

RISE

Education Systems Course

An open-access, cross-university curriculum for graduate-level students and education professionals interested in education policy, planning, and reform to deliver learning for all.



Education Systems Course: Syllabus

An open-access, cross-university curriculum for graduate-level students and education professionals interested in education policy, planning, and reform to deliver learning for all.

While schooling attainment has expanded rapidly in low- and middle-income countries in recent decades, in many countries children continue to learn little during their years in school. Many children emerge from primary school without the foundational skills necessary for later learning and for leading a full adult life as a citizen, community member, parent, and worker in a 21st century economy.

This course covers emerging evidence on the learning crisis and how education systems can better deliver learning for all. It introduces tools for analysing and visualising data on learning outcomes, and discusses policy and reform approaches that aim to create education systems aligned for learning. The course also covers the international aid architecture, teacher careers and support, assessment systems, instructional alignment, and more, all with a focus on improving education systems' delivery of learning for all.

The course is designed for graduate-level students and education professionals interested in education policy, planning, and reform, with a focus on low- and middle-income countries. This syllabus and the video lectures for this course are open-access under a CC-BY-4.0 license, and we welcome the use of these resources by others. The units are modular, and can be used all together as outlined below, or particular units can be used for particular training or learning purposes. Materials may be adapted and incorporated into other courses and trainings.

The course was developed by faculty at four renowned universities: the Institute of Education at University College London in the UK (led by [Caine Rolleston](#)); the Syed Ahsan Ali and Syed Maratib Ali School of Education at Lahore University of Management Sciences in Pakistan (led by [Faisal Bari](#) and [Rabea Malik](#)); the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana (led by [Michael Boakye-Yiadom](#)); and the Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy at University of Toronto in Canada (led by [Karen Mundy](#)). The Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE) Programme has played a facilitating role in helping to develop the public goods for this course (led by [Jason Silberstein](#), [Julius Atuhurra](#) and [Rastee Chaudhry](#)).

For more information on this education systems course, please visit <https://riseprogramme.org/tools/education-systems-course>. To access course lectures, please visit <https://www.youtube.com/@educationsystemscourse8654/>.

This syllabus was last updated in March 2023.

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Unit 1: Conceptualising Education Systems

Education systems are comprised of many actors and the relationships of accountability, feedback, and governance that bind them. Systems are effective if these relationships are aligned and if the various actors and components that make up a system work coherently to achieve the system's goals. A systems approach to education reform aims to diagnose areas of system incoherence, and identify approaches that could improve system coherence for achieving the system's goals. This unit contrasts a systems approach with other approaches to education reform.

After completing the unit, students should:

- Understand different system framework(s) in education (including education production function, SABER, RISE);
- Understand that systems are more than the sum of their parts;
- Have knowledge of the rationale for systems thinking in education, and be able to contrast it with other approaches to education reform;
- Have a high-level understanding of the different constituent parts of education systems (i.e., relationships between actors); and
- Have a high-level understanding of the multiple potential goals of education systems (i.e., learning, access, equity, selection), and the different potential interests these goals serve.

Lectures

1. [Why a “system” approach? What is a “system”?](#) (Lant Pritchett, RISE Programme, University of Oxford)
2. [The RISE 5 by 4 system of accountability](#) (Lant Pritchett, RISE Programme, University of Oxford)
3. [Coherence is a characteristic of systems as systems](#) (Lant Pritchett, RISE Programme, University of Oxford)
4. [Empirical examples of incoherence](#) (Lant Pritchett, RISE Programme, University of Oxford)

Required Readings

- Glewwe, P., Kremer, M. and Moulin, S. 2009. Many Children Left Behind? Textbooks and Test Scores in Kenya. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 1 (1) (January 2009), 112-35. <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/app.1.1.112>
- Glewwe, P., Lambert, S. and Chen, Q. 2020. Education Production Functions: Updated Evidence from Developing Countries. Ed(s): Steve Bradley, Colin Green, *The Economics of Education* (Second

Edition), Academic Press, Pages 183-215, ISBN 9780128153918,
<https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-815391-8.00015-X>

- Hanushek, E.A. 2018. Education Production Functions. Macmillan Publishers Ltd (eds) *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-349-95189-5_1930
- Pritchett, L. 2015. Creating Education Systems Coherent for Learning Outcomes. RISE Working Paper Series.15/005. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2015/005
- World Bank. 2013. The What, Why, and How of the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER). The World Bank. <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/867151468180272110/the-what-why-and-how-of-the-systems-approach-for-better-education-results-saber>

Further Readings

- Crouch, L. 2020. How to Rapidly Improve Learning Outcomes at System Level? Global Partnership for Education. <https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/how-rapidly-improve-learning-outcomes-system-level>
- Crouch, L. 2020. Systems Implications for Core Instructional Support Lessons from Sobral (Brazil), Puebla (Mexico), and Kenya. RISE Insight Series. 2020/020. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-RI_2020/020
- Crouch, L. and DeStefano, J. 2017. Doing Reform Differently: Combining Rigor and Practicality in Implementation and Evaluation of System Reforms. RTI International. International Development Working Paper No. 2017-01. <https://www.rti.org/publication/doing-reform-differently>
- Faul, M. V., & Savage, L. (Eds.). 2023. Systems thinking in international education and development: Unlocking learning for all? Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://www.e-elgar.com/shop/gbp/systems-thinking-in-international-education-and-development-9781802205923.html>
- Kaffenberger, M. and Spivack, M. 2022. System Coherence for Learning: Applications of the RISE Education Systems Framework. RISE Working Paper Series. 22/086. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISEWP_2022/086
- Klees, S. J., Ginsburg, M., Anwar, H., Robbins, M. B., Bloom, H., Busacca, C., Corwith, A., Decoster, B., Fiore, A., Gasior, S., Le, H. M., Primo, L. H., and Reedy, T. D. 2020. The World Bank's SABER: A Critical Analysis. *Comparative Education Review*, 64(1), 46–65. <https://doi.org/10.1086/706757>
- Pritchett, L., Newman, K., and Silberstein, J. 2022. Focus to Flourish: Five Actions to Accelerate Progress in Learning. *Research on Improving Systems of Education*. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-Misc_2022/07

Supplementary Resources

- The RISE Podcast: Luis Crouch on Purpose and Complexity in Education Systems Change. <https://riseprogramme.org/podcast/luis-crouch>

Unit 2: Goals of Education Systems

Education systems pursue many goals including preparing young people for employment, civic participation, and broader human flourishing. Central to these goals is the development of knowledge, understanding, and skills in relation to defined curricula and expectations. In particular, skills such as literacy and numeracy are often considered foundational.

