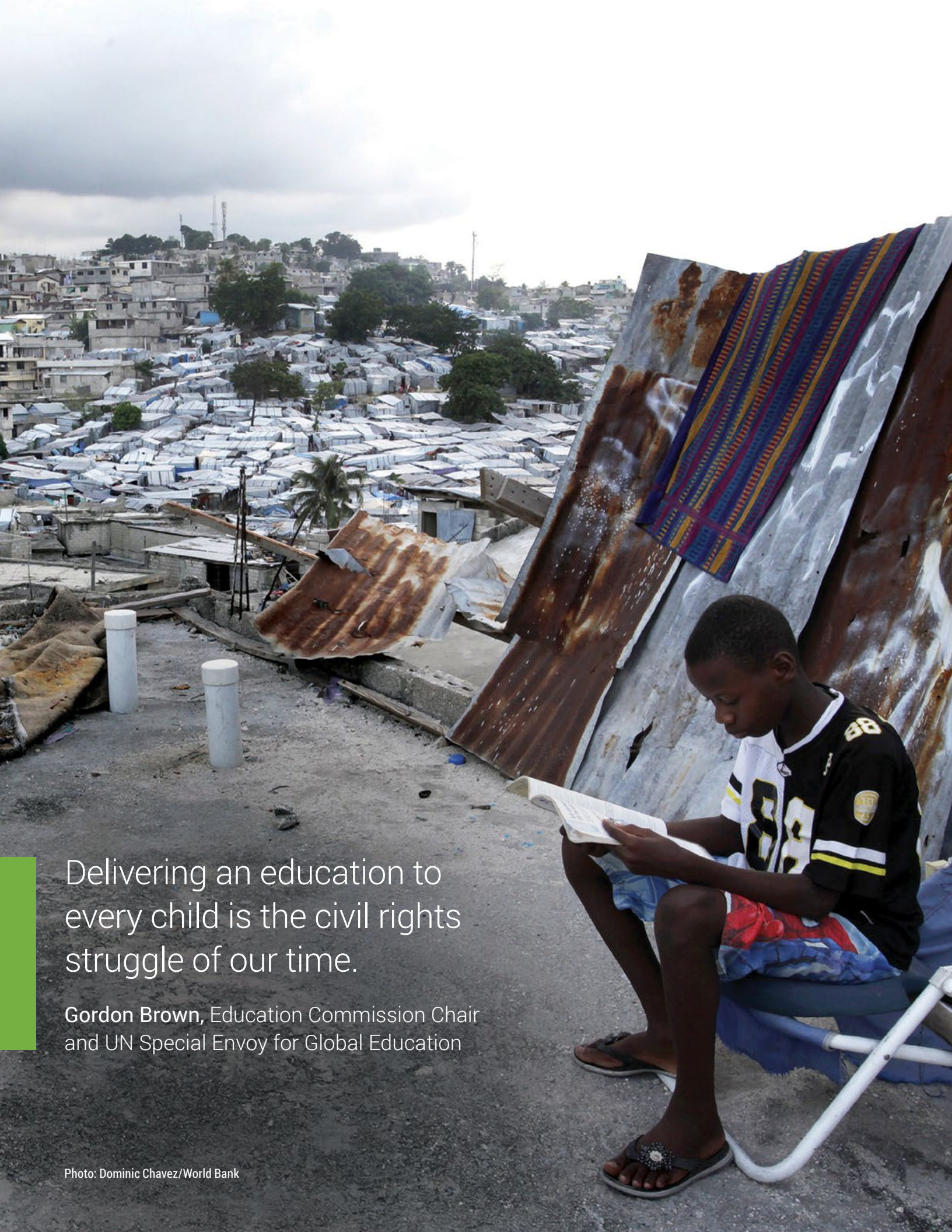




the
Education
Commission

Progress Report 2016-2017

Delivering the Learning Generation



Delivering an education to every child is the civil rights struggle of our time.

Gordon Brown, Education Commission Chair and UN Special Envoy for Global Education

September 2017

There is no time to waste. Without immediate action, half a generation will be left without the skills they need to fully participate in society and employment by 2030.

Faced with this grim prospect, the global community has a Herculean task: to achieve an ambitious set of education goals while facing ever-growing pressures on domestic budgets, declining international support for education, rising numbers of out-of-school children, and disappointing learning outcomes among those lucky enough to be in school.

The Education Commission tackled this challenge head-on by charting a pathway to get all young people in school and learning within a generation. In our 2016 *Learning Generation* report, we presented evidence of why a change of course is urgently needed, and provided recommendations to make this change possible. The report showed that if all countries accelerate their progress to match the world's top 25 percent fastest education improvers, we could achieve the largest expansion of educational opportunity in history. This would have major beneficial impact on economic development, health outcomes, and security.

This progress report provides an overview of the Commission's efforts over the past year to achieve the Learning Generation. It focuses on Commissioners' actions and voices, as well as the work of partners. But this report is just a snapshot, not a comprehensive recording of all activities that have helped advance the Learning Generation agenda. There are many people and organizations that have amplified the messages of the Commission over the past year. While we cannot recount all of these efforts on the following pages, we are deeply grateful for advocates' tireless work on behalf of the world's children and young people. We also note the important work of our research partners who continue to build on the critical inputs they provided to the *Learning Generation* report. Some of this research has been discussed at global conferences and published in books or major reports.

We have been inspired by the world's response to the Commission's recommendations. Sixteen countries received high-level Commission delegations and agreed to use our report findings as a model for delivering quality education for all. A growing cadre of countries have made commitments to increase domestic finance and implement critical reforms so that funds can be used in the best ways possible.

International donors are recognizing the need to step up their efforts too. The Commission's proposed International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd) would multiply the impact of donor dollars and fill education funding gaps. The Group of 20 (G20) and other key international institutions have given critical early support to the proposal. The IFFEd would complement the efforts of the Education Cannot Wait fund and the Global Partnership for Education – which have set record targets for fundraising – to ensure that all children can be in school and learning regardless of where they live, and even if they are displaced due to conflict or disaster.

The goal to deliver education for all has never before witnessed such momentum. Moving forward, we will persevere to ensure the Commission's work helps us make quality education a reality for all. Doing anything less is not an option.

