



DEBATE PACK

CDP 0011 (2021) | 25 January 2021

UN International Day of Education

House of Commons Chamber
Thursday 28 January 2021
Backbench Business Cttee debate
Debate led by Harriett Baldwin MP

The proceedings of this debate can be viewed on [Parliamentlive.uk](https://www.parliamentlive.uk)

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

Compiled by:
Nigel Walker

Subject specialists:
Anna Dickson
(international development)
Rob Long
(education)

Contents

1. Background – international	2
1.1 Sustainable Development Goal 4	2
1.2 Covid-19 impacts	2
1.3 FCDO Programmes	3
2. Background - policy response in England	5
2.1 Remote education expectations in England	5
Oversight of remote education	6
2.2 Funding for schools in England	6
3. International Education Day 2021 – UNESCO overview	8
4. Press articles	10
5. Press releases	11
6. PQs	17
7. Statements	26

1. Background – international

1.1 Sustainable Development Goal 4

In 2015 the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were agreed, with Goal 4 addressing [global education](#). One of the central aims of the SDGs is to “leave no one behind”. To achieve this in education will require a substantial increase in finance, access and quality.

UNESCO states that globally, education funding remains substantially below the target level that would be required to meet the ambition of SDG4. In 2015, it estimated the annual shortfall at around [\\$39 billion](#).

1.2 Covid-19 impacts

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on education systems and on children and young people’s learning and wellbeing is increasing daily. The crisis is preventing children and adolescents in every country from fulfilling their right to quality, safe and inclusive education.

The world’s most marginalised children will be hit hardest

Out of the total population of students enrolled in education globally, UNESCO estimates that over 90 per cent have been affected by school closures due to Covid-19. School closures will hit the world’s most marginalised children the hardest, including girls, the poorest, children with disabilities, and refugees, migrant and internally displaced children. “For these children, the pandemic could mean losing precious progress gained to date on realising their right to education and the achievement of SDG4.”

For girls, school closures present significant challenges. Over [111 million girls](#) live in least developed countries where getting an education is already a struggle. These are contexts of extreme poverty, economic vulnerability and crisis and where gender disparities in education are highest. In Mali, Niger and South Sudan — three countries with some of the lowest enrolment and completion rates for girls — closures have forced over 4 million girls out of school.

Children with disabilities often face multiple challenges to accessing inclusive education. This is exacerbated during times of crisis. Before Covid-19, [over half of children with disabilities](#) were out-of-school at the lower secondary level in low and lower-middle income countries. Distance learning activities and tools, including radio, TV and online lessons are often not made accessible to children and youth with disabilities, including those with visual or hearing impairments. Similarly, children from minority ethnic groups or refugees and migrants may be locked out of distance learning due to linguistic or cultural barriers.

1.3 FCDO Programmes

On the merger of DFID and the FCO, the then Secretary of State for International Development, [reconfirmed](#) the UK Government's commitment to education:

"The UK is and will remain a global leader on girls' education. Promoting 12 years of quality education for all girls is a priority for the UK and the Prime Minister. Between 2015 and 2019, we supported no fewer than 5.8 million girls in gaining a decent education. At last year's United Nations General Assembly, we announced a further £515 million to help over 12 million children – half of them girls – into school. The challenge for the next five years will be to ensure that the progress made towards the Sustainable Development Goals is not lost as a result of COVID-19. It is a challenge that the UK government is determined to meet."

FCDO supports the [Global Partnership for Education](#) (GPE), the only multilateral fund for education. The programme seeks to improve to improve learning, increase equity, and create efficient and effective education systems in 89 developing countries through the development and implementation of Education Sector Plans. The FCDO contribution to GPE from 2018-21 will support [approximately 2,100,000](#) children to stay in school and train 170,000 teachers.

In the last 12 months the [GPE has raised US\\$ 500 million](#) to support partner countries with planning and implementing their response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The funding is helping governments sustain learning for up to 355 million children in 66 countries. The UK is the largest donor to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and has contributed to this Covid-19 response fund. The figures for spending in 2020 are not yet published.

FCDO also funds [This Girls' Education Challenge](#) Phase 2, designed to enable up to one million marginalised girls (currently supported through Phase 1) to continue to complete primary school and transition on to secondary education.

