

Only 0.5% of global annual spending on education takes place in the poorest countries

The new Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report released today by UNESCO estimates annual education spending by governments, households and donors at S\$4.7 trillion worldwide. Of that, US\$3 trillion (65%) is spent in high income countries and just US\$22 billion (0.5%) in low income countries, even though the two have a roughly equal number of school-age children.

The report, *Building bridges not walls*, which monitors progress towards the internationally agreed Sustainable Development Goal for education ([SDG4](#)), also shows another imbalance in global education spending: On average globally, households are picking up one fifth of the bill for education. This can rise to far more in some countries, with households covering 50% of the education bill in El Salvador, 49% in Indonesia and 45% in Peru.

Of particular concern is that households are picking up far more of the education bill in even poorer countries. Data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics show that the amount households are contributing in Uganda is equivalent to 3.9% of GDP and accounts for 63% of total education spending in the country. In most rich countries, most households' contributions are equivalent to less than 1% of GDP.

Manos Antoninis, Director of the GEM Report said: *“Households are covering the costs of every day predictable items such as textbooks, supplies or transport. But in poorer countries, where public education systems are weaker, households may also be footing the bill for informal fees, private school tuition or supplementary private tuition. This can have grave consequences for how equally education is being provided to all.”*

A large proportion of households' education costs are for higher education. In 34 countries with data, tertiary education accounted for 30% of total household education spending but the share was over 50% in Chile and the Republic of Korea, almost 70% in Latvia and Lithuania and 74% in the United States. Among middle income countries, tertiary education absorbs 70% of total expenditure in Mongolia and Ukraine.

The 2019 GEM Report looks at the theme of migration and displacement, which is crucial to leaving no-one behind, one of the underlying refrains in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It shows that the \$800 million spent on refugee education in 2016 only filled a third of the funding gap. It calls on countries to link short-term humanitarian and long-term development aid from the beginning of a response to a refugee crisis. Using the momentum of the Education Cannot Wait fund, donors need to join up planning to bridge the humanitarian-development divide and catalyse predictable multiyear funding.

- ENDS -

For more information, please contact Kate Redman k.redman@unesco.org 0033 6 71 78 62 34

Notes to editors

Visit the Report's [electronic press kit](#)