With deep gratitude for your support on this journey,



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Director



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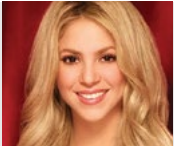
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**Helle Thorning-
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Background

The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity (the Education Commission) was set up to reinvigorate, and chart a pathway for, increased investment in education. The Commission, which the Prime Minister of Norway, the Presidents of Malawi, Indonesia, and Chile, and the Director-General of UNESCO convened following the 2015 Oslo Summit on Education for Development, is steered by 27 high-level Commissioners working to make ours the first generation ever that provides a quality education for every child.

Drawing upon new research and analysis from more than 300 partners in 105 countries, the Commission’s report, *The Learning Generation: Investing in education for a changing world*, puts forward an action plan for the largest expansion of educational opportunity in history.

At the 2016 United Nations General Assembly, then Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon received the report and agreed to act on its recommendations, a mantle that has been taken up by his successor António Guterres. The report highlights an urgent and ever-worsening learning crisis that, if left unaddressed, will leave half of the world’s 1.6 billion children and youth out of school or failing to learn by 2030.

To reverse these dire trends and fulfill Sustainable Development Goal 4’s (SDG 4) promise of an “inclusive and equitable quality education” for all by 2030, the Commission calls upon world leaders to commit to four education transformations. These transformations, which inform the structure of this progress report, underscore a critical and immediate need to strengthen performance, foster innovation, prioritize inclusion, and increase finance.

Domestic and international partners across governments, the private sector, and civil society continue to play vital roles in turning messages into action. The Commission’s work remains guided by the belief that it is impossible to separate the financing of education from *how* funds are used: more and better financing holds the key to realizing the Learning Generation vision.



Four Transformations to Create a Learning Generation

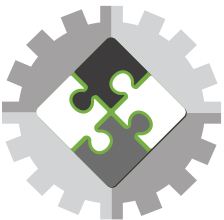
The Education Commission concluded that it is possible to get all young people in school and learning within a generation and create a Learning Generation. To achieve this vision, the Commission identified four education transformations that national and international decision-makers need to undertake.



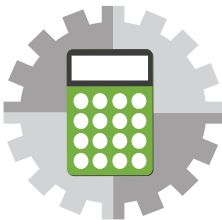
I. Performance



II. Innovation



III. Inclusion



IV. Finance

Major Highlights

October 2016 - September 2017



Performance: reform education systems to deliver results

Following high-level visits and outreach by Commission delegations, more than 20 developing countries endorsed the Learning Generation recommendations and agreed to prioritize education and be education champions. Representatives from 12 African countries were trained in the “delivery approach”— a planning and implementation methodology designed to achieve better and faster education results.



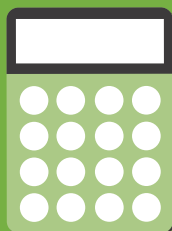
Innovation: invest in new approaches and adapt to future needs

The Education Workforce Initiative (EWI) prepares to launch in late 2017 to bring fresh thinking to the roles and assistance required for teachers and support staff to deliver quality education that meets this century's demands.



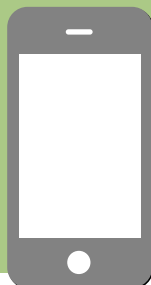
Inclusion: target efforts and resources to individuals at risk of not learning

Progressive universalism – the Learning Generation’s proposal to expand opportunities for all while focusing on those most vulnerable and in the early years of life – is embraced by several countries and international organizations.



Finance: increase and improve financing for education

The Commission’s proposed International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd) is endorsed by more than 30 international organizations and over 145,000 individuals around the world, including the UN Secretary-General. The Group of 20 Leaders’ Declaration acknowledged and agreed to take the Facility forward under the Argentinian G20 Presidency. Campaign organizations use Commission financing targets to coordinate global advocacy for domestic and international education financing.



Outreach: amplifying the call for a Learning Generation

Commissioner-authored articles and stories in global media reached millions of readers. Commissioners leveraged their own social media channels to engage millions more with Learning Generation messages. The Commission has earned over 100,000 digital supporters, and Commission posts were seen nearly seven million times on social media.



I now call upon leaders across the globe to take action and commit to expanding education financing and implementing the reforms necessary to realize the vision of a Learning Generation.

Jakaya Kikwete, Education Commissioner and former President of Tanzania

I. Performance

In education, despite significant investment and effort, progress in many countries has been limited because of weaknesses in decision-making, capacity, or accountability and governance. As a consequence, too many investments and reforms have failed. Successful education systems put results front and center. To succeed, the first priority for any reform effort is to secure the proven building blocks of delivery, strengthen the performance of the education system, and focus on results.

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Recommendations

- **Set standards, track progress, and make information public**
 - **Invest in what delivers the best results**
 - **Cut waste**
- ////////////////////////////////////

The Pioneer Country Initiative, launched in November 2016, helps countries turn these recommendations into action. Commissioners are leading the charge to inspire heads of state and ministers of education and finance to implement reforms, increase domestic investment in education, and enhance delivery of high-quality educational services. The initiative began in Africa, and is expanding to countries in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East.

From November 2016 to April 2017, Commissioner Jakaya Kikwete, former president of Tanzania, led high-level delegations to meet with heads of state and government leaders in 14 African countries.¹ The goal was to recruit “Pioneer Countries” and inspire leaders to improve learning for children and youth. During each visit, Commissioner Kikwete presented the *Learning Generation* report, shared country-specific projections and recommendations, and spoke about Tanzania’s transformative experience prioritizing access to quality education.

An initial group of Pioneer Countries, including Ethiopia, Ghana, Tunisia, and Uganda, demonstrated

strong readiness and interest in moving forward. Commission teams visited Ethiopia (April) and Uganda (July) to create stronger awareness and partnerships and prepare next steps. Commissioners continue to play a critical role in sustaining political momentum in all of the committed and interested countries.

At the center of the Pioneer Country Initiative is what we call a “delivery approach” that focuses on delivery of better and faster education results. This approach focuses on performance, and it encourages countries to prioritize education, execute reform and investment plans, and enhance accountability. The delivery approach is paired with a lab process that walks countries through the work of developing highly disciplined implementation plans that help achieve education results as quickly and efficiently as possible. The success of this approach hinges on strong partnerships with civil society.