In many low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), actual student performance, including in terms of foundational skills, is far from expectations. In recent years, increased attention to the learning crisis in many LMICs and in global discourse has highlighted the need to pivot towards learning where outcomes are weak.

Low levels of learning at any point in a child's educational career are the result of a trajectory of learning in the years prior. Low learning outcomes are often linked specifically to low learning trajectories in the early primary school years. Learning trajectories are an important tool for analysis and diagnosis of a range of systemic issues contributing to poor outcomes.

After completing the unit, students should:

- Be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the nature and extent of the global learning crisis and its connections to SDG4;
- Be able to demonstrate understanding and basic application of the concept of a learning trajectory as an analytic and diagnostic tool in relation to education system analysis;
- Be able to demonstrate understanding of educational quality in relation to learning productivity or value-added;
- Be able to interpret and evaluate studies employing concepts including learning trajectories and learning productivity (or value-added) in relation to the analysis of education systems and the learning crisis; and
- Be able to demonstrate understanding that equity goals are of central importance for education systems and be able to identify key trade-offs that systems may face when pursuing access, quality, and equity.

Lectures

1. [The learning crisis](#) (Michelle Kaffenberger, RISE Programme, University of Oxford)
2. [Learning trajectories](#) (Michelle Kaffenberger, RISE Programme, University of Oxford)
3. [What have we learned from learning trajectories?](#) (Michelle Kaffenberger, RISE Programme, University of Oxford)

Required Readings

- Crouch, L., Rolleston, C., and Gustafsson, M. 2021. Eliminating Global Learning Poverty: The Importance of Equalities and Equity. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 82, 102250. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2020.102250>
- Kaffenberger, M. and Pritchett, L. 2020. Aiming Higher: Learning Profiles and Gender Equality in 10 Low- and Middle-Income Countries. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 79, 102272. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2020.102272>
- World Bank. 2019. Ending Learning Poverty: What Will It Take? <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/395151571251399043/pdf/Ending-Learning-Poverty-What-Will-It-Take.pdf>

Further Readings

- Allen, D., Fraenkel, C., Meier, D., DeGraff, M., Satz, D., Almagor, L. Snyder, J. A., Stanczyk, L., Reich, R., and Smith, C. 2016. 'What Is Education For? [Forum]'. *Boston Review*, 26 April 2016. <https://www.bostonreview.net/forum/danielle-allen-what-is-education-for/>.
- Biesta, G. J. J. 2010. *Good Education in an Age of Measurement: Ethics, Politics, Democracy*. London: Taylor & Francis Group. <https://archive.org/details/goodeducationina0000bies/>
- Crouch, L., Kaffenberger, M., and Savage, L. 2021. Using learning profiles to inform education priorities: An editors' overview of the Special Issue. *International Journal of Educational Development*, Volume 86. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2021.102477>.
- Kaffenberger, M. 2022. The Role of Purpose in Education System Outcomes: A Conceptual Framework and Empirical Examples. RISE Working Paper Series. 22/118. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISEWP_2022/118
- Silberstein, J. 2021. Measuring, Visualising, and Simulating Solutions to the Learning Crisis: New Evidence from Learning Profiles in 18 Countries. 2021/029. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-RI_2021/029

Supplementary Resources

- UNESCO Learning Trajectory Overview and Data Explorer (GEM Report SCOPE website). <https://www.education-progress.org/en/articles/trajectories> (webinar recording: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Axb9bLxxlw&ab_channel=GEMReportUNESCO)
- The RISE Podcast: Denis Mizne on Transforming Brazil's Education System to Deliver Learning. Podcast: <https://riseprogramme.org/podcast/denis-mizne>
- The RISE Podcast: Sharath Jeevan OBE on the Need to Put People, Mindsets, and Motivation at the Centre of Education Systems: <https://riseprogramme.org/podcast/sharath-jeevan>

Unit 3: Politics of Learning

The political economy approach suggests that there are political dynamics related to both supporting and impeding successful education reform and sustained improvement in learning. This unit focuses on the political, social, institutional, and historical environment in which education systems are embedded. Understanding the variation in successful adoption and delivery of reforms across countries — and within countries over-time and across political regimes — requires a deeper understanding of the power relations among a broad range of interest groups. It also requires an understanding of the priorities, incentives, and decision making process of political actors (such as politicians, governments, and policy makers).

This unit covers frameworks developed to understand the ways in which politics can impact education outcomes and the channels of impact, with political economy studies from different countries referenced.

After completing the unit, students should:

- Know how political dynamics impact adoption of reforms, and how political dynamics contribute to the same reform having varied effects across different contexts;
- Know how local stakeholder politics and interests play out, such as why some reforms are implemented and others blocked by different stakeholders (including teachers, principals, grassroots bureaucrats, students, parents, community leaders);
- Be able to articulate the notion of political will and what it means in terms of envisioning and achieving development goals, and understand the importance of leaders declaring education/learning a priority;
- Understand how politics plays a part in what gets financed; and
- Learn about the politics of learning vs the politics of schooling.

Lectures

1. [The politics of schooling vs learning – Part 1](#) (Ken Opalo, Georgetown University)
2. [The politics of schooling vs learning – Part 2](#) (Ken Opalo, Georgetown University)
3. [The politics and governance of basic education – Part 1](#) (Brian Levy, Johns Hopkins University and University of Cape Town)
4. [The politics and governance of basic education – Part 2](#) (Brian Levy, Johns Hopkins University and University of Cape Town)
5. [The politics of education in developing countries](#) (Naomi Hossain, American University)

Required Readings

- Hickey, S. and Hossain, N. 2019. Politics of Education in Developing Countries: From Schooling to Learning (p. 256). Oxford University Press.

<https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/oso/9780198835684.001.0001/oso-9780198835684-chapter-1>

- Levy, B., Cameron, R., Hoadley, U., and Naidoo, V. 2018. *The Politics and Governance of Basic Education: A Tale of Two South African Provinces* (p. 320). Oxford University Press.
<https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/oso/9780198824053.001.0001/oso-9780198824053>
- London, J. 2021. *Outlier Vietnam and the Problem of Embeddedness: Contributions to the Political Economy of Learning*. RISE Working Paper Series. 21/062. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2021/062.

