



**United  
Nations**

Department of  
Economic and  
Social Affairs

***Key findings from the expert group meeting on  
“Population, education and sustainable development”***

**CPD 56 Informal briefing  
New York, 27 October 2022**

# EGM Population, education and sustainable development

- Held virtually 6&7 September 2022
- 20+ experts from UN entities and research institutions
- Observers from Member States and civil society

## Topics covered

- Relationships between education and different elements of population change and the ICPD Programme of Action
- Progress toward related goals of the 2030 Agenda
- Emerging issues including impact of and recovery from the pandemic, access to digital technologies and skills, and strengthened emphasis on lifelong learning

# Progress toward SDG4

- Even before the pandemic, recent progress towards universal schooling had been far too slow to meet the aspiration of SDG 4
  - Primary school completion rates in low-income countries were only on track to reach 2/3 by 2030
  - About half of children globally achieving minimum proficiency in reading
- Dramatic increase in girls' school enrollment, with gender parity reached globally in primary and secondary enrollment
- However, the poorest girls have the lowest attainment, worst learning outcomes and biggest gender gaps

# Impact of COVID-19

- Interrupted schooling for millions of children around the world
- Exposed disparities in the quality of education between and within countries, including in access to digital technologies
- Impact on learning outcomes context-dependent and still under study
- Importance of preparing resilient systems for the future
  - Reinforce risk-informed educational planning
  - Integrate equity-oriented analysis

# Education and ICPD Programme of Action priorities

- Gender equality; opportunities for girls, adolescents and youth; sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights; prevention of early marriage and childbearing
- Gender norms and poverty as key drivers of early marriage, early childbearing, and lack of access to education or school dropout
- Sexuality education and impacts on health, well-being and other outcomes
- Macro-level: expanding quantity of education without improving quality weakens the association of education with fertility decline

# Health, ageing, lifelong learning

- Education – particularly tertiary – is associated with better health outcomes and longevity
- To improve the life chances of people at all ages, programmes in lifelong learning for reskilling and upskilling, incorporating holistic “21st-century skills”, must be prioritized

# Education and international migration

- Access of migrants to education opportunities in host countries
- Recognition of education and skills to avoid “brain waste”
- Migration for education
- Emigration of skilled professionals educated in origin countries
- Access to education for refugee children
- Some countries/regions are dealing with many of these issues as both origins and destinations of migrants



# Importance of data

- Timely data on education and population needed across countries and regions and at all geographical levels, for planning school infrastructure, teacher workforce, and identifying at-risk populations
- Data disaggregated by age, sex, educational attainment, and other key characteristics provides the evidence base that is needed for building inclusive societies