**Common Policy Agenda on Learning\*: Emerging Policy Priorities***\* Title to be determined*

The following is a list of emerging policy priorities based on an ongoing review of the latest research. Each priority area is followed by examples of suggested strategies. The list is by no means exhaustive. The aim is to identify a few key policies and related strategies that (a) evidence strongly suggests will contribute to improve learning for girls, boys, young women and young men in low-income countries and (b) have a strong likelihood of attaining broad-based buy-in and support from the global education community.

We would welcome your feedback on the list below. In particular, do you agree that the proposed areas would have a significant impact on improving learning outcomes for *both* girls and boys? Where different approaches are required for girls and boys/young women and men, please specify. Are there other areas that you suggest should be included or further explored—and do you have research that you could share to support these suggestions?

***Emerging Policy Priorities and Examples of Related Strategies:***

1. **Build the foundation for early learning success: Greater attention and support for early childhood development and early grade literacy**

* Adopt a holistic life-stage view that takes into account necessary investments outside of education policy to prepare children—especially girls—for school, such as investments in nutrition, health, water and sanitation and women’s literacy.
* Focus on early grade literacy, including training teachers on how to reach reading, maximizing amount of time spent engaged in literacy activities, conducting reading assessments at early grades and providing appropriate level reading materials. This includes understanding and responding to the reasons that girls are performing below boys in some low-income countries, such as techniques to increase girls’ participation in the classroom.
* Prioritize mother tongue language of instruction during the early years in school whenever feasible, particularly important for girls and other marginalized groups who have less informal access to the language taught in school.

1. **Improve the quality of teaching**

* Hire locally as closely linked social networks have shown to have a positive effect on teachers’ motivation and attendance. This includes an emphasis on recruiting more female teachers as the presence of female teachers has shown to boost enrollment and improve learning outcomes for girls. Greater outreach to recruit students from rural areas to enroll in teacher education programs can also help provide a critically need cadre of trained teachers in many rural areas.
* Prepare teachers appropriately, which may include flexible training programs to accommodate teachers’ time constraints and bridge programs for teachers, especially female teachers, to earn additional credentials required to teach at secondary levels.
* Support and motivate teachers, including improving work environment and living arrangements of teachers, offering continuous professional development and integrating teachers into the local community. Strategies to support female teachers include providing mentoring opportunities between more experienced and less experienced female teachers and recruiting and deploying female teachers in pairs.
* Monitor teaching and learning process continuously. Simple, low-cost assessments systems are needed that provide information at the individual, school and system level. While more sex and age-disaggregated information is needed, schools and governments must also have the capacity to collect, analyze and use the data.
* Develop safety policies, gender training and codes of conduct. Interventions, such as clearly communicated and enforced codes and conduct and gender sensitivity training for educational personnel are needed to ensure girls’ safety within the learning environment.
* Strengthen school leadership and management. Changes in teaching practices must be supported and enforced by qualified head teachers and principals who are equipped to lead and manage schools.

1. **Strengthen the relevancy of skills and link between post-primary education and job opportunities**

* Take a holistic approach as young people require a comprehensive package of educational services that include academic, market-based vocational skills and life skills, such as communication, HIV/AIDS awareness and conflict prevention skills.
* Strengthen the link between education and labor market opportunities. Post-primary education should teach marketable and remunerative skills—and ensure that girls are not tracked for traditionally lower-paying vocations. It should focus on transferable skills that prepare young people for a wide range of work opportunities. This requires the direct engagement of the business community and other relevant partners, such as in establishing skills standards and developing demand-driven curricula.
* Offer a diverse and flexible menu of learning options to respond to young people’s realities and needs, such as childcare for young mothers. Multiple systems of delivery will require greater coordination among ministries, validation of skills and enhanced fluidity between the formal and non-formal education sector.
* Expand and improve second chance programs, which are critical for young people who haven’t had the opportunity to finish—or even begin—school. This is critical for young women who have been disproportionately excluded. Strategies must take into account the reasons that young people are not in school. They should be flexible in delivery to allow for other work and domestic responsibilities, such as childcare; lead to recognized qualifications; and allow graduates to enter/re-enter the formal school system.

1. **Improve accountability and assessment systems**

* *Stand-alone area or strategy to reach other priorities?*

1. **Contribute to global knowledge base of what works and doesn’t work to inform policy and practice**

* Increase research and analysis on the links between gender equity, equality and learning—and the intersection with other factors of marginalization. Improve the availability of sex and age-disaggregated data to inform policy and decision-making
* Implement National Education Accounts (a complete overview of all resources that come into the education sector and their uses) in order to have access to basic information about resources and resource use within the education system and design policies and programs to improve those systems. Ensure the accounts are designed to incorporate data on learning outcomes and sex-disaggregated data.
* Build the evidence base of what works and doesn’t work , including conducting more impact evaluations and learning how to scale up promising practices. Data must not only be collected but documented and shared among the practitioner, academic and policy-making communities.
* *These are just a few as there are many important areas that require further research and investigation. What issues would you prioritize for additional research and analysis?*