A further 500,000 highly marginalised adolescent girls, who are out of school, will also be targeted to gain literacy, numeracy and other skills relevant for life and work. It is estimated that at least 400,000 girls will complete junior secondary school in the first four years of the extension.

In 2019, the UK provided £789 million in bilateral aid targeted at education. This, along with equivalent figures for the previous few years, breaks down into sub-sectors as follows:

UK aid funding for education, by sector										
Total bilateral aid to all recipients, £ millions, not adjusted for inflation										
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Education policy and administrative management	190.5	265.0	247.1	423.7	302.3	144.2	217.1	133.1	152.7	126.3
Education facilities and training	11.6	24.4	18.7	3.9	12.8	20.6	11.0	12.6	8.8	148.8
Teacher training	12.0	13.1	20.8	28.4	34.2	81.9	52.9	25.4	26.2	22.1
Educational research	1.3	1.0	2.1	8.6	15.2	16.6	20.1	26.5	34.7	28.0
Primary education	164.1	251.8	213.5	199.5	166.2	167.1	415.5	327.3	219.2	203.0
Basic life skills for youth and adults	7.9	9.0	26.7	25.4	31.6	44.4	33.6	37.6	20.3	6.4
Basic life skills for youth	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0	0.1
Early childhood education	1.5	1.0	1.6	1.5	0.2	0.0	0.1	3.3	4.8	8.4
Secondary education	26.0	22.6	23.3	125.9	170.0	34.0	70.7	72.8	66.5	87.1
Vocational training	8.0	14.0	11.4	12.7	13.7	20.8	30.3	35.5	31.3	36.9
Higher education	48.9	37.0	38.0	50.3	52.3	93.8	99.7	94.4	102.9	105.0
Advanced technical and managerial training	10.2	10.2	17.4	25.5	22.5	28.1	12.5	16.0	18.6	16.6
Total	481.9	649.2	620.6	905.4	820.9	651.5	963.5	784.6	686.0	788.7

Source: FCDO, [Statistics on International Development: Final UK Aid Spend 2019](#), 24 September 2020, and earlier editions

This includes only bilateral aid – that is, aid provided for a specific programme or purpose. The UK also provides contributions to the core budgets of multilateral institutions such as UN agencies or the World Bank, and some of these may also have provided aid for education – for example, the UK provided £7 million in multilateral aid to UNESCO in 2019.

The bilateral aid total has varied over the years, with no obvious trend, but it has typically been around the £600-800 million range. The UK's levels of aid for education rank highly in international terms – based on data from the OECD (which is not directly comparable to the FCDO's figures), the UK provided the equivalent of \$612 million in 2019 in aid for education, which is the third-highest among OECD countries. (The top two were Germany, at \$2,935 million, and the United States at \$1,438 million¹.)

¹ Source: [OECD.Stat](#), table DAC5, retrieved 24 January 2021

2. Background - policy response in England

The schools policy response to the pandemic has been wide-ranging, with school closures and exam cancellations, as well as concerns about school funding support for children on free school meals. This section provides an overview of current remote education expectations in English schools, as well as on the funding provided to support schools during the pandemic.

The following Library briefings provide wider information:

- [Coronavirus and schools: FAQs](#)
- [Coronavirus: exams in 2021](#)
- [School meals and nutritional standards \(England\) \(see section 5\)](#)

2.1 Remote education expectations in England

On 7 January 2021, the DfE updated its [guidance to schools](#) for the current lockdown. Remote education expectations are covered from p46 onwards.

To summarise:

- Remote education should be equivalent in length to the core teaching pupils would receive if in school, and as a minimum:
 - Key Stage 1 (ages approx. 5 to 7): 3 hours a day on average across the cohort, with less for younger children
 - Key Stage 2 (ages approx. 7 to 11): 4 hours a day
 - Key Stages 3 and 4 (ages approx.. 11 to 16): 5 hours a day

It should include either live or recorded direct teaching time, and time for pupils to complete work independently.

For younger age groups (i.e., reception and key stage 1 pupils), there is an acknowledgement that online provision often needs more support from parents, and that this can create challenges. As such, the DfE doesn't expect schools to use solely digital means to teach these pupils.

Provision should also take into account pupils' special educational needs.