Further Readings

- Ansell, B. W. 2010. *From the Ballot to the Blackboard: The Redistributive Political Economy of Education*. Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Cuban, L. 1990. "Reforming Again, Again, and Again." *Educational Researcher* 19, no. 1: 3–13.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/1176529>
- Fullan, M. 2016. The Elusive Nature of Whole System Improvement in Education. *Journal of Educational Change*. Vol 17, 539–544. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-016-9289-1>
- Levy, B. 2022. How Political Contexts Influence Education Systems: Patterns, Constraints, Entry Points. RISE Working Paper Series. 22/122. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2022/122
- Paglayan, A. S. 2020. 'The Non-Democratic Roots of Mass Education: Evidence from 200 Years'. *American Political Science Review*, September, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055420000647>.
- Paglayan, A. S. 2022. 'Education or Indoctrination? The Violent Origins of Public School Systems in an Era of State-Building'. *American Political Science Review*, April, 1–16.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055422000247>.
- Piper, B. 2016. International Education is a Broken Field: Can "Ubuntu" Education bring Solutions? *International Review of Education*. 62(1), 101–111. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-016-9544-y>

Supplementary Resources

- Nice White Parents: Longform podcast about US education politics by Serial.
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/nice-white-parents/id1524080195>
- The RISE Podcast: Brian Levy on Education and Governance in South Africa:
<https://riseprogramme.org/podcast/brian-levy>
- Trojan Horse Affair: Longform podcast/investigative reporting about UK education politics by Serial.
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-trojan-horse-affair/id1606918193>

Unit 4: International Aid Architecture

For more than 50 years, international actors have supported educational change in developing countries through the provision of educational aid. Such aid includes the “official development assistance” provided by sovereign states either bilaterally or through multilateral institutions. It also increasingly includes financial and technical support from non-state actors, including non-governmental organisations (NGO) and foundations, and to a smaller degree includes public private partnerships with the private sector.

This unit reviews the historical rise of global actors in education and discusses different explanations for their behaviour. It also explores the effects of these actors on national educational policies and systems, focusing specifically on how international actors have shifted the quality and thematic focus of their financial and technical support to meet the challenge of the global learning crisis.

After completing the unit, students should:

- Understand the origins and evolution of international cooperation and aid in education and the main actors in the international aid architecture;
- Demonstrate a knowledge of the international norms that undermine the effectiveness and ability of the international aid architecture to improve learning outcomes;
- Explain different factors that drive the quality and focus of international cooperation in education;
- Explore critically the role that moral vision and geopolitical self-interest play in the evolution of international cooperation in education; and
- Understand some of the factors that may limit the effectiveness of aid to basic education and the ability of global actors to shape national policies on learning.

Lectures

1. [History and prospects](#) (Karen Mundy, University of Toronto)
2. [Is the international education aid architecture today fit for purpose?](#) (Karen Mundy, University of Toronto)

Required Readings

- Beeharry, G. 2021. The Pathway to Progress on SDG 4 Requires the Global Education Architecture to Focus On Foundational Learning and to Hold Ourselves Accountable for Achieving It.. *International Journal of Educational Development*. Volume 82. REPRINTED: Center for Global Development, "Symposium: The pathway to progress on SDG 4, <https://www.cgdev.org/reader/pathway-progress-sdg4-symposium?page=1>

- Hares, S. and Rossiter, J. 2021. The State of Global Education Finance. [Blog] <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/state-global-education-finance-seven-charts-update>
- Mundy, K. 2021. Why Do We Keep Failing to Universalize Literacy? A Response to Girin Beeharry. <https://www.cgdev.org/reader/pathway-progress-sdg4-symposium?page=13>
- Piper, B. 2016. International Education is a Broken Field: Can “Ubuntu” Education Bring Solutions? *International Review of Education*, 62(1), 101–111. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-016-9544-y>

Further Readings

- Ball, S. J. 2012. *Global Education Inc.: New Policy Networks and the Neoliberal Imaginary*. London: Routledge. <https://archive.org/details/globaleducationi0000ball>
- Mundy, K. 2016. “Leaning in” on Education for All. *Comparative Education Review*, 60(1), 1-26. <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/684434?journalCode=cer>

Supplementary Resources

- Do One Better Podcast: Dr Asyia Kazmi OBE, Gates Foundation’s Global Education Policy Lead. Podcast: <https://www.lidji.org/post/dr-asyia-kazmi-obe-gates-foundation-s-global-education-policy-lead>

Unit 5: Bureaucracies

In most countries, education is delivered via large-scale public-sector education bureaucracies. These bureaucracies are complex in a variety of ways. The relevant bureaucracies usually comprise multiple administrative agencies with different and sometimes overlapping functions (e.g., both the curriculum authority and the examinations board influencing what is taught). Furthermore, these agencies and functions are spread across different administrative levels (e.g., central, regional, district, and school). The relevant bureaucracies also face challenges as they aim to deliver education, which itself is a ‘thick’, complex task requiring co-creation between teachers, students, and other actors across numerous and varied classroom contexts.

Given the complexity, conventional civil service bureaucracies face difficult challenges around managing and delivering quality education. A common response to these challenges is a pattern of bureaucratic administration called ‘isomorphic mimicry’. Systems engaged in isomorphic mimicry are characterised by top-down, standardised management that depends on ‘thin’, input-based indicators such as how many textbooks have been distributed or how many students are enrolled. Such thin indicators, if successfully implemented, may enable the system to ‘look like’ it is doing the right thing, when in fact the inputs are not producing the desired ‘thick’ outputs (e.g., ensuring children are learning).

An alternative administrative paradigm involves a ‘thicker’ approach that is centred on a bureaucracy-wide sense of shared purpose or mission. Under this approach, individual bureaucrats are granted the autonomy to make decisions that respond to the needs and challenges of their specific contexts, in alignment with ‘thick’ indicators as goals. At the same time, bureaucrats must be supported with adequate training and resources that enable them to serve the shared purpose. This is particularly the case with the ‘middle tier’ of bureaucrats (e.g., district education officers) who can play a key role in maintaining alignment between the central government, and teachers and schools on the frontline.

After completing the unit, students should:

- Understand the multiple levels and multiple functions of education bureaucracies;
- Explain the limitations of conventional bureaucratic structures in implementing complex service delivery in education; and
- Understand the importance of alignment with a shared purpose and supporting and trusting bureaucrats with autonomy in improving the complex work of education bureaucracies.

