



OFFICE OF EDUCATION: RESILIENCE RESOURCE

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# HOW INVESTMENTS ACROSS THE EDUCATION CONTINUUM DELIVER CROSS-SECTORAL IMPACT

## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The early years of a child's life set important foundations for their later growth, development, and well-being. Investments in early childhood education have been shown to be a cost-effective and critical strategy for increasing human capital and social and emotional competencies for vulnerable populations (Heckman 2011).

Early childhood education:

- Has significant potential to disrupt cycles of adversity and violence, as early experiences can alter neural pathways both in relation to physiological responses to reacting to stress and in forming relationships in adulthood (Keverne 2014; Shonkoff et al. 2012)
- Can increase psychosocial dimensions of resilience in young people (Bhana and Bachoo 2011; Masten 2014)
- Is an important platform for strengthening capacities and changing mindsets and practices of vulnerable caregivers (EPDC 2018)

Evidence also suggests that quality early childhood education for disadvantaged children can simultaneously reduce inequality and boost future productivity and income (Elango et al. 2015).

## PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Quality, accessible, and equitable primary and secondary education has enormous and widely recognized benefits:

- Children gain critical cognitive capacities, particularly in literacy and numeracy, which are fundamental precursors for success later in life in terms of economic productivity, health, and well-being outcomes, and broader and effective participation in society (World Bank 2018b).
- In contexts of adversity, participation in education at these levels is also protective, providing safety for children and youth from sexual or economic exploitation and harm, early marriage, and conscription into armed conflict.

- It allows children and youth who are living in or fleeing from dangerous environments to develop coping mechanisms, and it promotes a sense of routine and hope for the future (INEE 2012; World Bank 2018b; Milton and Barakat 2016).
- When delivered in an equitable and relevant fashion, schooling enables students to build trusting relationships with peers, those in authority, and state institutions, as well as to find opportunities to exercise their agency and become active citizens in their community and wider society (Novelli and Smith 2011; Shah et al. 2016).
- Primary and secondary education is a critical place for building and strengthening children’s social-emotional competencies, such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships, and responsible decision-making, all of which are critical for effective workforce participation, and in forging effective social networks in times of adversity (Cunningham and Villasenor 2016; INEE 2016).
- Completion of secondary education is particularly critical for girls in contexts of adversity as it has wide-ranging benefits to them, their households, their communities, and society.

## HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education institutions, its students, and its personnel serve a critical and fundamental role in supporting and strengthening resilience trajectories that aim to adapt and transform the status quo (Milton and Barakat, 2016; World Bank, 2000, 2002).

- Individuals who complete higher education see significant increases in their earning potential.
- Societies in which higher proportions of the population complete higher education are also more likely to see sustainable poverty reduction, productivity, economic growth, and a more active and engaged citizenry (McMahon, 2009; Oketch, McCowan, and Schendel 2014).
- The institutions themselves are also hubs for research and innovation that can develop new adaptive technologies and approaches and transform policies and practices across a range of sectors. Additionally, it is in and from these institutions that thought leaders and technical expertise within a country are harnessed—critical for the longer-term endeavor of strengthening local institutional capacity in responding more effectively to known risks and adversities (Milton and Barakat, 2016; Schweisfurth et al. 2016).

## NONFORMAL EDUCATION

Nonformal education offers significant potential to extend the benefits of primary and secondary education to populations that have been excluded from education due to crisis and conflict. Nonformal education:

- Can ensure that all citizens have access to foundational literacy and numeracy skills, life and vocational skills, and/or critical information about risks in their environment, so that all individuals within a community—not just those who have completed formal education—have the necessary capacities to adequately prepare for and respond to adversities they might face (Myers and Pinnock 2017; INEE 2012; Milton and Barakat 2016; World Bank 2018b)
- Can be a critical platform in contexts of adversity for bringing together those most vulnerable to the impacts of risk factors to redress and transform the adversities they face (Shah et al. 2016)