In terms of actual content, schools should teach a "planned and well-sequenced curriculum". They should also:

- Select and use an appropriate digital platform
- Distribute school-owned laptops to overcome digital barriers
- Provide printed resources
- Allow vulnerable and critical worker pupils to attend in person, where appropriate.
- Have systems to check whether pupils are engaging
- Identify a senior leader with responsibility for remote education

Oversight of remote education

Ofsted can inspect providers where there are significant concerns about the quality of remote education provided under Section 8 of the *Education Act 2005*, as amended. Routine inspections, in general, are suspended at the moment, but the intention is that Ofsted will continue to inspect schools graded inadequate, and some of those graded 'requires improvement' in the spring of 2021.

In his [Statement to Parliament](#) on 6 January 2021, Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, said that parents who had concerns about the education provided should first "raise their concerns with the teacher or headteacher and failing that, report the matter to Ofsted".

2.2 Funding for schools in England

The DfE has introduced a number of additional funding streams for schools and pupils, specifically related to the pandemic. Schools also continue to receive their regular recurrent funding. Additional funding includes:

[Exceptional costs funding](#) for certain additional costs incurred during the period March to July 2020:

- additional cleaning associated with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases;
- support for free school meals for where this was not covered by the national voucher scheme;
- Some increased premises related costs.

A second claims period closed on 22 December 2020. The DfE published [guidance on how to make a claim](#).

- A [universal catch-up premium](#) and the [National Tutoring Programme](#) – in recognition of lost face-to-face teaching for schools.
- [Funding for digital devices and 4G routers](#), for disadvantaged children unable to attend school because of closures or self-isolation requirements.
- Home to school transport: In August 2020, Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, [announced](#) an additional £40 million funding for local authorities to support school transport provision in the autumn term during the pandemic.²
- Additional funding for free school meals during the initial lockdown, and during the Easter, May half term, and summer holidays. A COVID Winter Grant Scheme, to be run by councils in England, was subsequently announced to provide support from December 2020 to March 2021. Further details on funding for school meals and holiday activities can be found in another Library briefing paper, [School meals and nutritional standards \(England\)](#)

² Department for Education press release, '[Multi-million-pound funding package for school transport](#)', 8 August 2020.

- Further funding for free school meals, and digital devices, during the spring 2021 lockdown.³
- The DfE has [also confirmed](#) it is providing additional high need funding of £730 million in 2021-22, and says this will take the overall SEND budget to “more than £8 billion” in 2021-22.
- A [COVID workforce fund](#), to cover the second half of the autumn 2020 term. This funding would be available to schools and colleges “facing the greatest combined staffing and funding pressures”. In order to be eligible, institutions need to meet financial and teacher/ lecturer absence thresholds.⁴

³ Speech by Prime Minister Boris Johnson, '[Prime Minister's address to the nation: 4 January 2021](#)'

⁴ Department for Education press release, '[New funding to support schools and colleges during Covid pandemic](#)', 27 November 2020.

3. International Education Day 2021 – UNESCO overview

[International Education Day 2021: Recover and Revitalize Education for the COVID-19 Generation](#)

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Culture Organisation (UNESCO)

This third International Education Day occurs in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic that led to a global learning disruption of unprecedented scale and severity. The closure of schools, universities and other learning institutions, as well as the interruption of many literacy and lifelong learning programmes, has affected the lives of 1.6 billion students in over 190 countries. Governments everywhere moved swiftly to offer alternative solutions, but at least one third of the world's students were not able to access remote learning, while it is estimated that those in low-and lower-middle-income countries have lost nearly four months of schooling compared to six weeks in high-income ones. And, unfortunately, the disruption is still very much 'with us'.

The pandemic has amplified social, economic and digital inequalities, putting a generation at risk of a learning catastrophe as the UN Secretary-General warned in his Policy Brief on Education and COVID19. But it has also shone light on the centrality of education for every society, as a public common good and the bedrock of social cohesion, well-being and opportunity. As the pandemic enters or worsens second and third waves of COVID-19, forcing countries into new lockdowns, many schools have remained open, even as other institutions and businesses are shut, testifying to the unique importance of their role in society, and the multiple risks – academic, socio-emotional and economic - of relying solely on remote learning solutions.

At the same time, the pandemic has been a wake-up call – to make education systems more resilient to crisis, and more inclusive, flexible and sustainable. It has shown the capacity of systems to innovate, expanding the frontiers of learning possibilities; the enterprise of teachers to ensure learning continuity; and highlighted the immense value education holds for learners, families and communities—indeed losing something, even if only temporarily, functions to clarify its worth.