Lectures

1. [Mission and motivation in public bureaucracies](#) (Dan Honig, University College London)
2. [Education systems reforms through X and Y lenses](#) (Dan Honig, University College London)
3. [Rewriting the grammar of the education system: The Delhi case](#) (Yamini Aiyar, Centre for Policy Research)

Required Readings

- Aiyar, Y., Davis, V., Govindan, G., and Kapoor, T. 2021. *Rewriting the Grammar of the Education System: Delhi's Education Reform (A Tale of Creative Resistance and Creative Disruption)*. *Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE)*. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-Misc_2021/01 (Chapters 4 and 6).
 - Podcast [optional]: <https://riseprogramme.org/podcast/yamini-aiyar>
- Honig, D. 2022. *Managing for Motivation as Performance Improvement Strategy: Closing the Implementation Gap in Education & Far Beyond*. Centre for International Development Faculty Working Paper Series: 409. <https://bsc.cid.harvard.edu/publications/managing-motivation-public-performance-improvement-strategy-education-far-beyond>
 - Webinar with Honig and Aiyar [optional]: <https://riseprogramme.org/events/bureaucratic-barriers-or-administrative-actions-role-bureaucracies-successful-education>
- Pritchett, L. 2014. *The Risks to Education Systems from Design Mismatch and Global Isomorphism: Concepts, with Examples from India (WIDER Working Paper)*. UNU-WIDER. <https://doi.org/10.35188/UNU-WIDER/2014/760-8>

Further Readings

- *On the limitations of narrowly standardized, top-down management and the value of purpose-aligned, empowered autonomy in improving education bureaucracies:*
 - Aiyar, Y. and Bhattacharya, S. 2016. *The Post Office Paradox*. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 51(11), 61–69. <https://www.epw.in/journal/2016/11/special-articles/post-office-paradox.html>
 - Andrews, M., Pritchett, L., and Woolcock, M. 2017. *Building State Capability: Evidence, Analysis, Action*. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oopen.org/search?identifier=624551> – especially Chapter 2: “Looking like a state: The seduction of isomorphic mimicry”
 - Bryk, A. and Schneider, B. 2002. *Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement*. Russell Sage Foundation. <https://muse.jhu.edu/book/15670/>
 - Honig, D., and Pritchett, L. 2019. *The Limits of Accounting-Based Accountability in Education (and Far Beyond): Why More Accounting Will Rarely Solve Accountability Problems*. RISE Working Paper Series, 19/030. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2019/030
 - Mangla, A. 2014. *Bureaucratic Norms and State Capacity in India: Implementing Primary Education in the Himalayan Region*. Harvard Business School Working Paper, No. 14-099, April 2014. (Revised October 2015.) https://www.hbs.edu/ris/Publication%20Files/Asian_Survey_5505_03_Mangla_219b4d54-2a4f-4a43-a0ab-d632628f8fae.pdf
 - Weick, K. E. 1976. *Educational Organizations as Loosely Coupled Systems*. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 21(1), 1–19. JSTOR. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2391875>
- *Further examples of the shortcomings of isomorphic mimicry in reform:*

- Bano, M. 2022. International Push for SBMCs and the Problem of Isomorphic Mimicry: Evidence from Nigeria. RISE Working Paper Series. 22/102. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2022/102
- Mansoor, Z. 2019. Punjab, Pakistan: A Case Study for Using a Systems Approach for Identifying Constraints to Education Service Delivery. Pathways for Prosperity Commission Background Paper Series No. 30. Oxford. United Kingdom. https://pathwayscommission.bsg.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2020-01/punjab_pakistan_a_case_study.pdf
- Mansoor, Z., Qarout, D., Anderson, K., Carano, C., Yecaló-Teclé, L., Dvorakova, V. and Williams, M. (2021, July). “A Global Mapping of Delivery Approaches.” DeliverEd Initiative Working Paper. Education Commission and Blavatnik School of Government. <https://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/research/publications/delivered-report-global-mapping-delivery-approaches>
- Muralidharan, K. and Singh, A. 2020. Improving Public Sector Management at Scale? Experimental Evidence on School Governance in India. RISE Working Paper Series, 20/056. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2020/056
 - Conference presentation video [optional]: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CW995lbnkX4&t=23530s&ab_channel=RISEProgramme
- Naviwala, N. 2016. Pakistan’s Education Crisis: The Real Story. In Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED570671>
- *On different levels within the bureaucracy:*
 - Hwa, Y.-Y. and Leaver, C. 2021. Management in Education Systems. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 37(2), 367–391. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxrep/grab004> – especially Section III
 - Iyer, P. and Rossiter, J. 2018. Coherent for Equitable Learning? Understanding the Ethiopian Education System. RISE Insight. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-RI_2018/005
- *The middle tier: district officials, circuit supervisors, school inspectors, et al.*
 - Asim, A. and Mundy, K. (forthcoming). Of Agents and Agency: The Missing Middle in Educational Reform in Developing Countries. RISE Working Paper Series
 - Childress, D., Chimier, C., Jones, C., Page, E., and Tournier, B. 2020. Change Agents: Emerging Evidence on Instructional Leadership at the Middle Tier. UNESCO IIEP; Education Development Trust; Education Commission. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374918>
 - Cilliers, J., Dunford, E., and Habyarimana, J. 2021. What Do Local Government Education Managers Do to Boost Learning Outcomes? RISE Working Paper Series, 21/064. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2021/064
 - Ehren, M.C.M. and Visscher, A.J. 2006. Towards a Theory on the Impact of School Inspections. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 54(1), 51–72. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8527.2006.00333.x>

- *Empirical evidence on the importance of school-level leaders:*
 - Leaver, C., Lemos, R., and Scur, D. 2019. Measuring and Explaining Management in Schools: New Approaches Using Public Data. RISE Working Paper Series, 19/033.
https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2019/033
 - Lemos, R., Muralidharan, K., and Scur, D. 2021. Personnel Management and School Productivity: Evidence from India. RISE Working Paper Series, 21/063.
https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2021/063

Unit 6: Teachers

This unit examines the relationships between education systems and the teachers within those systems.

Education systems must effectively recruit, train, deploy, motivate, and professionally develop their workforces in order to address the challenge of quality education for all. ‘Teacher quality’ is therefore the result of a complex interplay of systemic and individual-level factors and is challenging to conceptualise and to measure. For example, observable indicators of teacher quality (like formal certifications) typically show only limited ability to predict teacher effectiveness in terms of study learning outcomes.

In sub-Saharan Africa in particular, shortages of teachers and limited preparation of the teaching force present a major challenge. Reform of the education workforce in any particular context can be controversial and requires navigating political economy dynamics, as well as potentially allocating new resources, and reforming data and management approaches.

After completing the unit, students should:

- Understand the difficulties of defining and assessing teacher quality and the limitations of specific approaches to this;
- Understand the importance of limitations of teacher supply (number and quality) in relation to the learning crisis, the pursuit of SDG4, and the trade-offs that result from this in particular contexts; and
- Understand the importance of political economy with respect to systemic reform where the education workforce is concerned.

