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Learning and Education in Developing Countries: Research and Policy for the Post-2015 UN Development Goals

Edited by

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Foreword

Wadi D. Haddad

It is a distinct pleasure for me to add a few words to a very timely book on a critical theme in the world of international education and poverty alleviation—learning. The topic itself has personal and professional resonance for a variety of reasons. My personal passion and my professional focus have been on mobilizing colleagues, organizations, and country decision-makers to move beyond the institutional developments of education and focus more on learning and the learner, and then to make the appropriate kinds of investments in education that can enhance learning effectively and efficiently, particularly in developing countries.

This volume brings together, under the leadership of Professor Dan Wagner, a group of 16 highly talented education specialists from around the world. Supported by the Brookings Institution, this group set their collective minds to think about the issues, and gaps, in what we know about learning today, looking both at the past and the future, and at research from both developed and developing countries. This task was present when I had the opportunity to direct the effort to put together the Jomtien Conference on Education for All in 1990; this led to a number of initiatives including the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which formally ends in 2015. Now, a quarter-century since Jomtien, learning and educational quality are again in the policy limelight. And,

significantly, the ideas we had about learning in 1990 have largely been revived and accepted as central to the set of post-2015 goals.

The challenges are still real today, but they are ever more important. Few in today's world can survive and do well without meeting a variety of learning needs. This volume lays out some critical areas for further exploration and action. I am confident that the ideas and concepts herein will help to frame the thinking and debates on this ever-important topic over the next decade and beyond.

Note

Wadi D. Haddad spent 17 years at the World Bank and served as director and deputy corporate secretary, senior manager in the education sector, and senior advisor for human development. He also served as special adviser to the director general of UNESCO; member of the International Scientific Advisory Board of UNESCO; and chief advisor to the president of Lebanon for National Policy Affairs.

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Support for work of this volume was generously provided by the Center for Universal Education at Brookings as part of the *Global Compact on Learning*. The Center engaged Dan Wagner, the editor, as the chair of a Research Task Force on Learning (RTFL), comprised of the 16 coauthors of this volume. We worked intensively for nearly two years, including one international gathering at UNESCO in Paris in March 2012.

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Naturally, all errors of fact and interpretation are the sole responsibility of the authors and are not intended to represent the views of any of the aforementioned individuals or the Brookings Institution or any other agency or organization.

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List of Abbreviations



| | |
|------|--|
| AfL | assessment for learning |
| AoL | assessment of learning |
| CFS | child-friendly spaces |
| ECD | early childhood development |
| ECCE | early childhood care and education |
| EFA | Education for All |
| EGRA | Early Grade Reading Assessment |
| GMR | Global Monitoring Report |
| ICT | information and communications technology |
| IEA | International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement |
| INEE | Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies |
| IRI | interactive radio instruction |
| LSEA | Large-Scale Educational Assessment |
| LMIC | low- and middle-income countries |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| NFE | nonformal education |
| NGO | nongovernmental organization |
| NLA | national learning assessments |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OLPC | One Laptop Per Child |
| OVC | orphans and vulnerable children |
| PISA | Program for International Student Assessment |
| RCT | randomized control trials |
| RTFL | Research Task Force on Learning |

| | |
|--------|---|
| SQC | small, quicker, cheaper (types of assessments) |
| TVET | technical and vocational education and training |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UIS | UNESCO Institute for Statistics |

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