In Africa, the Commission has provided Pioneer Countries with technical support, knowledge sharing opportunities, and training. In May 2017, we convened a week-long workshop in Nairobi where representatives from government and civil society from 12 African Pioneer Countries learned about the delivery approach and participated in a lab simulation. The expert-led sessions included country readiness assessments, and opportunities to exchange information and learn from the delivery

¹This initial wave of visits took place in low- and middle-income countries and represented a cross-section of regional and linguistic zones: Botswana, Chad, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Tunisia, and Uganda.

approach experiences of Tanzania and Malaysia. The workshop also brought in Commissioners and key partners like the Global Partnership for Education, UNICEF, and UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning.



Photo: Lana Wong/Education Commission

In Latin America, the Commission is collaborating with SUMMA (*Laboratorio de investigación e innovación en educación para América Latina y el Caribe*), the first education research and innovation laboratory for Latin America and the Caribbean created by the Inter-American Development Bank and Fundación Chile, with the support of the Education Ministries of Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay. We are working with SUMMA to promote the delivery approach in select countries, catalyze improvements in data and monitoring, and bring the Latin American experience in education innovation and performance to a wider global audience. In March, the Commission presented the *Learning Generation* report and the Pioneer Country Initiative to key government and donor partners at [SUMMA's launch in Chile](#). Additional Commission delegations and meetings are taking place with leaders in Asia, including Vietnam, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan.

As part of the Pioneer Country Initiative, we amplified Commissioners' high-level delegation visits with media coverage and [social media outreach and engagement](#). In addition to communicating demand for more and better financing, messages showcased countries' progress on educational reforms. Commissioners effectively promoted these messages through [op-eds](#), global briefings such as the one at the 2017 World

Economic Forum on Africa, and social media leveraging international media interviews.

The initiative has also brought attention to a global conversation on results-first thinking in education. The delivery approach has been discussed at international conferences for education researchers and donors, such as the [BE2 \(Building Evidence in Education\) Conference](#) on results-based finance and accountability in April, and at the [RISE Annual Conference](#) in June.

The Pioneer Country Initiative has transformed the Commission's messages into action on the ground. Commissioner Kikwete's visits with political leaders reverberated across a range of ministries, with some embedding the recommendations into their strategic thinking. The leadership of over 20 countries have agreed to take additional steps to increase their commitments to education and implement critical reforms.

I am grateful to [@PresidentABO](#) of Gabon for accepting [@educationcommission](#)'s invitation to join the Pioneer Country Initiative. [#LearningGeneration](#)



Moving forward, the Commission will continue to play a catalytic and supportive role to help countries improve their education performance. We will document the Pioneer Countries' use of the delivery approach and lab process to learn how to apply and scale these concepts in diverse country contexts. As Pioneer Countries begin the hard work of turning words into action, Commissioners will continue to meet with heads of state/government to inspire more countries to make significant education commitments. Country representatives will be invited to observe the lab process and study Pioneer Country experiences, supporting a collaboration and learning exchange.

Perhaps most important, we are reaching out to institutional partners in an effort to continue this initiative beyond the life of the Commission.



Commissioner Jakaya Kikwete greets President Beji Caid Essebsi during the Commission's visit to Tunisia in February 2017 as part of the Pioneer Country Initiative. Photo: Office of the President of Tunisia

We are excited by the prospects of the Pioneer Country Initiative and supportive of the Commission's International Finance Facility for Education, which can release additional – and much needed – funds for the African continent. Tunisians have long been proud to call ourselves 'Education Champions.' I look forward to seeing what can be achieved with the Commission as we work together in common cause.

Beji Caid Essebsi, President of Tunisia



Photo: Albert González Farran/UNAMID

We need to create new models for education to prepare our young people with the skills needed not for yesterday, not for today, but for tomorrow.

Jack Ma, Education Commissioner and Alibaba Group Founder and Executive Chairman

II. Innovation

Successful education systems must develop creative approaches to achieve results. Faced with escalating demands and constrained resources, education must transform if it is to prepare young people for life in 2050 and beyond. In the future, successful systems will be those that maintain a laser-like focus on results while encouraging innovative approaches for achieving these results at all levels of education – from the classroom to the state.



Recommendations

- **Strengthen and diversify the education workforce**
- **Harness technology for teaching and learning**
- **Improve partnerships with non-state actors**



Education Workforce

The Commission held extensive consultations with national governments, civil society organizations, academic and research organizations, donors, foundations, and education innovators to determine the education workforce's most pressing, unmet needs. The consultations confirmed that we should think differently about the education workforce across primary and secondary education. Key recommendations include the need to focus on *how* to implement changes, identify a small number of critical priorities, encourage South-South collaboration, and ensure integration with existing initiatives.

The resulting Education Workforce Initiative, which is preparing to launch in late 2017, will bring fresh thinking to workforce design and implementation. The EWI will examine the roles of teachers and of key support staff, and explore how to expand these roles. This is driven by the recognition that increasing the supply of qualified teachers alone will not be enough to meet the changing demands of this century – the role of the teacher must be redefined. Researchers will also look at how to reinforce existing teachers' motivation and practice, and how to strengthen leadership at school and district levels.

The EWI will kick off with a research phase that draws on evidence from in-depth case studies of how education workforce reform is implemented and examples of innovative approaches. The research will

be shared in an upcoming education workforce report, scheduled for publication in mid-2018.

An EWI international working group will be convened to develop specific proposals for the redesign of professional education roles. The working group will also address the recruitment, training, deployment, and development needs of teachers and support staff. Starting in mid-2018, policymakers will collaborate with the working group to apply EWI research and co-develop country-specific proposals. During this process, the Commission will integrate existing initiatives and identify partners to facilitate country-level stakeholder engagement and implementation.

The lesson is clear: We need quality teachers for quality education.

Teopista Birungi Mayanja, Education Commissioner and Uganda National Teachers' Union Founder

Commissioner Ju-Ho Lee, former Minister of Education in South Korea, will chair the working group which will include representatives from Pioneer Country governments; teachers (through Education International); experts on education, health, and public sector reform; and authorities on 21st century skills and technology. An advisory group will provide specific expertise and help shape outputs. A sustainability plan is in development to secure funding, select a highly-regarded research institution(s) to host and lead this work in conjunction with national partners, and create formal links with the Pioneer Country Initiative and the UNESCO International Teachers Task Force.

