

# Investing in Education and Training in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond

2 December 2020 (13:30-15:00 GMT +1)



## Introduction

Since the outbreak of [COVID-19](#) through to mid-September 2020, governments worldwide have invested around US\$ 12 trillion off-budget and stimulus packages as fiscal response to save lives and mitigate economic shocks.<sup>1</sup> Pending the evolving nature of the current crisis, governments have been carefully weighing trade-offs and choice of fiscal allocations between social protection and economic recovery plans.

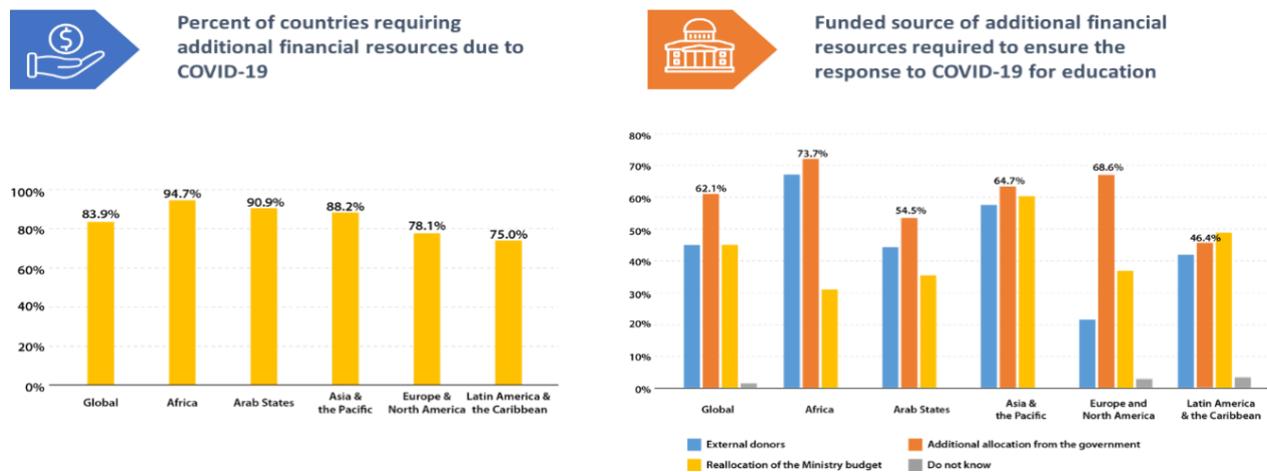
According to a survey regarding countries' education responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, that UNESCO conducted with UNICEF and the World Bank in July-September 2020<sup>2</sup>, around 80 percent of surveyed countries responded that they would require additional funding for education due to COVID-

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<sup>1</sup> IMF. [Fiscal Monitor: Policies for the Recovery](#) (October 2020).

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank. [What have we learnt? Overview of findings from a survey of ministries of education on national responses to COVID-19](#) (October 2020).

19, which has been supported and/or being planned to be through various funding sources as illustrated below:



In order to build knowledge on the extent to which education has been addressed in governments' massive fiscal responses being taken since the outbreak of the COVID-19 and to make a case for an early and sustainable investment in education and training, UNESCO mobilized the Global Education Coalition and conducted research on this topic drawing from several sources of information.

According to the preliminary findings of this research, and despite the huge disruption caused to education by the crisis and the benefits of early investment in education for recovery, the education and training sector has been invisible in high-stake decision-making on trade-offs of fiscal response in many countries, with an estimated 0.78% (or US\$91 billion out of US\$12 trillion) worldwide allocated to education and training.<sup>3</sup> Governments have deployed fiscal measures in several phases and areas in response to the evolving contexts and effects of COVID-19 and according to the diverse needs of education systems. The scale, focus and nature of national responses have varied in accordance with national circumstances and fiscal capacity, often following the three phases: 1) Immediate support during widespread lockdown/school closures; 2) Transition/preparation for gradual reopening; and 3) Support for post COVID-19 recovery.