Lectures

1. [The central issue of teacher quality in two parts: How economists think about it and how policymakers think about it](#) (Barbara Bruns, Center for Global Development)
2. [How policymakers think about teacher quality](#) (Barbara Bruns, Center for Global Development)
3. [Recruiting better teachers](#) (Barbara Bruns, Center for Global Development)
4. [Grooming great teachers](#) (Barbara Bruns, Center for Global Development)
5. [Motivating teachers](#) (Barbara Bruns, Center for Global Development)
6. [Managing the politics of teacher quality reform](#) (Barbara Bruns, Center for Global Development)
7. [Challenges of teacher education in Africa](#) (Kwame Akyeampong, University of Sussex)
8. [The politics of teacher recruitment](#) (Shintia Revina, SMERU Research Institute)
9. [Motivating teacher performance](#) (Shintia Revina, SMERU Research Institute)

Required Readings

- Azam, M. and Kingdon, G. 2015. Assessing teacher quality in India. *Journal of Development Economics* 117: 74-83. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2015.07.001>
- Bold, T., Filmer, D., Martin, G., Molina, E., Stacy, B., Rockmore, C., Sensson, J. and Wane, W. 2017. Enrollment without learning: Teacher effort, knowledge, and skill in primary schools in Africa. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 31.4 (2017): 185-204. <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/jep.31.4.185>
- Bruns, B. and Luque, J. 2014. Great Teachers: How to Raise Student Learning in Latin America and the Caribbean. World Bank Publications. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/20488>

Further Readings

- Aslam, M., Rawal, S. and Kingdon, G. 2019. The Political Economy of Teachers in South Asia." *Handbook of Education Systems in South Asia*: 1-23. https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-981-15-0032-9_20
- Bau, N. and Das, J. 2020. Teacher Value Added in a Low-Income Country. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 12 (1): 62-96.DOI: 10.1257/pol.20170243. <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/pol.20170243>
- Buhl-Wiggers, J., Kerwin, J.T., Smith, J.A., and Thornton, R. 2018. Teacher Effectiveness in Africa: Longitudinal and Causal Estimates. International Growth Centre. S-89238-UGA-1, <https://www.theigc.org/publication/teacher-effectiveness-in-africa-longitudinal-and-causal-estimates/>
- de Ree, J., Muralidharan, K., Pradhan, M. and Rogers, H. 2016. Double for Nothing? Experimental Evidence on the Impact of an Unconditional Teacher Salary Increase on Student Performance in Indonesia. NBER Working Paper series. <https://doi.org/10.3386/w21806>
- Education Commission. 2019. Transforming the Education Workforce: Learning Teams for a Learning Generation. New York: Education Commission. <https://educationcommission.org/transformingtheeducationworkforce/>
- Huang, A.R., Revina, S., Fillaili, R., and Akhmadi. 2020. The Struggle to Recruit Good Teachers in Indonesia: Institutional and Social Dysfunctions. RISE Working Paper Series. 20/041. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2020/041
- Hwa, Y.-Y. and Pritchett, L. 2021. Teacher Careers in Education Systems That Are Coherent for Learning: Choose and Curate Toward Commitment to Capable and Committed Teachers (5Cs). Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE). https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-Misc_2021/02
 - Blog 1 and video: <https://riseprogramme.org/blog/introducing-5Cs-teacher-career-reform>
 - Blog 2: <https://riseprogramme.org/blog/teacher-recruitment-online-dating>

Supplementary Resources

- Hwa, Y.-Y. et al. 2022. Purpose, Pressures, and Possibilities: Conversations About Teacher Professional Norms in the Global South. Edited by Y.-Y. Hwa. Oxford, UK: Research on Improving Systems of Education. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-Misc_2022/06
- Teaching and Teachers in Education Systems. Webinar recording: <https://riseprogramme.org/events/teaching-and-teachers-education-systems>
- The RISE Podcast: Joan DeJaeghere and Vu Dao on Pedagogy, Equity, and Research Collaborations in Vietnam: <https://riseprogramme.org/podcast/joan-dejaeghere-vu-dao>

Unit 7: Assessment

Understanding the nature and extent of the learning crisis, and measuring progress in addressing it, requires reliable and valid assessment of learning outcomes. In recent years much progress has been made in terms of extending large-scale internationally comparable assessment exercises to many low- and middle-income countries. Significant improvements to national and local assessment exercises have also been achieved. However, controversy surrounds the question of how to measure progress towards SDG4 and, more broadly, how to measure progress with respect to alleviating the learning crisis. Some examples of the types of assessments and measurements of learning currently available are:

- Large scale international assessments (e.g., PISA and PISA for Development)
- Regional assessments (e.g., PASEC)
- National educational assessments (e.g., NAS India)
- Citizen-led assessments (e.g., ASER)
- Other ‘shorter quicker cheaper’ types of assessments (e.g., used in programme evaluations)
- Broader indicator approaches such as the World Bank’s Human Capital Index

After completing the unit, students should:

- Know and understand the key learning assessments which inform the learning crisis and SDG4;
- Understand the strengths and weaknesses of various types of large-scale assessments;
- Understand and be able to evaluate various assessment exercises in terms of their purpose(s) including in relations to any tensions and incoherences which arise from multiple purposes; and
- Be able to discuss the potential role of large-scale assessments in informing education systems reforms.

Lectures

1. [Why assess? A brief introduction to the key issues](#) (Newman Burdett, Consultant)
2. [The purposes of assessment](#) (Newman Burdett, Consultant)
3. [Measuring learning at large scale](#) (Newman Burdett, Consultant)
4. [Large scale assessments: How can we get useful data for policy?](#) (Abhijeet Singh, Stockholm School of Economics)
5. [Designing learning by assessments for impact evaluations](#) (Abhijeet Singh, Stockholm School of Economics)

Required Readings

- Burdett, N. 2016. The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly - Testing as a Key Part of the Education Ecosystem. RISE Working Paper Series. 16/010. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2016/010
- Dang, H. A., Glewwe, P., Vu, K., & Lee, J. 2021. What Explains Vietnam's Exceptional Performance in Education Relative to Other Countries? Analysis of the 2012 and 2015 PISA Data. RISE Working Paper Series. 20/036. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2020/036
- Nakabugo, M.G. 2021. Uwezo Citizen-led Assessments: Inspiring Debate about Children's Learning and Holding Governments Accountable. Harding-Esch, P with Coleman, H (eds) Language and the Sustainable Development Goals. London: British Council. ISBN 978-0-86355-982-2. https://uwezouganda.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/5_Uwezo-citizen-led-assessments_Web_FINAL.pdf
- Singh, A. 2020. Myths of Official Measurement: Auditing and Improving Administrative Data in Developing Countries. RISE Working Paper Series. 20/042. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2020/042
 - Blog: <https://riseprogramme.org/blog/combating-cheating-ideas-india-indonesia>
- Wagner, D.A. 2003. Smaller, Quicker, Cheaper: Alternative Strategies for Literacy Assessment in the UN Literacy Decade. *International Journal of Educational Research* 39.3: 293-309. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2004.04.009>