While this work is just starting, the ideas behind it are already inspiring partner organizations. For example,

the MasterCard Foundation included the Commission's recommendation to focus broadly on the education workforce, rather than teachers only, in the concept note for its seminal report *Secondary Education in Africa*.

Education Technology

The Commission's work on education technology ("edtech") has focused on identifying advocacy opportunities to support three key recommendations.

First, the Commission recommended broadening Internet access to connect all schools. We are laying the groundwork for collaboration with partners to catalyze greater use of Universal Service Access Funds for education. We will also work with the Groupe Speciale Mobile Association, known as GSMA, to promote digital inclusion messages such as those from the UN Broadband Commission's Report on the digital gender divide.

Expanding digital tools that provide access for the most marginalized, especially children with disabilities, was also a key recommendation of the Commission. One major initiative the Commission supports is the creation of a Global Digital Library, funded by the Norwegian government as part of the [Global Book Alliance](#). The library will expand access to local-language learning content by providing openly licensed, downloadable materials, including formats for those with print disabilities, that allow sharing, electronic use, and large-scale printing, as well as linking to other sources for those materials. The initial focus will be on learning materials that can support children's literacy learning, both supplementary reading materials and textbooks. The Commission also has a partnership with USAID to support further development of the Alliance.

The Commission discussed its recommendations on expanding access to digital tools as part of a panel at the mEducation Alliance symposium in October 2016. We are also supporting partners' innovation prizes for technologies to improve learning for children with disabilities.

Finally, the Commission noted the need to leverage online platforms to encourage the recognition of alternative, online higher education and skills

accreditation. We are facilitating collaboration between governments interested in developing a national education platform and partners of edX – a global online nonprofit learning provider founded by MIT and Harvard and led by Commissioner Anant Agarwal – so that digital content can be tailored to country-specific requirements. The Brookings Institution has reviewed approximately 3,000 innovations in education to identify promising models to "leapfrog" progress in education systems.

In the future, the Commission will identify opportunities to connect Pioneer Country governments to edtech partners that can help reach the most marginalized young people. The Commission will also continue to advocate for global edtech initiatives that align with the Learning Generation recommendations.

Partnerships with Non-State Actors

The Commission believes that engagement with non-state actors – a diverse set of organizations ranging from civil society and foundations, to the business community – can help expand and improve the delivery of quality education. In an effort to put this into practice, we have engaged with a variety of non-state actors over the past year to help advance our recommendations. For example, a consortium of organizations, including Teach For All and the Asia Society, has established an initiative on the global education ecosystem and global public goods in education. Part of their work is to identify actions that advance the Learning Generation recommendations and help strengthen the local capacity to create, monitor, share, and scale up innovation. In addition, the Global Business Coalition for Education was inspired by the Commission to bring together industry leaders and partners in a new Youth Skills and Innovation Initiative. The Initiative aims to close the youth skills gap by encouraging and committing to new, proven, and disruptive approaches.

The Commission has also worked closely with the PAL (People's Action for Learning) Network to raise the value of citizen-led assessments in measuring learning and filling a critical data gap at the country level. Going forward, the Commission will work with other partners to promote a stronger voice from the PAL Network in



Photo: Asian Development Bank

And unless education systems can respond, the mismatch between demand and supply of skills will lead to a growing inequality within and between countries.

Amel Karboul, Education Commissioner, Maghreb Economic Forum Secretary-General, and Former Minister of Tourism of Tunisia

measuring learning, holding governments to account, and encouraging more learning-oriented education reforms.

With respect to finance, the Commission has been working with the private sector to explore potential engagement in the International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd). An initial coordination meeting with private sector representatives was held during the World Bank/IMF Spring Meetings, and follow-up meetings will be organized during the IFFEd's design phase (see Finance chapter). The Commission also briefed the International Education Funders' Group, the Brookings Institution's Center for Universal Education Donor Network, individual foundations, and other private affinity groups on its findings and how the

Commission's recommendations can apply to their grant-making strategies and priorities.

Thanks to partnerships with South Korea's KDI School of Public Policy and Management and the Global Development Learning Network (GDLN), we will be able to reach an even larger audience with the Learning Generation messages. With the help of these partners, we are creating an interactive e-book and e-learning module based on the *Learning Generation* report. Both will be available in mid-2018 and disseminated through the GDLN network of 90 development, research, and learning institutions in 60 countries.



Photo: PAHO

Every child – in every country, in every neighborhood, in every household – has the right not only to a seat in a classroom but to a quality education – starting in the early years of life, the single most important stage of brain development. We need to invest early, invest in quality, and invest in equity.

Anthony Lake, Education Commissioner and UNICEF Executive Director

III. Inclusion

Successful education systems must reach everyone, including the most disadvantaged and marginalized. While the first two transformations will help to ensure more effective learning systems, they will not close the learning gap unless leaders also take additional steps to include and support those at greatest risk of not learning – the poor, the discriminated against, girls, and those facing multiple disadvantages.



Recommendations

- **Prioritize the poor and early years – “progressive universalism”**
- **Invest across sectors to tackle the factors preventing learning**



The Commission calls for all stakeholders to take up a strategy called “progressive universalism”—pursuing quality education for all while prioritizing education in the early years of a child’s life and reaching out to the most disadvantaged populations, where social returns are often the highest. Progressive universalism requires investment across sectors to address educational exclusion.

This strategy works. The experience of South Korea – which provides an important example of progressive universalism in action – is documented in Commissioner Ju-Ho Lee’s forthcoming book *Human Capital and Development: Lessons and Insights from Korea’s Transformation*. This is a continuation of the research from the *Learning Generation* report.

To advance this strategy, the Commission has pursued high-level advocacy by taking these messages to leaders of global institutions and international development agencies. At the country level, Commissioner Kikwete has led efforts to introduce the strategy to Pioneer Country presidents, prime ministers, cabinet officials, development leaders, and civil society leaders. His delegation visits to Pioneer Countries have stressed the critical role that progressive universalism can play in building a Learning Generation.

Numerous international organizations and major corporate foundations working in education have responded to the Commission’s call by launching advocacy campaigns based on progressive universalism or by strategically prioritizing the poor and disadvantaged in their program strategies. Many directly cited the Commission report.