Action to respond to the pandemic disruption has unlocked and inspired new partnerships, as reflected in UNESCO's Global Education Coalition that has rallied 160 partners since its launch in March 2020. It has brought organizations together to advocate and galvanize support to education, as witnessed by the Save Our Future Campaign. It has catalyzed cooperation between governments in the early days of the crisis and, more recently, at an extraordinary session of the Global Education Meeting convened by UNESCO, Ghana, Norway and the United Kingdom in October 2020. On this occasion, heads of state and government and ministers from over 70 countries endorsed a Declaration expressing strong commitment to protect education financing and outlining measures to be adopted through the end of 2021 to safeguard education by:

1. Taking every measure to reopen schools safely and inclusively;
2. Supporting all teachers as frontline workers and prioritizing their training and professional development;
3. Investing in skills development for inclusive recovery;
4. Narrowing the digital divide that has prevented one third of the world's students from accessing education during school closures;
5. Protecting if not increasing education budgets; ensuring that stimulus packages support measures to mitigate learning losses and get the most vulnerable back to school; and increasing the volume, effectiveness and predictability of aid to education.

As a new year begins, now is the time to step up collaboration and international solidarity to place education and lifelong learning at the centre of the recovery and the transformation towards more inclusive, safe and sustainable societies. It is the time to invest in better gearing education systems everywhere to the reality of interdependence that the pandemic has driven in, and to making education a vehicle to foster social justice, peace, respect for diversity, human rights and democratic values.

This International Education Day aims to:

- Highlight commitments and follow-up actions taken to protect education through the recovery, increase inclusion and combat drop-out
- Celebrate initiatives being led by governments, educators, organizations—from global to grassroots efforts—as well as partnerships demonstrating the potential to recommit education to the principles of equity and relevance
- Highlight best practices in laws and policies on equitable finance for education that effectively and efficiently target the most disadvantaged via a tool featured on UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report website, PEER.
- Give voice to the COVID-19 generation to express their concerns and aspirations in the face of a future marked by an economic recession and climate change.

As in 2020, this Day will be organized in partnership with several partners, including the Global Partnership for Education and the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies (CRI), and feature the participation of partners from the Global Education Coalition. Capturing the spirit of the International Day of Education, CRI and UNESCO have spearheaded a Learning Planet Festival to celebrate learning in all contexts and share innovations that fulfill the potential of every learner, no matter what their circumstances.

International Education Day will be celebrated on Monday January 25, 2021.

4. Press articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to this debate. Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or accuracy of external content.

[The drive for quality education worldwide, faces 'mammoth challenges'](#)

UN News
24 January 2021

[After Covid, will digital learning be the new normal?](#)

The Guardian
Nic Fleming
23 January 2021

[International Day of Education 2021: Harnessing the promise of innovation in education](#)

World Bank blogs
Mari Elka Pangestu
22 January 2021

[The opportunity to build back better from COVID-19: Fostering gender parity in education and skills development for a larger workforce](#)

World Bank blogs
Shobhana Sosale, Sarah Bunker, Laura McDonald and Eliana Rubiano-Matulevich
22 January 2021

[COVID-19 put 1.6 billion children out of school. Here's how to upgrade education post-pandemic](#)

World Economic Forum
Amel Karboul
4 December 2020

[Overseas aid budget for education cut by a quarter this year, data shows](#)

The Guardian
Kathy McVeigh
27 November 2020

[COVID-19 is an opportunity to reset education. Here are 4 ways how](#)

World Economic Forum
Randa Grob-Zakhary
15 October 2020

[The COVID-19 pandemic has changed education forever. This is how](#)

World Economic Forum
Cathy Li and Farah Lalani
29 April 2020

5. Press releases

[Secretary-General's message on the International Day of Education](#)

United Nations
24 January 2021

When education is interrupted, it affects everyone – especially students, teachers and families.

Today, on the third International Day of Education, I pay tribute to their resilience in the face of a pandemic that, at its peak, forced almost every school, institute and university to close its doors.

Although this disruption has led to learning innovations, it has also dashed hopes of a brighter future among vulnerable populations.

All of us pay the price.