Considering the serious consequences that the COVID-19 has already had on education and the generational catastrophe that may be caused unless timely investment is made on education and training, the [extraordinary session of the Global Education Meeting](#) (2020 GEM), convened on 22 October 2020, adopted [the 2020 GEM Declaration](#) in the presence of Heads of State and Government, ministers and officials from over 70 countries and international development partners, expressing strong commitment to protecting education financing and outlining measures to safeguard education from the disruption caused by COVID-19. Participants committed to maintain or increase the share of public expenditure on education towards the international benchmarks of at least 4-6% of GDP and/or 15-20% of public expenditure, as well as to ensure that national recovery stimulus packages include allocations to: a) support measures for addressing all marginalized students' learning gaps and socio-emotional impact during educational disruption; b) (re-)enrolment campaigns and targeted support for learners who are at risk of not returning to school, especially, girls, those living in poverty, persons with disabilities, refugees and persons affected by conflict, crises and natural disasters; and c) training and skills development to increase employment opportunities for people affected by job losses.

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO. [Fiscal responses to education and training in the context of COVID-19](#). No. 10, Working Papers on Education Policy (October 2020).

The commitment also included increasing the volume, predictability and effectiveness of international aid to education by: a) meeting the benchmark of 0.7% of donor GNP for official development assistance (ODA) to developing countries; b) increasing the share of ODA to education as a percentage of total ODA; and c) ensuring that international aid for education is aligned to national education plans that integrate COVID-19 response and recovery and in accordance with aid effectiveness principles.

## Objective

The policy webinar, taking place on 2 December 2020, aims to share UNESCO's analysis of the national fiscal measures for education and skills development, discuss countries' experiences, lessons and policy options in their fiscal response to address the impact of COVID-19 on education, and explore ways and means to seize the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity for bolder transformative actions and more strategic investment in education and training to achieve SDG4.

## Target audience

The webinar is primarily directed to policymakers and managers dealing with education financing issues in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, including: a) ministries of education/training and ministries of planning/finance, b) international and civil society organizations, and c) other major stakeholders, including business sector and media.

## Format

The 90-minute webinar will include a mix of presentations by and discussion among country representatives and international organizations to share experiences and concrete actions for better investment in education and skills development. This includes panel discussions between the presenters and the audience as well as Q&A session, along with interactive polling sessions.

## Logistics

The webinar will be held in English, Spanish and French via Zoom. All participants should be registered prior to the webinar using this [link](#).

## Agenda:

<b>Wednesday, 2 December 2020 13:30 to 15:00 PM GMT +1</b>	
<b>Opening session</b> <b>13h30-13h45</b>	<b>Welcome and introduction to the webinar</b> <b>Mr. Borhene Chakroun</b> , Director, Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, UNESCO <b>Opening remarks</b> <b>Ms. Stefania Giannini</b> , ADG for Education, UNESCO <b>Mr. Robert Jenkins</b> , Chief of Education and Associate Director, UNICEF

<p><b>13h45-13h50</b></p>	<p><b>Presentation:</b> Overview of fiscal responses to education and training in the context of COVID-19</p> <p><b>Mr. Gwang-Chol Chang</b>, Chief of Section of Education Policy, UNESCO</p>
<p><b>13h50-14h30</b></p>	<p><b>Panel Discussion:</b> National fiscal policy measures in their education response to COVID-19: experience, challenges and future directions</p> <p><b>Moderator: Mr. Koffi Segniagbeto, Head of Office, UNESCO-IIEP Dakar</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ms. Hee-jeong Ahn</b>, Deputy Director, Ministry of Education Republic of Korea</li> <li>• <b>Mr. Patrick Khunou</b>, Deputy Director General, Department of Basic Education, South Africa</li> <li>• <b>Mr. Yuri Loon</b>, Senior Policy Advisor, Ministry of Finance, Netherlands</li> <li>• <b>Dr. Bader Alyoubi</b>, Dean, College of Business, University of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia</li> </ul> <p><b>Panel discussion:</b> The role of international organizations and public-private partnerships to meet the financial commitment of the GEM Declaration</p> <p><b>Moderator: Ms. Margaret Irving</b>, Education Economist, Global Partnership for Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ms. Mercedes Garcia-Escribano</b>, Deputy Division Chief, Fiscal Affairs Department, IMF</li> <li>• <b>Ms. Glenda Quintini</b>, Senior Economist, Skills and Employability, OECD</li> <li>• <b>Ms. Alexa Joyce</b>, Future-Ready Skills Director, Europe, Middle East and Africa, Microsoft Corporation</li> <li>• <b>Ms. Zohra Yermeche</b>, Program Director, Connect To Learn, Sustainability and Corporate Responsibility, Ericsson</li> </ul>
<p><b>14h30-14h50</b></p>	<p><b>Q&amp;A</b></p> <p><b>Ms. Satoko Yano</b>, Programme Specialist, UNESCO</p>
<p><b>14h50-15h00</b></p>	<p><b>Conclusions</b> and closing remarks with takeaways</p> <p><b>Mr. Borhene Chakroun</b>, Director, Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, UNESCO</p>