In advocating **progressive universalism**, the Commission recognizes the scarcity of public funding and proposes that funds be allocated to highest return activities and to those least able to pay for services...Progressive universalism has enabled Korea to provide a quality education for all.

Ju-Ho Lee, Education Commissioner and former South Korean Minister of Education

The International Disability and Development Consortium’s report [#CostingEquity: The case for disability-responsive education financing](#) provides a disability perspective on donor and government investments. The report draws on many Commission analyses to support its case. It also utilizes our recommendations – including incorporating higher costs for learners with disabilities, and leveraging cross-sector investment and technology – to advocate for inclusive education.

The **ONE Campaign’s** 2017 [Poverty is Sexist report](#) calls for both increased financing and domestic reforms to improve quality education specifically for girls, whose

educational opportunities are disproportionately affected by poverty. This report, which utilized several analyses from the *Learning Generation* report, is part of the [#GirlsCount](#) movement that pressures leaders to change the trajectories of the 130 million girls out of school.

“When we ask ourselves what breaks the weak, it is not just the Mediterranean wave that submerges the life vest, nor the food convoy that does not make it to the besieged Syrian town. It is the absence of hope – the soul-crushing certainty that there is nothing ahead to plan or prepare for, not even a place in school.”

Gordon Brown, Education Commission Chair and UN Special Envoy for Global Education

Theirworld, an international civil society organization, launched its global [#5for5 campaign in October 2016](#). This campaign explains the importance of prioritizing the early years of a child’s life; 90 percent of a child’s brain develops by the time she reaches five years old. This growing campaign – its films have been viewed by more than one million people – asks world leaders to invest in early childhood development and education and has specifically called attention to the Commission’s appeal that every country in the world provides two years of free, quality pre-schooling to every child. This point was reiterated in Theirworld’s June report [Bright and Early: How financing pre-primary education gives every child a fair start in life](#). The organization also calls on stakeholders to back the Commission’s proposed International Finance Facility for Education to help finance quality pre-primary education programs.

UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning’s Strategic Debate workshop [“Towards progressive universalism: the impact of inequalities on learning achievement”](#) drew on Commission analyses showing the inequities of educational access. The workshop highlighted that when children from poor backgrounds have the same opportunities as those from rich backgrounds, learning gaps narrow significantly. It further identified the importance of changing how public resources are allocated to achieve progressive universalism.

UNICEF, an organization with a strong tradition of focusing on the most marginalized, is using progressive universalism to inform its upcoming Education Strategy and employing the Commission’s recommendations in Regional Education Network meetings, Global Education Team meetings, and with UNICEF National Committees to inform work and funding priorities.

“The *Learning Generation* report has had an important impact on the academic community – stimulating high-quality, evidence-based policy debates. The Education Commission’s message on ‘progressive universalism’ has struck a chord amongst researchers, international policymakers, and NGOs at events hosted by the UK All Party Parliamentary Group on Global Education for All, University of Cambridge’s REAL Centre, and UNESCO’s International Institute for Educational Planning, for example.”

Pauline Rose, Director, Research for Equitable Access and Learning (REAL) Centre, University of Cambridge

The Commission, along with our partners at the international and country levels, will continue to catalyze global agendas and support local actions based on the principles of progressive universalism. On September 20, 2017, at the United Nations headquarters in New York, the Commission participated in an event with the Secretary-General to take stock of progress towards achieving SDG 4, with a focus on the roadblocks to inclusion that confront the most vulnerable and marginalized. The event was framed around the Commission’s Learning Generation recommendations.

Education is one of the surest means we have to end extreme poverty in our time.

Jim Kim, Education Commissioner and World Bank Group President

Refugees

For Syrian youths who have been forced from their homes and have lost everything, education is about more than qualifications or test scores – it embodies their hope for the future.

Helle Thorning-Schmidt, Education Commissioner and Save the Children Chief Executive

According to the [2016 UNICEF Uprooted report](#), there are 50 million refugee or migrant children in the world. These children face higher hurdles to gain access to a quality education – refugee children are five times more likely to be out of school than other children.

Organizations around the world have taken up the Commission’s recommendations to tackle this enormous problem. For example, Save the Children UK’s *Restoring Hope, Rebuilding Futures* report (June 2017) challenges donor governments and international agencies to do better in reaching South Sudanese refugee children in Uganda. It sets out a plan of action which, if implemented, could deliver good quality universal pre-primary, primary, and secondary education for these children.

Save the Children UK supports the Commission’s proposal for the IFFEd as one way to finance this work, stating that “[s]uch a mechanism would help to cut through the fragmented and often competing financing and delivery mechanisms that are supposed to support protracted humanitarian crises. Effective coordination and pooled resourcing would help to facilitate engagement from private sector donors, who could play a critical role in northern Uganda” (p. 3).

The Commission traveled with Save the Children UK’s team on a joint mission to Uganda to examine schooling for South Sudanese refugees. They also discussed the Commission’s work with the Ugandan government to develop a plan to educate all the country’s children, both refugees and citizens. The Education Cannot Wait (ECW) fund is now preparing to support a more comprehensive multi-year strategy to the refugee response, which bridges the humanitarian-development divide.

The crisis in South Sudan is just one of many humanitarian catastrophes that disrupt children’s education. The Commission’s proposed IFFEd, in conjunction with the ECW fund, would work to address these dire situations with additional innovative funding. In a speech at the UN Economic and Social Council Chamber, Commission Chair Gordon Brown emphasized the importance of this new funding approach to provide education in countries with the largest numbers of refugees and displaced boys and girls.



Photo: Eileen Burke/Save the Children



Photo: Lana Wong/Education Commission

Now we look to national governments to expand their financial commitment to education. And where governments do step up and commit to expanded education financing, we believe this pledge should trigger support from the international community.

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Education Commissioner and GAVI Chair and **Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi**, Education Commissioner and Minister of State for Tolerance, United Arab Emirates

IV. Finance

Successful education systems require more and better investment. This investment must be based upon the primary responsibility of national governments to ensure that every child has access to quality education, free from pre-primary to secondary levels. It must be supported by the resources and leadership of international partners, prioritizing their investment in countries that demonstrate commitment to invest and reform.