Further Readings

- Berkhout, E. et al. 2020. From Cheating to Learning: An Evaluation of Fraud Prevention on National Exams in Indonesia. RISE Working Paper Series. 20/046. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2020/046
- Bruns, B., Akmal, M., and Birdsall, N. 2019. The Political Economy of Testing in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa. RISE Working Paper Series. 19/032. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2019/032
- Koretz, Daniel M. 2008. *Measuring up: What Educational Testing Really Tells Us*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Rossiter, J., Abreh, M.K., Ali, A. and Sandefur, J. 2021. Do High-Stakes Exams Promote Consistent Educational Standards? CGD Working Paper 581. Washington, DC: Center for Global Development. <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/do-high-stakes-exams-promote-consistent-educational-standards>
- Ward, M. 2018. PISA for development: Results in focus. OECD. <https://doi.org/10.1787/22260919>

Supplementary Resources

- The RISE Podcast: Armando Ali on Assessing Learning in Mozambique and the Power of Citizen Action: <https://riseprogramme.org/publications/rise-podcast-armando-ali-assessing-learning-mozambique-and-power-citizen-action>
- Pritchett, L. 2018. Testing, Testing: The 123's of Testing. RISE Blog. https://riseprogramme.org/blog/testing_testing

Unit 8: Instruction

Teaching is at the heart of education systems and is of central importance to determining how much children learn. However, there are multiple system-level components that directly shape teaching (as distinct from the teacher-level factors covered in Unit 7) and determine how effective it is. Core instructional components include curriculum standards, assessments, and instructional resources (i.e., textbooks, lesson plans, and teacher training or coaching). These components are often poorly aligned with each other, and often poorly aligned with children's learning levels.

Many education reform efforts seek to improve teaching by acting on a single instructional component. However, there is increasing evidence that this piecemeal approach is inadequate to improve learning outcomes. Instead, there is a need to examine and improve coherence across instructional components, and alignment between instructional components and children's learning levels and needs.

For example, the literature on overambitious curricula highlights the mismatch between curricula and children's learning levels in many contexts. This results in children who are left behind and unable to catchup, as the curriculum advances faster than their pace of learning. Conversely, many of the most promising examples of systems change that have increased learning at-scale have brought about greater coherence between instructional components.

This unit discusses tools to measure coherence between various instructional components (such as the Surveys of Enacted Curriculum). It also explores influential contemporary case studies that have successfully improved instructional coherence (i.e., 'Teaching at the Right Level' approaches and 'structured pedagogy' programmes), and compares and contrasts the distinct approaches these programmes take even as they pursue a similar goal.

After completing the unit, students should:

- Understand the concepts of instructional components and instructional coherence;
- Be able to provide diverse examples of instructional coherence, and interpret real-world case studies through the lens of instructional (in)coherence; and
- Be able to marshal theoretical and empirical evidence around the impact of overambitious curricula, and the importance of adapting instruction to childrens' learning levels.

Lectures

1. [Diagnosing \(in\)coherence: A focus on the system enablers for learning – Part 1](#) (Julius Atuhurra, RISE Programme, University of Oxford)
2. [Diagnosing \(in\)coherence: A focus on the system enablers for learning – Part 2](#) (Julius Atuhurra, RISE Programme, University of Oxford)
3. [Teaching at the Right Level: Helping tackle systems challenges and deliver results](#) (Rukmini Banerji, Pratham Education Foundation)

Required Readings

- Atuhurra, J. and Kaffenberger, M. 2020. System (In)Coherence: Quantifying the Alignment of Primary Education Curriculum Standards, Examinations, and Instruction in Two East African Countries. RISE Working Paper Series. 20/057. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2020/057
 - Blog [optional]: https://riseprogramme.org/blog/system_incoherence_curriculum
- Banerji, R., and Chavan, M. 2016. Improving literacy and math instruction at scale in India’s primary schools: The case of Pratham’s Read India program. *Journal of Educational Change*, 17(4), 453–475. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-016-9285-5>
 - Blog: <https://riseprogramme.org/blog/introducing-aligns>
- Hwa, Y.-Y., Kaffenberger, M. and Silberstein, J. 2020. Aligning Levels of Instruction with Goals and the Needs of Students (ALIGNS): Varied Approaches, Common Principles. RISE Insight Series. 2020/022. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-RI_2020/022
- Piper, B., Destefano, J., Kinyanjui, E. M., and Ong’ele, S. 2018. Scaling up successfully: Lessons from Kenya’s Tusome national literacy program. *Journal of Educational Change*, 19(3), 293–321. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-018-9325-4>

Further Readings

- *Case Studies of Improved Instructional Coherence*
 - Banerjee, A., Banerji, R., Berry, J., Duflo, E., Kannan, H., Mukherji, S., Shotland, M., and Walton, M. 2017. From proof of concept to scalable policies: challenges and solutions, with an application. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 31 (4): 73–102. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.31.4.73>
 - Crouch, L. 2020. Systems Implications for Core Instructional Support Lessons from Sobral (Brazil), Puebla (Mexico), and Kenya. *Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE)*. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-RI_2020/020
 - Muralidharan, K., Singh, A. and Ganimian, A. J., 2019. Disrupting Education? Experimental Evidence on Technology-Aided Instruction in India, in: *American Economic Review*, Vol. 109:4, 1426-1460. <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.20171112>
- *Overambitious curricula*
 - Pritchett, L. and Beatty, A. 2012. The Negative Consequences of Overambitious Curricula in Developing Countries (SSRN Scholarly Paper ID 2102726). Social Science Research Network. <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2102726>
- *Pedagogical Production Function*
 - Kaffenberger, M. and Pritchett, L. 2021. A Structured Model of the Dynamics of Student Learning in Developing Countries, with Applications to Policy. *International Journal of Educational Development*. Volume 82, 2021, 102371. ISSN 0738-0593. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2021.102371>

