





Leaders for Education
A Regional Alliance

Shaping the future of Latin America and the Caribbean together

unicef
for every child

The opportunity

The Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region is at a pivotal moment to build a prosperous future for the next generations, though this heavily depends on one variable: **education**. Investing in education is the most cost-effective way to shape the region's future.

UNICEF is seeking ambitious partners who, like us, see that there is a rare opportunity to build on the momentum from the educational innovations that resulted from a global lockdown - to uphold the right to quality education for all to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4), and to prepare children and adolescents with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive.

For this to become a reality in LAC, we need to act now and enable rapid recuperation of learning losses and accelerate access to quality education for every child and adolescent. Only through collective action we can drive change at scale, transform education and, by extension, grow the region's future economy. Coming together, we can accelerate and amplify investment, drive innovation, and scale new ideas and solutions to make sure that every child and adolescent learn.

A new kind of education is within our grasp – one that is adaptable, flexible, and relevant to the needs of all children and adolescents across all contexts. **But we need to act now.**



Investing in education provides an **exceptional return on investment** and has a **transformative effect** on the lives of children and their communities.

An additional year of education yields about **9% increase** in earnings for an individual per year, with a significant impact on girls.

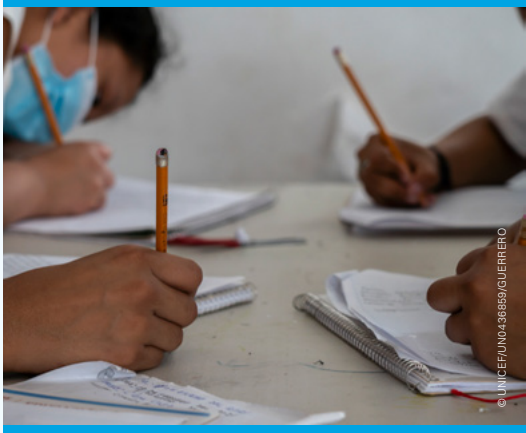
The challenge

The arrival of COVID-19 exacerbated the region's pre-existing learning crisis, knocking children and adolescents off course from their learning journeys. We are facing critical challenges in three interdependent stages of child development that will determine a child's ability to reach his/her full potential – to be a productive member of society and achieve shared prosperity for the region.

Children are missing out on early childhood education (ECE) during a critical period for brain development. ECE provides the essential building blocks to acquire foundational skills later in life and consequently successfully transition into primary education. Even before COVID-19, the gross ECE enrollment rate was 46.6% in the region, with coverage for children from 0 to 2 years being just 18.6% while for children from 3 to 6 years at 77.5%.

Children and adolescents lacked foundational and advanced skills and had low learning outcomes, even before COVID-19. Now it is worse. Before the pandemic, almost half of 10-year-old children suffered from learning poverty, where they were not able to read a simple text. By 2022, we estimated that as much as four in five (80%) sixth graders in this region had learning poverty. These severe learning losses represent a potential loss of future earnings between US$1.5 and US$2.3 trillion (16%–25% of the regional GDP).

Adolescents lack the skills needed for the future. Adolescents' ability to successfully transition from school to productive lives was also affected by COVID-19. Prior to March 2020, an estimated 9.7 million adolescents of secondary school age were out of school. Of youth aged 15–24, 24% were not in education, employment, or training, with young girls facing the biggest challenges. Only 33% were on track to acquire digital skills to carry out basic computer related activities. In a 2022 survey, adolescents and young people stated that the business sector was a key player in their transition to the labour market; however, almost one-third considered that they did not have the skills required by the sector.


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If we do not act now, the learning crisis will turn into a **learning catastrophe**, impacting generations to come. Learners are facing drastic education budget cuts as governments are not sufficiently reflecting the gravity of the learning crisis in their programmes and plans to recover the learning losses.

Urgent investment in education is needed.