Recommendations

- **Mobilize more and better domestic resources for education**
- **Increase the international financing of education and improve its effectiveness**
- **Establish a Multilateral Development Bank investment mechanism for education**
- **Ensure leadership and accountability for the Learning Generation**



The Commission has called for a compact between developing countries and the international community. Low- and middle-income countries commit to increasing domestic financing and reforming education to ensure that resources are used more effectively. In turn, the international community stands ready to support countries that live up to these commitments by offering access to international financing and other forms of assistance.

Various countries have been examining some of the Commission's detailed background work on domestic taxes and innovative financing. For example, Rwanda's new sector plan includes proposals for new levies to help finance education based on Commission research. The promotion of domestic reform and financing has been at the heart of our Pioneer Country Initiative. For each of the high-level visits, we prepared a country-specific report highlighting necessary reforms and the total financing required to meet the Learning Generation objectives. The Commission developed its costing model further to provide specific estimates of investment and financing in Pioneer Countries. We are working to make the costing model more accessible for external users and to find a permanent home for this valuable resource.

The Commission brought countries and donor partners together for an African Ministers of Finance Roundtable in April 2017 to increase domestic and international financial support for countries that are ready to accelerate education reform. We are mobilizing wider awareness and financial support from international partners to develop a sound institutional basis. Developing country governments have responded positively. Leaders from more than 20 countries across Africa and Asia formalized this in letters agreeing to become education reform champions and calling for international support for the IFFEd.

The Commission's wider call to innovate and increase international education financing has gained considerable traction. Education in emergencies received a record percentage of humanitarian funding last year, more than 50 percent greater than the year prior (but still short of the Commission's goal). Education finance was a key theme of major global events such as the SDG Action Day in June 2017 and the high-level meeting on education at the UN General Assembly in September 2017. Donor agencies, including the UK's Department of International Development (DFID), have reported using the Commission's recommendations to help guide new strategy development, and civil society actors started a single education financing campaign platform based on the Commission's recommendations: increased domestic financing, donors contributing 15 percent of aid to education, and a shift of global funding to multilateral efforts.

But even with this additional domestic and international financing effort, funding would fall short. Therefore, the Commission's central innovation for financing education for all has been the proposed [International Finance Facility for Education](#) – IFFEd.

Commissioner Strive Masiyiwa explained how the IFFEd can unlock new streams of funding in a [May op-ed](#) in the online news outlet *Quartz*:

“The Facility works on two levels. First, it pools donor funds to act as guarantees for multilateral banks. These guarantees will allow banks to borrow more money from capital markets and create a new stream of education financing for developing countries.

“Second, the Facility helps countries escape the ‘debt trap’ of using high-interest loans to realize their education goals. This is particularly important for countries like Ghana, Tanzania, and Cote d’Ivoire that are gaining economic ground and losing the ability to qualify for grants or low-interest or interest-free loans. The Facility will mobilize funds from donors to subsidize or pay down interest. Countries will be able to pay the loans back on favorable terms over several decades while they reap the economic benefits of a more skilled population.”

The proposed IFFEd is the product of an extensive and ongoing consultation process. Through meetings and dynamic debates, dialogues and discussions with civil society actors, including the Global Campaign for Education, the proposals for the IFFEd have been shaped by a diverse set of stakeholders over the past year. This often involved a healthy process of hearing and reconciling disparate viewpoints. It required reaching consensus with the various multilateral development banks on the use of guarantees as a basis to expand their financing for education. The Commission presented the IFFEd to the presidents of all major multilateral development banks at the January World Economic Forum in Davos and at the April World Bank/IMF Spring Meetings. Technical experts from donor agencies provided advice, knowledge, and contributions to the more detailed design of the IFFEd.

In creating the IFFEd proposal, the Commission was insistent that it should complement existing education funding efforts and strengthen their impact. We worked with donors and international organizations such as the Education Cannot Wait fund and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) to clarify how the IFFEd would do this. Commissioners Gordon Brown, Julia Gillard, Jakaya Kikwete, and Anthony Lake [held a high-level](#)

[discussion](#) on the complementarity of the three funds at the Center for Global Development in April 2017.

The Commission also worked with partners on a [publicly available document](#) clarifying how the funds fit together and presented the IFFEd proposal to the GPE board in June.

Media were key to building support among influencers and the public around the world. The IFFEd’s potential was explained in a CNN [op-ed](#) by Commissioners Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi on International Women’s Day, an [op-ed](#) by Commission Chair Gordon Brown on World Refugee Day, and an [essay](#) by Commissioner Strive Masiyiwa in *Quartz* for a special series on innovation in Africa, among other placements. In addition, [many stakeholders used social media to call for the IFFEd](#).

“At our inception, the Commission was given permission to be bold. Our financing plan is just that and destined to reshape the education financing landscape. We look to the international community to show this same bold courage through action.”
Lawrence Summers, Education Commissioner and Harvard University President Emeritus

A broad range of groups – donors, civil society, and international organization like the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee – were instrumental in building momentum for the IFFEd proposal. The July meeting of the 2017 Group of 20 member states in Hamburg galvanized the energy of these education finance advocates (see Public Campaigning box). Growing pressure on world leaders contributed to the IFFEd’s high-level recognition in the G20 Declaration – a major advocacy victory originally introduced by UN Secretary-General António Guterres during the G20 Ministers of Foreign Affairs meeting.

In the coming year, the Commission will continue to advance the financing compact and emphasize the urgent need for more effective investment through the Pioneer Country Initiative (see Performance chapter). Activities on the international finance side will be focused on increasing financing for ECW, and supporting GPE’s requested 2018 replenishment target to reach \$2 billion annually by 2020. We will also work with donors and dedicated teams at multilateral development banks to continue designing and to launch the IFFEd.



Backstage at the July 2017 Global Citizen Festival in Hamburg (from L to R): President and First Lady of Argentina Mauricio Macri and Juliana Awada; Commissioner Julia Gillard; Commission Co-Convener and Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg; Commissioners Helle Thorning-Schmidt and Shakira Mebarak; Education Advocate Wongani Nyirenda; Commission Chair Gordon Brown Photo: Global Citizen

Public Campaigning in Support of the Learning Generation

In support of the Commission’s recommendation for more and better education financing, civil society organizations joined efforts and mobilized for several months to call for the establishment of the IFFEd. They did so while also calling for increased funding for existing initiatives such as the Education Cannot Wait fund and the Global Partnership for Education.