After all, education is the foundation for expanding opportunities, transforming economies, fighting intolerance, protecting our planet and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

As the world continues to battle the pandemic, education – as a fundamental right and a global public good – must be protected to avert a generational catastrophe.

Even before the pandemic, some 258 million children and adolescents were out of school, the majority of them girls.

More than half of 10-year-olds in low- and middle-income countries were not learning to read a simple text.

In 2021, we must seize all opportunities to turn this situation around.

We must ensure the full replenishment of the Global Partnership for Education fund, and strengthen global education cooperation.

We must also step up our efforts to reimagine education – training teachers, bridging the digital divide and rethinking curricula to equip learners with the skills and knowledge to flourish in our rapidly changing world.

Let us commit to promote education for all — today and every day.

[New research reveals best investments to tackle learning crisis in vulnerable countries](#)

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
28 October 2020

The new report by leading global education experts looks at cost-effective ways to improve global learning and tackle learning crisis compounded by COVID-19.

- the UK, the World Bank and partners launch a new report authored by leading global education experts that identifies cost-effective ways to improve global learning
- nine out of 10 children in low income countries cannot read a story by age 10 and the coronavirus pandemic has compounded this global learning crisis as schools have been forced to close
- the report follows the World Bank-IMF Annual Meetings that warned of the huge setbacks that COVID-19 will have on education progress without concerted, sustained action, and comes ahead of a major global education summit – co-hosted by the UK next year – that will raise funds to get children into school

The UK government, the World Bank, and Building Evidence in Education Global Group have brought together the world's leading education experts to identify cost-effective ideas to transform learning for millions of children. A virtual event today (Wednesday 28 October) marks the launch of the first report of the Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel, which includes 12 leading education experts from around the world and is co-chaired by Abhijit Banerjee, Nobel prize-winning economist and MIT Professor, and Sylvia Shmelkes, Provost of the Universidad Iberoamericana of Mexico.

Both of them will appear at the report launch, along with Ministers from around the world, including Baroness Liz Sugg, the UK's Special Envoy for Girls' Education and Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Minister; Maria Antonieta Alva, Minister of Finance, Peru; and David Sengoh, Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education & Chief Innovation Officer, Sierra Leone; and Valentine Uwamariya, Minister of Education, Republic of Rwanda. They will also be joined by other members of the Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel.

The report sets out the best investments to improve the quality and take-up of education in developing countries, and those which do not necessarily represent good value for money. It comes as the world faces a learning crisis, with the coronavirus pandemic forcing more than 1.6 billion children out of their classrooms at the peak of school closures.

Speaking ahead of the virtual launch, the UK's Special Envoy for Girls' Education, Baroness Sugg said:

Coronavirus is not only the biggest global health and economic threat we've faced in a lifetime - it is also an unprecedented education crisis.

Even before the pandemic struck, nine out of 10 children in low income countries were unable to read a story by age 10. Without action, this will get worse.

That is why it is more important than ever that we invest wisely to get children learning again. The UK and the World Bank have brought together world-leading expertise to highlight the best ways to educate children today, so we can transform the world of tomorrow.

Hosting today's event, Mari Pangestu, World Bank Managing Director of Development Policy and Partnerships, said in advance of the launch:

The COVID-19 crisis is exacerbating what was already a global learning crisis. Our research shows that learning poverty could increase sharply, with losses especially large among the most disadvantaged students.

Now, more than ever, it will be critical to bridge research and policy, theory and implementation in our collective work, in order to turn development knowledge into development outcomes and particularly to support those hit hardest by this unprecedented crisis. The education field was lacking this bridge between academia and policymaking. This initiative tries to fill this gap.

To improve learning, build back better from coronavirus and deliver value for money, the report identifies 'best buys' including:

- tailoring teaching based on ability and learning level, rather than age or grade, and providing extra catch-up support to help children falling behind
- increasing investments in pre-primary education, to halt the learning disparity seen by age 5 between low and higher-income households
- developing structured lesson plans with teacher mentoring and training
- providing merit-based scholarships to disadvantaged children to help them stay in school
- informing parents about the benefits of sending their children to school and the choices available to them, and
- working to reduce travel times to schools

This report follows a Ministerial meeting at the World Bank-IMF Annual Meetings, where experts warned of the huge setback that the COVID-19 pandemic will have on education progress without concerted, sustained action.