- *Instructional incoherence and Covid learning loss*
 - Andrabi, T., Daniels, B., Das, J. 2020. Human Capital Accumulation and Disasters: Evidence from the Pakistan Earthquake of 2005. RISE Working Paper Series. 20/039. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2020/039
 - Kaffenberger, M. 2021. Modeling the Long-Run Learning Impact of the COVID-19 Learning Shock: Actions to (More Than) Mitigate Loss. In: International Journal of Educational Development, Vol. 81. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2020.102326>

Supplementary Resources

- A collection of Daniel Willingham’s articles on cognitive science and classroom instruction. <http://www.danielwillingham.com/articles.html>
- Covid learning loss simulations. <https://riseprogramme.org/tools/simulating-learning>
- Science of Teaching: Improving foundational literacy and numeracy. <https://scienceofteaching.site/>
- The RISE Podcast: Nangamso Mtsatse on Helping Kids to Read for Meaning and Calculate with Confidence in South Africa. <https://riseprogramme.org/podcast/nangamso-mtsatse>
- Why Alignment for Foundational Skills Matters: Cognitive Science Insights and Real-World Implications. Webinar recording: <https://riseprogramme.org/events/why-alignment-foundational-skills-matters-cognitive-science-insights-and-real-world>

Unit 9: Education Markets (A Systems Approach to the Private Sector)

Private schools have seen tremendous growth in developing countries in recent years, and now account for a greater share of enrollment than public schools in many urban areas. As they have expanded in number, private schools have ceased to only serve the rich, with the poor now being served by ‘low-cost’ private schools. The private sector is therefore an increasingly consequential part of the overall education system.

Much of the academic and policy debate over the role of private schools in education has focused on comparing private vs. government schools, including contentious debates over which type of school is higher quality. In contrast, scholars have recently begun to articulate a systems approach to studying private schools. Under this approach, private and government schools co-exist within local education markets, and families make choices between these types of schools depending on the market structure. Within education markets, private and government schools are not best understood separately, but instead can only be understood together.

After introducing education markets, this unit explores policy options for intervening in and improving them. The unit discusses multiple kinds of market failures that, left unaddressed, lead to lower learning in all schools. For example, on the demand side, lack of good information on school quality leads families to make poorly informed decisions about where to educate their children (and allows the non-state market to charge higher fees). The unit also explores questions around how private and government schools respond to the alleviation of market failures. For example, how is the impact of increasing funding to a single school different from increasing funding to multiple schools within an education market? And how do private schools respond to increased funding to government schools in their local market?

The unit will focus on education markets in Pakistan, which has one of the highest penetrations of private schools in the world and has been a focus of academic study and policy experimentation to improve private schools.

After completing the unit, students should:

- Understand the concept of education markets;
- Identify common education market failures and their impact on school choice and learning; and
- Offer examples of how to alleviate education market failures and support these examples with empirical evidence.

Lectures

1. [Education markets \(preliminaries\)](#) (Jishnu Das, Georgetown University)
2. [The education landscape](#) (Jishnu Das, Georgetown University)
3. [Understanding policy responses](#) (Jishnu Das, Georgetown University)

Required Readings

- Andrabi, T., Bau N., Das, J. and Khwaja, A.I. 2022. Heterogeneity in School Value-Added and the Private Premium. RISE Working Paper Series. 22/116. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISEWP_2022/116
- Andrabi, T., Das, J. and Khwaja, A. 2017. Report Cards: The Impact of Providing School and Child Test Scores on Educational Markets. *American Economic Review*, 107 (6): 1535-63. <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.20140774>
 - Presentation of unpublished long-term results at 2019 RISE Conference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cvOHvrXxcV0&t=10333>

Further Readings

- On Education Markets:
 - Andrabi, T., Bau, N., Das, J., Karachiwalla, N. and Khwaja, A. 2021. Crowding in Private Quality: The Equilibrium Effects of Public Spending in Education. Working Paper. <https://economics.ucr.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/11-05-21-Bau.pdf>
 - Andrabi, T., Das, J. and Khwaja, A. 2015. Delivering Education: A Pragmatic Framework for Improving Education in Low-Income Countries. Policy Research Working Paper Series 7277, The World Bank. <https://doi.org/10.1596/1813-9450-7277>
 - Andrabi, T., Das, J., Khwaja, A., Ozyurt, S. and Singh, N. 2020. Upping the Ante: The Equilibrium Effects of Unconditional Grants to Private Schools. *American Economic Review*, 110 (10): 3315-49. DOI: 10.1257/aer.20180924 <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.20180924>
- On the Private School Premium
 - Patel, Dev and Justin Sandefur. A Rosetta Stone for Human Capital. CGD Working Paper. <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/rosetta-stone-human-capital>
 - Blog: <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/rosetta-stone-comparing-test-scores-around-world-and-across-global-income-distribution>
- On Public Private Partnerships in education (generally)
 - Mauricio Romero, Justin Sandefur, Beyond Short-Term Learning Gains: the Impact of Outsourcing Schools in Liberia After Three Years, *The Economic Journal*, Volume 132, Issue 644, May 2022, Pages 1600–1619, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ej/ueab087>
 - Patrinos, Harry Anthony; Barrera-Osorio, Felipe; Guaqueta, Juliana. 2009. The Role and Impact of Public-Private Partnerships in Education. © World Bank. <http://localhost:4000/entities/publication/f89e9dde-fe8d-5737-b414-108c4f35540c>
 - Romero, Mauricio, Justin Sandefur, and Wayne Aaron Sandholtz. 2020. "Outsourcing Education: Experimental Evidence from Liberia." *American Economic Review*, 110 (2): 364-400. DOI: 10.1257/aer.20181478
 - Ungated working paper version: <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/partnership-schools-for-liberia>

- On Vouchers (specifically)
 - Epple, D., Romano, R., & Urquiola, M. (2017). [School Vouchers: A Survey of the Economics Literature](#). *Journal of Economic Literature*, 55(2), 441-492.
 - Karthik Muralidharan, Venkatesh Sundararaman, The Aggregate Effect of School Choice: Hsieh, Chang-Tai and Miguel Urquiola. The effects of generalized school choice on achievement and stratification: Evidence from Chile's voucher program, *Journal of Public Economics*, Volume 90, Issues 8–9, 2006, Pages 1477-1503. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2005.11.002> (ungated version: [http://www.columbia.edu/~msu2101/Hsieh-Urquiola\(2006\).pdf](http://www.columbia.edu/~msu2101/Hsieh-Urquiola(2006).pdf))
 - Evidence from a Two-Stage Experiment in India , *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Volume 130, Issue 3, August 2015, Pages 1011–1066, <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjv013>
 - Pedro Carneiro, Jishnu Das, Hugo Reis; The Value of Private Schools: Evidence from Pakistan. *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 2022; https://doi.org/10.1162/rest_a_01237 (ungated working paper version: https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2022/091)
 - Romero, M. and Singh, A. 2022. The Incidence of Affirmative Action: Evidence from Quotas in Private Schools in India. RISE Working Paper Series. 22/088. https://doi.org/10.35489/BSG-RISE-WP_2022/088
- On Regulation and State Capability:
 - Härmä, Joanna. Ensuring quality education? Low-fee private schools and government regulation in three sub-Saharan African capitals. *International Journal of Educational Development*, Volume 66, 2019, Pages 139-146. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2018.10.007>
- On Parent Choice
 - Stephanie Simmons Zuilkowski, Benjamin Piper, Salome Ong'ele & Onesmus Kiminza (2018) Parents, quality, and school choice: why parents in Nairobi choose low-cost private schools over public schools in Kenya's free primary education era, *Oxford Review of Education*, 44:2, 258-274, DOI: 10.1080/03054985.2017.1391084