More than 30 major global and national nonprofits and campaigning organizations including Theirworld, ONE, Global Citizen, Save the Children, Avaaz, Islamic Relief, Voluntary Service Overseas, and World Vision, stood together and signed a [joint letter they delivered](#) to the European Union Humanitarian Aid Commissioner Christos Stylianides in March 2017 asking for the G20’s support of the IFFEd proposal.

In the immediate lead-up to the G20 Summit, we engaged spokespeople and a cohort of Commissioners and Co-Convener – among them Commission Co-Convener and Norwegian Prime Minister [Erna Solberg](#), Commissioners Julia Gillard, Helle Thorning-Schmidt, Jakaya Kikwete, [Shakira Mebarak](#), and Chair [Gordon Brown](#) who spoke at the Global Citizen Festival in Hamburg, which was streamed live to millions of people around the world. During the Summit, millions more people were reached through [media interviews](#) by Commissioners Mebarak and Brown.

People around the world joined this call for action. By the eve of the July 2017 G20 Summit in Hamburg, campaigners [handed messages from over 145,000 people](#) to the G20 asking leaders to make the right choice in support of education. They soon learned that their voices were heard when the [G20 Leader’s Declaration](#) acknowledged the recommendation to establish the IFFEd, and stated leaders’ agreement to advance this proposal under the Argentinian G20 Presidency in 2018.

Moving forward, campaigners remain committed to seeing the IFFEd proposal through and will continue to mobilize. The Commission and our partners are already focused on next year’s G20, which will highlight education. And with the newly increased public awareness of the need to urgently fund global education, the outlook is promising.

Timeline

2016

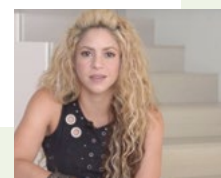
SEPTEMBER



Learning Generation report launches at the United Nations with over 30,000 people participating (in person and online).

Twenty-two Commissioners present the report to the UN Secretary-General.

A video featuring Shakira Mebarak and other Commissioners reaches more than six million people.



OCTOBER

UNICEF's Global Education Team discusses the *Learning Generation* report and implications for UNICEF's work with representatives from its Headquarters, Regional, and Country Offices.

Commissioner Patricio Meller introduces the Learning Generation to Chilean education experts.

[Commissioner Larry Summers calls for innovative education financing in opinion piece on Medium.](#)

NOVEMBER



Commissioner Jakaya Kikwete meets Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, kicking off 14-country tour in Africa to launch the Pioneer Country Initiative.

Commissioner Kristin Clemet, Chair Gordon Brown, and Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg introduce the Commission report to Civita policy audience in Oslo. Commission Chair Brown meets with Norwegian teachers' union.

DECEMBER



[Commissioner Kailash Satyarthi convenes Nobel Laureates and Leaders Summit in New Delhi to mobilize support for children's rights and global education.](#)

UN General Assembly adopts two resolutions welcoming Education Commission findings and encouraging action on education.

2017

JANUARY

At the World Economic Forum in Davos, Commission Chair Gordon Brown and Commissioner Shakira Mebarak call for more and better international financing for education, and Chair Brown introduces education financing recommendations to presidents of all major multilateral development banks.

Ministers of Education from Pioneer Countries discuss the next steps for creating the Learning Generation in London.



Norwegian State Secretary Laila Bokhari says at the UN: "As highlighted in the Education Commission report, increased financing for education is needed for

the largest expansion of education opportunity in modern history: creating a Learning Generation."



[Commissioner Helle Thorning-Schmidt delivers keynote address on the Commission's findings on 'Teaching, Testing, Talent and Technology' at the Education World Forum in London.](#)

Commission Chair Gordon Brown provides testimony to UK Parliament International Development Committee Inquiry on aid to education.

FEBRUARY

[Commissioner Baela Raza Jamil speaks at the UNESCO E9 Ministerial meeting in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The resulting Dhaka declaration includes education financing language.](#)

Commissioners Amel Karboul and Jakaya Kikwete meet with Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi to discuss the Learning Generation vision and implementation.



MARCH



Commissioners Sheikha Lubna and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala sound the alarm for increasing finance for girls' education (CNN).

More than 30 major charities and organizations – including Theirworld, Save the Children, ONE, Avaaz, and Global Citizen – [call on world leaders to help launch a new way of providing the funding](#) needed to educate millions of children and give them a better chance in life.



Commissioners Theo Sowa and Jakaya Kikwete share the Learning Generation vision with Ghanaian President Nana Akufo-Addo in Accra.

Commissioner Patricio Meller introduces Latin American countries to Commission findings at SUMMA launch in Santiago.



APRIL

Commissioner Aliko Dangote holds preparatory meeting in Nigeria before presentation of Learning Generation recommendations to government officials.

Presidents of all major multilateral development banks agree to advance work on the IFFEd proposal.

Global Partnership for Education launches replenishment target in accordance with Commission's recommendation of \$2 billion annually by 2020.

The first phase of Pioneer Country visits in Africa concludes. All 14 countries endorse the Learning Generation, and commit to becoming Education Champions and making education a top priority in their domestic budgets.

Ministers of Finance discuss the IFFEd proposal at World Bank Spring Meetings.



Commission Chair Gordon Brown and Commissioners Jakaya Kikwete, Julia Gillard, and Anthony Lake discuss the new, complementary architecture of international financing for education at the Center for Global Development in Washington, D.C.

World Bank CEO supports the IFFEd and UN Deputy Secretary-General calls for more and better education finance at the Global Business Coalition for Education event in Washington, D.C. [UK's DFID Permanent Secretary says, "For my money, this is the best proposition out there at the moment."](#)

MAY

Commissioner Strive Masiyiwa argues in *Quartz* essay that the [key to innovating education in Africa will be to fix its financing](#).

Commissioner Shakira Mebarak launches global petition calling for the G20 to put education on the global agenda and fund it through the IFFEd.

Commissioner Felipe Calderón calls for increased and better education investments in [El País](#).

[Learning Generation workshop](#) for government and civil society leaders brings together African Pioneer Countries in Nairobi, Kenya. Commissioners Amel Karboul and Teopista Birungi Mayanja participate.



JUNE

[Youth leaders come together for Y20 Summit 2017](#) in Berlin and call on G20 leaders to support the IFFEd proposal and funding for education.