These recommendations build on the UK's leading role in championing every girls' right to 12 years of quality education. Next year, the UK will co-host a Global Partnership for Education replenishment summit to urge world leaders to invest in getting children into school and girls' education will be a central theme of the UK's upcoming Presidency of the G7.

The UK and World Bank are already working with partner governments across the world to deliver successful, value-for-money programmes in line with the report's findings, showing how these recommendations can help to make smart, cost-effective investment choices in education.

For example, the UK is working with the Ethiopian Government to reduce learning inequality by supporting its investment in pre-primary education; supporting Ghana to provide quality education for children where the curriculum is tailored to their learning level and helping Rwanda to develop and deliver well-structured lesson plans through teacher coaching and mentoring.

Through dedicated initiatives like the World Bank's Strategic Impact Evaluation Fund, the Bank has been investing in building evidence on effectiveness and costs, as well as helping governments around the world translate findings into policy action.

Girls' education: Baroness Sugg's speech at UNESCO's Global Education Meeting

**Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
22 October 2020**

The UK's Special Envoy for Girls' Education and FCDO Minister Baroness Sugg spoke at UNESCO's Extraordinary Global Education Meeting on 22 October 2020:

I am pleased to join you all today on behalf of the UK Prime Minister, Boris Johnson. Global education is a top priority for the United Kingdom.

I'd like to thank my fellow co-hosts, Norway and Ghana, and of course, UNESCO for convening so many of us today.

In my remarks at the start of this extraordinary meeting on Tuesday I said that this is a crisis affecting every country. What has been clear in the discussions of the last 2 days is that there are particular challenges facing low-income countries and we need to come together to step up support.

As has been highlighted by many contributors to this meeting, even before COVID-19 struck, we were facing a learning crisis. Hard-won improvements in access to education were not matched by improved quality. World Bank and UNESCO data suggested that globally, over half – 53% – of children could not read and understand a simple story by the age of 10. In low-income countries this figure was nearly 9 in 10 children.

Projections now suggest that the global rate may have increased to 63%, driven by massive disruption that has affected over a billion children since the pandemic began.

This is a tragedy for those children, but also for their communities and nations, as they risk missing out on the long-term health, economic, and social benefits that a quality education can secure.

To avert this tragedy, UNESCO has asked us to 'reimagine and recommit' to education.

'Reimagining' education requires taking tough decisions to prioritise what we know is effective. Next week I am looking forward to launching the Global Evidence Panel on Education with World Bank colleagues. The Panel reflects the growing global consensus on what is effective in getting children learning – even more important as the economic and health pressures of COVID-19 begin to bite.

For the UK, re-commitment starts with political leadership. All of us here today must work to elevate education as a core part of our COVID-19 responses. The UK believes that girls' education should be central to this, and we will be standing up for the right of every girl to 12 years of quality education. Next year, this will be at the heart of our G7 Presidency, so the transformative power of girls' education gets the political attention it deserves.

'Re-Commitment' also means proper resourcing. Throughout these first months of the pandemic, the UK has protected education support in our aid programmes. But more is needed. That is why next year, we will co-host the financing summit for the Global Partnership for Education with our good friends in the Government of Kenya. The Replenishment has a rolling financial target of \$5 billion for the next 5 years. Yet even this won't be enough on its own. We need innovative financial solutions to close the enormous financing gap, drawing in finance from additional sources, including the private sector.

The GEM2020 Declaration recognises the challenge we face. I very much welcome the focus on the most marginalised, including girls, and the call to action on finance. I look forward to seeing the proposals from UNESCO to strengthen the SDG4 Steering Committee, which must help make our collective efforts all the more effective.

We knew before COVID-19 hit that business as usual wouldn't fix the learning crisis. It is now more important than ever that we raise our game, and come together in an effort to reduce the global learning gap. You can all count on the UK as a committed partner as we do so.

UK and Kenya to host major education summit in 2021

**Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing St
12 October 2020**

The United Kingdom and Kenya will co-host a high-level summit next year to lead global action to educate every child, the Prime Minister Boris Johnson and President Uhuru Kenyatta announce today (Monday 12 October).

Coronavirus has worsened the global education crisis, with 1.3 billion children – including 650 million girls – out of education at the peak of school closures. Experts warn that many children will never return, particularly as countries experience an economic contraction in the wake of the pandemic.