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Leaders for Education: A Regional Alliance to transform education

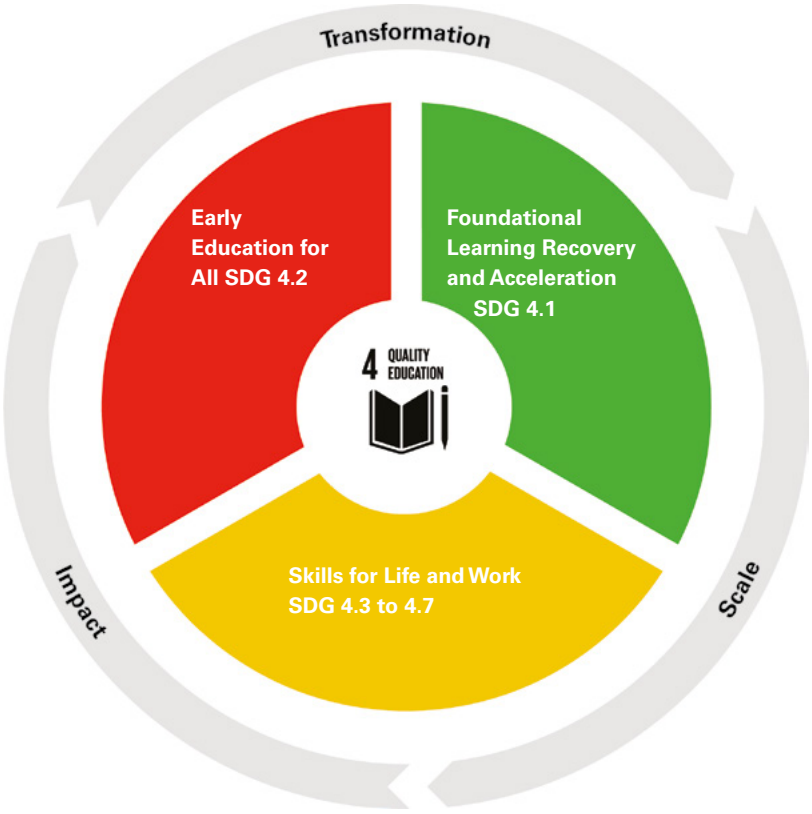
"Leaders for Education" is a UNICEF-led alliance that seeks to address the learning crisis worsened by COVID-19 in the region through the power of collective action and investment. We call on leaders from the business, philanthropic, and public sectors to join us with resources, expertise, and influence to drive the necessary investment, advocacy, and knowledge needed for LAC to urgently transform education at scale.

The Alliance aims to ensure lifelong learning opportunities for all, from early childhood to adolescence, helping to accelerate the achievement of SDG4 in the region. United in action, this will mark the first time a regional concerted effort can be rolled out at scale across the learning cycle of children and adolescents. UNICEF has curated a series of three investment cases across the learning cycle that include investment, influence, and impact opportunities for:

i. Early Education for All
ii. Foundational Learning Recovery and Acceleration
iii. Skills for Life and Work

The IMPACT we can achieve together

Leaders for Education



- Increased % of children in ECE
- Increased # of teachers and other essential ECE workforce trained to meet national quality standards for ECE
- Increased # of countries improving quality of ECE services by improving budget and governance processes

- Increased # of out-of-school children re-enrolled in the education system
- Increased # of children that access digital learning solutions and tools
- At least an additional 2.25 million 10-year-old children able to read at the right level, reducing the learning poverty index by half

- Decreased % of youth not in education, employment, or training
- Increased % of youth with technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship enabled by ICT skills
- Increased % of countries institutionalizing holistic skills development for adolescents to thrive

How YOU can shape the future of education with UNICEF

Investing in quality education pays enormous dividends. By joining the Leaders for Education Regional Alliance, you will transform education for children and adolescents in LAC. You will ensure that the next generation is equipped with the necessary skills to realize their dreams and lead the way to shared prosperity, peace, and equality. Through investing in children and adolescents today, you can shape the future of this region for generations to come through:

Impact at scale. Working together with UNICEF, business, philanthropic, and public sector leaders, we can achieve impact a scale through evidence-based solutions. The Alliance builds on UNICEF's operational capacity for education with footprints in 36 countries and territories in the region – the largest of any international provider of humanitarian and development programming – by unlocking our ability to convene different actors in the region to strengthen education systems in a sustainable and impactful way.

Community. Joining and working alongside like-mind peers and leveraging the power of the collective to deliver impact at scale. This means opportunities to:

- Connect to other regional and global leaders looking to make an impact in education
- Access national, regional, and global events
- Co-finance evidence-based interventions with other Alliance members
- Join an annual members' meeting
- Access exclusive communications and reports
- Visit UNICEF programmes supported by the Alliance
- Make your commitments visible

Thought leadership. Leveraging opportunities to use the power of personal and organizational expertise and influence to:

- Provide your expertise and know-how to tackle key educational challenges
- Lend your voice to advocate for and influence change to transform education
- Engage your networks in the Alliance to galvanize investments
- Innovate by pioneering and testing innovative solutions