Commissioner Theo Sowa holds webinar with hundreds of representatives from civil society organizations to discuss engagement with the Commission's work.

Commissioner Ju-Ho Lee introduces Learning Generation recommendations to Vietnam's Minister of Education.

JUNE

Pioneer Country Ministers convene at the United Nations during President of the General Assembly's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Action event.

Additional civil society consultations and coordination meetings on education financing take place.

JULY

Petition signed by over 145,000 people calling for the establishment of the International Finance Facility for Education delivered at the G20 Summit in Hamburg.

Co-Convener and Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg, Commissioner Shakira Mebarak, and Chair Gordon Brown call for establishing the International Finance Facility for Education and Commissioner Julia Gillard and youth leaders make call to action for GPE replenishment at Global Citizen Festival in Hamburg.

Commissioner and former European Commission President José Manuel Barroso advises Commission on the next stages of IFFEd's development.

The G20 acknowledges the proposed IFFEd and agrees to advance the proposal.

Uganda prepares for the lab phase of the *delivery approach* – a methodology that can help countries deliver better and faster education results.

Commissioner Amel Karboul is selected to give TED talk in Milan on the Learning Generation in October 2017.

AUGUST

Tunisia begins preparations for delivery approach lab.



Commissioner Ju-Ho Lee travels to Myanmar to meet with State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi to introduce the Learning Generation vision.

Commissioner Graça Machel highlights taking action on the Learning Generation at Women Advancing Africa Forum in Tanzania and mobilizes more than 70 African women leaders to sign letter in support of the proposed IFFEd.

SEPTEMBER



Commissioner Baela Raza Jamil discusses new approaches to monitor learning globally at the UKFIET 2017 Conference on Learning and Teaching for Sustainable Development in Oxford.

Commission reports on progress towards creating the Learning Generation at UN Secretary-General's education event during the UN General Assembly.



Facilitator Linda Ezekiel introduces the delivery approach to government and civil society leaders from 12 African countries at the Learning Generation workshop in Nairobi, May 2017. Photo: Lana Wong/Education Commission

I believe that the greatest responsibility of politics is to improve the availability and quality of education globally for the sake of our next generation and for the future of society.

Yuriko Koike, Education Commissioner and Governor of Tokyo

Outreach: amplifying the call for a Learning Generation

Communication and outreach play a pivotal role in the Commission's strategy to reach leaders and build public engagement to get all children in school and learning.

The 2016 *Learning Generation* report launch event was attended by more than 500 people, and another 30,000 watched online via United Nations TV and Facebook Live. Many of the Commission's more than 300 partners from 105 countries were in attendance. Commissioners helped frame the Learning Generation vision with multiple op-eds, interviews, and speeches. A video featuring Shakira Mebarak and other Commissioners reached more than six million people generating over 1.2 million views.

Since the report launch, the Commission's proposals and messages have been widely disseminated and referenced, with sustained uptake:

- Commissioners authored numerous opinion pieces in global media outlets advocating for the Learning Generation and making a compelling case for the establishment of the IFFEd. These articles were, in turn, widely shared in social media and generated healthy discussions among international audiences.
- There have been many instances of uptake of Commission messages by prominent world leaders. For example, World Bank CEO Kristalina Georgieva and UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed have used speeches and social media to call for immediate action to increase investments in education and to establish the IFFEd.
- At international conferences and gatherings, the Commission presented the Learning Generation vision, discussed specific transformations and recommendations, and engaged in productive dialogue with stakeholders across sectors. One such instance was the World Economic Forum on Africa in Durban, South Africa where Commissioner Kikwete discussed the IFFEd and the Pioneer Country work at a press conference.
- Throughout this period, we also engaged diverse audiences on social media as the number of followers on our channels grew to more than 100,000. Our messages were seen and shared by millions on social media. This was achieved by leveraging our own presence as well as our partners' and Commissioners' vast social media networks.
- Research organizations continue to build on the critical work that informed the *Learning Generation* report. For example, in January 2017, the British Academy hosted a third high-level roundtable with academics and policymakers to discuss the report findings. Much of the Commission's background research has been expanded and is forming the basis for further research.

In the coming year, the Commission will continue to rely on strategic communications to advance the rollout of the Learning Generation recommendations, supporting both targeted advocacy and broader engagement.

Moving Forward

The Education Commission is invigorated by the progress made towards turning our report recommendations into action over the past year. The Commission's boldness in pursuing the SDG agenda has garnered the support of many partners from government, civil society, and business. We are more confident than ever that we can dramatically expand access to quality education and achieve a Learning Generation in our lifetime.

In the coming months, we will double down on efforts to catalyze the performance, innovation, inclusion, and finance transformations that will make the Learning Generation possible and ensure that the recommendations are taken forward by actors in the international community.

The Commission will work tirelessly to increase the number of Pioneer Countries committed to critical education reforms and investments. Our Education Workforce Initiative provides an opportunity to help redefine the role of educators and give teachers the support they need to succeed. Recognizing the heightened challenges faced by refugees and other vulnerable populations, we will promote progressive universalism so that all children and young people can get a quality education. We will continue our efforts to establish the IFFEd and promote full funding of initiatives that complement its efforts. Along the way, we will pursue partnerships, policies, and powerful new ideas that align with our recommendations.

Our goal is to achieve SDG 4 and get all children in school and learning. We know it is possible but we need everyone – policymakers, business and civil society leaders, teachers and education administrators, and the general public – to band together and make this a reality.



Photo: Riccardo Savi/Getty Images

This is how we became the generation that dares to lift our heads,
envision a horizon that beckons, begs us to reach for the sky
For a world that rewards our hunger with inspiration
Our existence with education
In the fight against erasure we've become the generation that
conjures a world without the bomb
That rises above the meaning of sorrow
Which is to say we envision a world where you reach your arm
out and have seven billion reach back

Excerpt from *Untitled* written and performed by poet and activist Emtithal Mahmoud
at the Education Commission Report Launch, September 2016

The Commission is a catalyst for action. We are grateful to the many organizations and partners – too many to mention in one report – that have worked alongside us to create the [Learning Generation](#).

Learn more about our recommendations, partners, additional progress, and the many activities of the Education Commission on our website: educationcommission.org

the Education Commission

The International
Commission
on Financing Global
Education Opportunity



Cover photo: Asian Development Bank