Missing out on education does long term damage to individuals and communities, with girls particularly at risk. The benefits of schooling are transformative and multi-generational - a child whose mother can read is 50% more likely to live past the age of five and twice as likely to attend school themselves. With just one additional school year, a woman's earnings can increase by a fifth.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has championed girls education as the key to preventing exploitation and unlocking potential around the world, and the UK is the top donor to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). Next year's summit will raise funds for GPE's vital work in developing countries helping to get children into school, lift communities out of poverty and prevent girls being forced into child marriage.

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

Since coronavirus struck, the number of children out of school around the world soared past 1.3 billion. It is a toll of wasted potential and missed opportunity that is a tragedy not just for those children, but for each and every one of us.

Education unlocks doors to opportunity and prosperity. It offers girls a ticket out of poverty and exploitation to chart their own futures.

That's why I am delighted that the UK will co-host the replenishment of the Global Partnership for Education in 2021. I urge the global community to come together, dig deep and ensure we fund their vital work to give every child the chance at an education.

The Government of Kenya has made education a central part of their strategy to become a newly industrialised nation by 2030. A GPE partner since 2005, Kenya has made impressive gains, achieving universal primary education and breaking down gender barriers to get as many girls as boys enrolling in school.

Uhuru Kenyatta, President of Kenya said:

An educated population is a country's most valuable resource. GPE has been a key partner in helping us invest in innovative solutions to get all our children, especially girls, learning.

We must use the opportunity of GPE's financing conference to make ambitious pledges to invest in quality education so our children and young people have the skills and knowledge they need to seize the opportunities of the 21st century.

Even before the pandemic, 9 in 10 school children in low income countries were unable to read proficiently by the age of 10. Since its creation in 2002 GPE has already contributed to getting 160 million more children in school and doubling girls' enrollment in the countries they work in, and is today announcing a \$5 billion funding target for next five years. It is calling on governments, businesses and individuals to invest in children's futures.

This funding will help ensure that 175 million children can learn in 87 lower-income countries. In the longer term, this investment could add \$164 billion to economies in the developing world, lift 18 million people out of poverty, and protect two million girls from early marriage.

Julia Gillard, former Prime Minister of Australia and GPE Board Chair said:

An investment in GPE is an investment in the world's most powerful asset – its children and youth. By refinancing GPE, leaders can send a clear message that the world is serious about creating a brighter future for all girls and boys through education.

Today, we're launching our most ambitious and urgent campaign yet. We must seize this opportunity to make sure that no child is left behind. Our message to world leaders is simple: Raise your hand. Fund education.

The summit will take place in the UK in mid-2021 and will convene key global players and decision makers, with the aim of getting all children into school and learning.

6. PQs

[Overseas Aid: Children](#)

07 Dec 2020 | 123498

Asked by: Sir Oliver Heald

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the effect on children's (a) health and (b) education globally of the planned cut in UK aid from 0.7 to 0.5 per cent.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The seismic impact of the pandemic has forced us to take tough decisions, including temporarily reducing our aid budget. We will remain a world leading aid donor. We plan to spend more than £10 billion next year to fight poverty, tackle climate change and improve global health. As set out by the Foreign Secretary, our priorities will include girls' education and global health, including tackling COVID-19 and strengthening international health security.

We will build on our existing achievements in supporting girls' education and working to end the preventable deaths of mothers, newborns and children. We have set ambitious global targets of getting 40 million girls into education, and one third more reading by the age of 10, and we will co-host the replenishment for the Global Partnership for Education next year. We have pledged up to £1.65 billion to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, to support immunisation of 300 million children over the next five years.

[Human Rights: Females](#)

16 Nov 2020 | 113265

Asked by: Abena Oppong-Asare

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps his Department is taking to promote the empowerment of girls and women around the world.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Promoting gender equality is a key priority of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) work. As I stated in my answer of 10 November to question 110267, the challenges of advancing girls' education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, women's political empowerment and participation, women's economic empowerment, and ending gender-based violence, including conflict related sexual violence, are more acute now, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The UK Government's commitment to the issue of empowerment for women and girls was reflected by the appointment of Baroness Sugg as the UK Special Envoy for Girls' Education in March 2020. She is committed to promoting every girl's right to attend and stay in school, and to receive 12 years of quality education by 2030, by

working to accelerate progress towards getting marginalised girls into schools, staying there and staying safe.

