Schools2030 Global Forum
Session Learnings and Recommendations: Plenary 1

SESSION TITLE: **Schools2030 Global Forum Opening Ceremony:** *Why do we need to reimagine the role of schools, systems, and societies for the future of learning?*

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FOCUS AREAS: Schools, systems, and societies; working better together.

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS:

On re-imagining schools for the future of learning:

- Schools are grappling with high numbers of student enrolment and struggle with overcrowding and limited infrastructure.
- Reorganise education systems such as the curriculum and education policies to ensure that no one is left behind especially in the COVID-19 era.
- Education is a public good. Better education translates into better citizens.
- Schools should be safe spaces for learners, where there is no violence or stigma including linguistic exclusion.
- Invest in training teachers in order to have functioning education systems.
- Get communities engaged in supporting education .
- The 'leave no one behind' agenda is critical. Education is crosscutting. One cannot build human capital without education. Education is the 4th SDG, but it underpins all SDGs
- Schools must be attractive to children for them to stay.
- Ensure/promote inclusiveness in schools. No discrimination. No violence.

On re-thinking the skills young people need to thrive:

- There has been too great a focus on academic skills - In the era of science and technology, vocational skills are needed.
- Entrepreneurial skills training should also be mainstreamed in school curricula.

- IT skills are important – BUT We don't need technology for its own sake but to make technology work for learners.
- Inclusive education is life-long learning that includes 21st century skills where learners learn, unlearn and relearn.
- Adapt curriculum to market demands. Resources, policies have got to be relevant.
- Important to focus on early learning and early childhood development to achieve quality and equitable education outcomes

On recognising our complementary role as education system actors:

- The role of schools and of school leaders in to equip young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values they need. Schools are the first line of defence to break cycles of poverty
- The role of teachers is to support student learning and development. Teachers should focus on developing solutions with the learners. Learners have the skills; teachers can only activate such skills. Human centred design can help with this
- On the role of government: Increase public investment in education and ensure better allocation and use of available resources.
- Development partners need to coordinate together better to support government programmes.
- The role of civils societyis to support education within and outside school settings and to drive lifelong learning. CSOs can generate and share evidence of what works.

CONCLUSION:

- Education is key to breaking poverty cycles, underpins all the SDGs and should be considered a right for every child.
- 21st century skills must be vocational, digital, entrepreneurial – holistic skills better prepare learners for all outcomes.
- Investment in education is vital for a country's growth. It should be seen as an investment in citizens.
- Leave no one behind – curricula must be shaped to ensure inclusivity and access and to promote these at school level. Schools should be safe spaces for learners, where there is no violence or stigma including linguistic exclusion.
- Education must be seen as an investment for governments to make for the public good. It is an investment in your own citizens.
- Human-centred design is a useful method for supporting more responsive, participatory and relevant pedagogical practices, to support teacher agency and to ensure learners and school communities feel heard.
- CSOs have an important role to play as they influence policy and decision making and contribute to national strategy on inclusive education.

ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Focus on early learning (ECD) as one path to improve retention of learners in later years, but also to ensure a strong foundation for young people.
- Governments should increase public investment in education and ensure better allocation and use of available resources.
- CSOs must generate and share evidence of what works at school level.
- Reorganise education systems such as the curriculum and education policies to ensure that no one is left behind especially in the COVID-19 era.
- Adapt curriculum to market demands – including vocational skills, IT skills and entrepreneurship. Skills, curricula, resources, policies all have to be relevant.