Supplementary Resources

- CGD blog on low cost private schools: <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/low-cost-private-schools-what-have-we-learned-five-years-dfid-rigorous-review>
- Testimony to UK Parliament by Joanna Harma and Pauline Dixon on low-cost private schools: <https://parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/7dc4112b-76b7-4fd4-8b5b-8fb8aaf30a5d>
- The RISE Podcast: Jishnu Das on School Choice, School Quality, and 'Zombie Schools' in Pakistan: <https://riseprogramme.org/podcast/jishnu-das>
- The Seen and Unseen podcast episode with Karthik Muralidharan (an epic tour of the entire Indian education system, with a section on private schools starting at the 2:45:00 mark). <https://seenunseen.in/episodes/2020/8/9/episode-185-fixing-indian-education/>
 - Partial transcript: <https://www.notion.so/Podcast-Highlights-Karthik-Muralidharan-in-The-Seen-The-Unseen-Episode-185-Fixing-Indian-Educa-83355a25af9441fdb108b15003f4b298>

Unit 10: Financing Education

Financing education is an expensive endeavour, especially at the scale and scope required under global commitments. To this end, how education finances are sourced and utilised provokes important questions:

- Who pays and who benefits?
- How are budget allocations determined?
- What level of education is prioritised?
- Is financing sustainable?
- Who is the state accountable to for financing commitments?

At the global level, there is large disparity in per capita spending on education across countries. LMICs spend very little on education proportional to the size of their economies. With a learning crisis that is showing no signs of abating, there exists a case for rethinking education financing.

Foreign aid and concessional lending to LMICs for education financing represent only a small fraction of total financing and are predicted to decline further. Yet, the global discourse places significant attention on external sources, rather than building fiscally sustainable states in LMICs. A shift in focus towards building local accountability could translate to more sustainable financing models to build better education systems.

After completing the unit, students should:

- Understand the main conceptualisations underlying education financing, such as the: human capital approach; human rights approach; public policy approach; and tax justice approach.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the current global debate on education financing, in particular regarding the 4S framework from the ‘Transforming Education Summit’ in September 2022.
- Recognise the current sources of education financing (internal and external) in LMICs, illustrate why external financing ought to play a ‘catalytic’ (rather than ‘gap filling’) role, and understand how taxation is central to education financing.
- Evaluate the basic education financing equation, examine the idea that LMICs are stuck in ‘low financing traps’ and explore possibilities of escaping this trap.

Lectures

1. [An introduction to education financing](#) (Maria Ron Balsera, ActionAid International)
2. [Increasing the share, size, sensitivity and scrutiny of education budgets](#) (David Archer, ActionAid International)
3. [Educational planning and escaping the low financing trap – Part 1](#) (Keith Lewin, University of Sussex)
4. [Educational planning and escaping the low financing trap – Part 2](#) (Keith Lewin, University of Sussex)

Required Readings

- Archer, D. 2016. Domestic Tax and Education. The Education Commission: Background Paper (The Learning Generation). <https://report.educationcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Domestic-Tax-and-Education.pdf>
- Balsera, M. R, Klees, S. J, and Archer D. 2018. Financing education: Why should tax justice be part of the solution? <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2017.1394743>
- Cobham, A., and Klees, S. J. 2016. Global Taxation: Financing Education and the Other Sustainable Development Goals. Tax Justice Network. <https://taxjustice.net/reports/global-taxation-financing-education-and-the-other-sustainable-development-goals/>
- Lewin, K. M. 2020. Beyond business as usual: Aid and financing education in Sub Saharan Africa. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2020.102247>

Further Readings

- ActionAid International. 2017. Promoting quality education through progressive domestic resource mobilisation 2015-2017. Consolidated baseline survey report. <https://actionaid.org/sites/default/files/publications/Consolidated%20baseline%20report.pdf>
- ActionAid International. 2018. Promoting quality education through progressive domestic resource mobilisation 2015-2017. Consolidated endline survey report. https://actionaid.org/sites/default/files/endline_survey_report_online.pdf
- Al-Samarrai, S., Cerdan-Infantes, P., and Lehe, J. 2019. Mobilizing Resources for Education and Improving Spending Effectiveness: Establishing Realistic Benchmarks Based on Past Trends. World Bank Group: Policy Research Working Paper 8773. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/244151552329948414/pdf/Mobilizing-Resources-for-Education-and-Improving-Spending-Effectiveness-Establishing-Realistic-Benchmarks-Based-on-Past-Trends.pdf>
- Lewin K. M. 2015. Educational Access, Equity and Development: Planning to Make Rights Realities. UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning <https://www.iiep.unesco.org/en/publication/educational-access-equity-and-development-planning-make-rights-realities>
- Lewin K. M. 2022. It is time to fix the low financing trap: Public spending on education revisited. Journal for International Cooperation in Education. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/JICE-06-2022-0011/full/pdf?title=it-is-time-to-fix-the-low-financing-trap-public-spending-on-education-revisited>
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Supplementary Resources

- ‘To Get Children Learning, More Money is Necessary But Not Sufficient’: A Side Event of the Global Education Summit: Financing GPE 2021-2025. Webinar recording: <https://riseprogramme.org/events/get-children-learning-more-money-necessary-not-sufficient-side-event-global-education-summit>
- The RISE Podcast: Rachel Glennerster on Cost Effectiveness and Tackling Systems Issues at Scale: <https://riseprogramme.org/podcast/rachel-glennerster>
- The RISE Podcast: Ritva Reinikka on the Role that Financing Plays in Education Systems: <https://riseprogramme.org/podcast/ritva-reinikka>