## Panelists Profiles



**Mr. Borhene Chakroun** is the Director of the Division of Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems at UNESCO. His work focuses on global trends in reforming education and training systems for skills development in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. He has conducted a range of policy reviews and skills systems diagnosis and authored various articles and books on skills development and lifelong learning. Previously he worked as a consultant for the EU, the World Bank and other international organizations and the European Training Foundation (ETF).



**Ms. Stefania Giannini** was appointed UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education in May 2018, becoming the top UN official in the field. In this position, she provides strategic vision and leadership for UNESCO in coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the Education 2030 Agenda, encapsulated in Sustainable Development Goal 4. With an academic background in the Humanities, Mrs. Giannini has served as Rector of the University for Foreigners of Perugia (2004 – 2012), being one of the first and youngest women to hold this position in Italy. As Senator of the Republic of Italy (2013 – 2018) and Minister of Education, Universities and Research (2014 – 2016), she developed and implemented a structural reform of the Italian education system, centered on social inclusion and cultural awareness. She has also been closely involved in an advisory capacity with the European Commissioner for Research and Innovation.



**Mr. Robert Jenkins** (UNICEF) Robert Chief of Education and Associate Director in the Programme Division at UNICEF Headquarters. He joined UNICEF in 1995. He brings over 20 years of experience in international development and humanitarian programming in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Prior to his current appointment, he served as the UNICEF Representative, Jordan, from 2014-2019, and Deputy Director, Division of Policy and Strategy at UNICEF Headquarters from 2009-2014.



**Mr. Gwang-Chol Chang** - Chief of Section of Education Policy in the Division of Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems at UNESCO. Since joining UNESCO in 1996, he has held various positions at the Education Sector in Paris, supporting diverse programmes such as policy analysis, planning and management, including in post-conflict and post disaster situations (PCPD). He also served as Senior Programme Specialist in the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education and led the Education Section of the UNESCO Regional Office for West Africa-Sahel until 2019.



**Mr. Koffi Segniabeto** is the head of IIEP Dakar office, where he coordinates the different teams and activities since September 2020. In cooperation with IIEP's decision-making bodies, he is also responsible for technical partnerships, seeking additional funding and facilitating a high-level dialogue on the orientations of education and training policies. Previously, he was Senior Education Policy Analyst at IIEP Dakar. As such, he provided technical support to countries on various aspects of education sector analysis and planning. In recent years, he has led a team that supports several African countries in the analysis and planning of their education systems (Chad, Mauritania, Niger, Namibia, etc.). In addition to supporting the sector planning process in general, Mr. Segniabeto provides expertise in specific areas such as teacher management, vulnerability analysis, capacity development, etc.



**Ms. Hee-jeong Ahn** is the Deputy Director of the International Education Cooperation Division, Ministry of Education, Republic of Korea. She has been working in the field of international cooperation for over decade Currently, she is in charge of International Cooperation Division of the Ministry. She has MPhil in Asia-Pacific area studies.



**Mr. Patrick Khunou** is Chief Financial Officer in National Department of Basic Education in Ministry of Basic Education in South Africa since 2018 with experience in the Management Development Programme since 2015 and the Senior Leadership Development Programme since 2017. He was the Chief Financial Officer in Limpopo Department of Cooperative Governance, Human Settlements and Traditional Affairs 2001 to 2018 and Managing Member in Hunadi Rampata Management Services CC 1999 to 2001.



**Dr. Bader Alyoubi**, is the dean of College of Business at the University of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He has more than 35 scientific papers in the fields of knowledge Management, Information Systems, Information Technology, Computer Sciences and Artificial Intelligence, which are published in peer reviewed journals and conferences. Furthermore, awarded from university of Jeddah for excellent impact factor research, eager to publish a lot of papers in different journals. Dr Bader has obtained the Certified KPI Associate in 2017 and also obtained PMI\_PMP Training Certificate in 2018. In addition, he has 6 years of academic experience.



