opportunity to enrich the learning process for all children. This can be done by supporting teachers to adopt inclusive classroom practices and pedagogy, to ensure that all children participate, learn and meet their full potential[3].

2. **Provide an inclusive learning environment**: Educational planners and policy-makers must first ensure that all students can access school. In order to be conducive to learning, schools and classrooms must be child-friendly, and disability- and gender-responsive. Building accessible school infrastructure is recognized as a cost-effective measure[4]. A safe and positive school climate can help ensure that all students participate and learn. School violence should be monitored and addressed[5]. Recommendations include implementing constructive disciplinary actions to improve students' socio-emotional and behavioural skills –such as 'time out' actions and mediation activities[6] –, as well as measures to tackle bullying, harassment and gender-based violence[7].

3. **Tackle attitudinal and systemic constraints that impede the provision of quality, equitable educational opportunities to all**: Working with stakeholders, including teachers, school staff, children, community members and families is essential to develop a common vision that all children have the right and, thus should have the opportunity, to attend school, participate and learn. Inequitable teacher deployment systems as well as high teacher absenteeism rates need to be addressed to allow all children –regardless of their geographical location or socio-economic status– to receive a quality education[8].

4. **Teachers matter**: Issues related to teacher's benefits and career structure should also be explored in detail as they have an impact on teacher's motivation[9]. A high quality, inclusive teacher workforce is key to equitable quality learning opportunities to all children[10]. Efforts should be placed on boosting teachers' teaching skills, content knowledge and classroom practices. Providing tailored

training opportunities to help teachers acquire essential skills to respond to the needs of all children within the classroom is essential[11]. In order to ensure all students have the same opportunities to learn and participate, it is recommended that teachers:

- believe in their capacity, understand their responsibility and commit to teach to all children[12];
- uphold positive attitudes towards all of their students and have the same kinds of expectations for all[13];
- value and support each child's individual learning process[14].

Encouraging and facilitating teachers' collaboration can boost their motivation and enrich their teaching skills[15]. Techniques such as peer observation, peer coaching and co-operative teaching, among others, are some of the strategies that could be developed.

5.   **Provide appropriate pedagogical materials**: In order to help students' learning process, accessible, inclusive, gender-responsive teaching materials should be provided. All children learn differently, and that diversity should be acknowledged. Teachers may consider the principles of Universal Design for Learning by[16]:

- representing concepts through multiple ways and using multiple teaching strategies and materials;
- encouraging students to demonstrate their knowledge through multiple means;
- providing different options to keep students engaged throughout the learning process.

Next steps for the Policy Toolbox

IIEP is now launching the pilot phase of the Policy Toolbox to ensure that the platform meets the needs of its users before its official launch, expected in September 2020, and is looking for interested individuals who wish to participate to the pilot, explore the website and provide feedback on their experience. Register for the Policy Toolbox pilot phase and get priority access to the website!

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2. UNESCO. 2017. *A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education*. Paris: UNESCO.
3. This idea is related to the concept of Inclusive pedagogy, for more information consult: Spratt, J.; Florian, L. 2013. 'Applying the principles of inclusive pedagogy in initial teacher education: from university based course to classroom action'. In: *Revista de Investigación en Educación, Vol. 11, No. 3*, pp. 133-140, and Florian, L. 2015. 'Inclusive Pedagogy: A transformative approach to individual differences but can it help reduce educational inequalities?'.
   In: *Scottish Educational Review, Vol. 47, No.1*, pp. 5-14.
4. Snider, H.; Takeda, N. 2008. *Design for all: Implications for Bank operations*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.
5. UNESCO. 2019. *Behind the numbers: Ending school violence and bullying*. Paris: UNESCO.
6. UNESCO Bangkok. 2016. *Happy schools! A Framework for learner well-being in the Asia-Pacific*. Paris: UNESCO.
7. UNESCO. 2019. *Behind the numbers: Ending school violence and bullying.* Paris: UNESCO, and UNESCO. 2016. *Global guidance on addressing school-related gender-based violence.* Paris: UNESCO.
8. IIEP-UNESCO Pôle de Dakar. 2016. *Teacher allocation and utilization in Africa.* Working

Paper. Dakar: IIEP-UNESCO Pôle de Dakar.

9. Childress, D.; Chimier, C.; Raudonyte, I.; Tournier, B. 2019. Teacher career reforms: Learning from experience. Paris: IIEP-UNESCO.

10. UNESCO; International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030. 2019. *Teacher policy development guide*. Paris: UNESCO.

11. Spratt, J.; Florian, L. 2013. 'Applying the principles of inclusive pedagogy in initial teacher education: from university based course to classroom action'. In: *Revista de Investigación en Educación, Vol. 11, No. 3*, pp. 133-140, and UNESCO. 2005. *Guidelines for inclusion: Ensuring access to education for all*. Paris: UNESCO.

12. UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund). 2014. *Teachers, inclusive, child-centred teaching and pedagogy: Webinar 12 - Companion technical booklet*. New York: UNICEF.

13. IIEP-UNESCO Learning Portal. 2018. Brief 3: Effective and appropriate pedagogy. Accessed 1 April 2018.

14. USAID (United States Agency for International Development). n.d. *Introduction to gender-responsive teaching methods*.

15. Ainscow, M. 2005. 'Developing inclusive education systems: what are the levers for change?' In: J*ournal of Educational Change, Vol. 6, No. 2*, pp. 109-124. UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund). 2014. Teachers, inclusive, child-centred teaching and pedagogy: Webinar 12 - Companion technical booklet. New York: UNICEF.

16. CAST. 2018. *Universal design for learning guidelines version 2.2*. Accessed 5 July 2019.

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