**Mr. Yuri van Loon** is a Senior Policy Advisor on Budgetary Policy in the Ministry of Finance, leading the work on monitoring the Dutch budgetary response to the COVID-19 crisis and has prepared comparative analyses on the budgetary responses of other Eurozone member states. Previously, roles have included consulting and research on the effectiveness of EU policies the design and use of fiscal rules and the European structural funds.



**Ms. Margaret Irving** joined the GPE Secretariat in August 2015. She works with the Education, Policy and Learning team, where she leads the Secretariat's technical work on data systems, and education financing. Margaret worked as an analyst in the Financial Institutions Group at UBS Investment Bank in London before undertaking a PhD in Education at Stanford University, where her research explored the dynamics of race, class and social mobility in South Africa. She also holds an MPhil in Economics from Oxford, and completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Cape Town.



**Ms. Mercedes García-Escribano** is a Deputy Division Chief in the IMF's Fiscal Affairs Department. She has over 15 years of experience working on emerging and developing economies in the fields of international economics and fiscal policy analysis. In her current role, she has been the lead author of some of the most read IMF work on inequality—the 2017 Fiscal Monitor on Tackling Inequality—and on costing the Sustainable Development Goals. She has published on a range of topics in fiscal, financial, and labor market issues. Ms. García-Escribano holds a PhD degree in Economics from University of Chicago.



**Ms. Glenda Quintini** is a senior economist at OECD where she leads a team of economists looking at how skill needs are changing in the labour market and identifying effective policy responses, particularly in the area of adult learning and on-the-job training. The team provides advice to countries on their skills-related policies and carries out comparative analysis, covering both OECD and developing countries. Glenda's team also contributes to the development and analysis of the OECD Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) and the accompanying employer module on skill gaps. Over the years, Glenda has devoted a lot of attention to issues of skills mismatch, skills use at work, work-based learning and automation. Glenda holds a PHD in Economics from the University of Oxford.



**Ms. Alexa Joyce** is Future-Ready Skills Director, Europe, Middle East and Africa, Microsoft Corporation. She works across the region to drive student skills development, from primary through to higher education. Her role in future-ready skills aims to drive both the soft skills that students need to succeed in work and life, as well as develop deep STEM and technical competences. Over the last 20 years, Alexa has worked with governments in more than 100 countries across the world in digital transformation in education. She previously led the global strategy at Microsoft for engaging and support education system leaders as they evolve their school systems, and was formerly EMEA Director of Policy, Teaching and Learning, focusing on supporting national device deployments across the region. Prior to Microsoft, she worked with leading international education organizations: European Schoolnet (the network of 34 Ministries of Education in Europe), UNESCO and OECD. She's on the advisory board of ALL Digital, a European network for digital inclusion, University College London's EDUCATE incubator for ed-tech startups and the Institute for Ethical AI in Education.



**Ms. Zohra Yermeche** leads Ericsson's education initiative, Connect to Lean, and oversees the development and deployment of Ericsson's ICT solutions in schools across Africa and in other regions of the world. She has worked at the intersection of ICT and education in various projects around the globe. Most recently she has led the Connect to Learn project implementation for Ericsson in Myanmar. Zohra received her Ph.D. in Applied Signal Processing from the Blekinge Institute of Technology (Sweden). Her professional experience includes working as a senior researcher in Multimedia Technologies at Ericsson Research.



**Ms. Satoko Yano** is a Programme Specialist in Section of Education Policy at UNESCO HQs, leading a team working on education sector-wide policy/planning and EMIS. Prior to joining the UNESCO HQs in 2018, she held various positions at UNESCO in Asia-Pacific. She was a programme specialist and Chief of Education at UNESCO New Delhi. Prior to that, she was a Programme Specialist in the Unit for Inclusive Quality Education (IQE) at UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education (Bangkok, Thailand), leading a regional team working on issues related to education planning and management. She was also involved in providing technical assistance and capacity development support in education policy review, sector plan development and monitoring. She holds a Bachelor's degree in psychology from University of Tokyo, Japan and a Master's and Ph.D. in Comparative Education (with specialization in Economics of Education) from Columbia University, USA.