The UK is proud to be a world leader on efforts to prevent Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), and Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict (PSVI). We are co-lead of the new global Generation Equality Action Coalition on gender-based violence (established to mark the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action on Gender Equality). We have increased our efforts to reach girls and women with life-saving sexual and reproductive health services, including with an additional £10m for UN Population Fund's COVID-19 response. And FCDO continues to deliver on its National Action Plan (NAP) on Women Peace and Security - focusing on elevating and legitimising the work of women peacebuilders. We will continue to engage virtually with our international partners and promote the empowerment of women and girls in multilateral fora including in the UN

Poverty

12 Nov 2020 | HL9841

Asked by: Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is retaining the Department for International Development's commitment to maintaining poverty reduction as the primary objective of UK spending.

Answering member: Baroness Sugg | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The Government will prioritise the bottom billion, the very poorest around the world, as part of our core mission. This is in our national interest and it will project the UK as a force for good in the world. For example, during the coronavirus pandemic, the UK has provided £15 million to UNICEF to protect vulnerable children, and a further £5 million to the Education Cannot Wait fund, supporting emergency education in conflict countries. Furthermore, the UK has allocated £119 million of aid to provide relief to over 6 million people and help prevent famine in countries hit by conflict and COVID-19.

Education: Children

10 Nov 2020 | 110248

Asked by: Bell Ribeiro-Addy

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure an expansion of gender-responsive social protection following the covid-19 pandemic to help keep children, particularly girls, in school.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) supports some of the poorest and most vulnerable people through social protection programmes in over 25 countries. We recognise their potential to deliver gender equality outcomes, including girls' education,

and are working with governments and international partners to strengthen the gender responsiveness of social protection policies and programmes in developing countries. Our Gender-Responsive Social Protection and Better Assistance in Crises programmes are providing expert advice to FCDO country offices, governments and partner organisations on how to strengthen social protection measures in the COVID-19 response, including how to deliver more effectively for women and girls. We will continue to encourage a strong gender focus in social protection programmes and systems in the COVID-19 recovery.

The UK is committed to supporting children in developing countries to return to school when it is safe to do so, and recognises the important role social protection can play in safeguarding the wellbeing of individuals and their families during times of crisis, and in helping families to meet the direct and indirect costs of sending girls to schools. This is part of the FCDO's wider education programme response to COVID-19 which includes work with partner countries to ensure they have the knowledge and resources to facilitate a safe return.

Education: Children

16 Oct 2020 | 101066

Asked by: Bell Ribeiro-Addy

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help ensure a co-ordinated and adequately funded global action plan for getting children back to school following the covid-19 pandemic.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is committed to ensuring a safe return to school for children around the world. We are taking decisive action through our 18 bilateral education programmes, and we are supporting global efforts, including the UNICEF-led campaign 'Opening Up Better', to ensure children return to school when it is safe to do so. We recognise that children already living through emergencies are at a double disadvantage during the COVID-19 pandemic and have provided an additional £5 million to Education Cannot Wait and £5.3 million to UNHCR to support refugee education.

The UK has played a leading role coordinating the global response, and on 20 and 22 October the UK will be co-hosting an extraordinary Global Education Meeting (GEM) with UNESCO. This extraordinary meeting of the GEM will bring together the international education community to agree on a set of global priority actions to be put in place to support the recovery from COVID-19 and strengthening education systems.

The UK, along with Kenya, will host next year's replenishment of the Global Partnership for Education, the major global fund for education. This will be a key moment to mobilise much needed commitments as we build back from COVID-19.

Education: Refugees

22 Jul 2020 | 73819

Asked by: Harriett Baldwin

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the effect of covid-19 on the adequacy of the education of refugees in Official Development Assistant-eligible countries.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Department for International Development

COVID-19 is an education crisis as well as a health crisis, particularly for refugee children who, even before this unprecedented global pandemic, made up the largest group of those out of school. Today, we know that refugee education is a major gap in the COVID-19 response. The longer refugee children are out of school, the less likely they are to return, which is why the UK, as a leading donor to education in emergencies, is determined that refugee children should have the opportunity to rebuild their lives and achieve their full potential.

In response the UK has just announced a new £5.3 million commitment to the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR, to enable more than 5500 teachers to provide vital education for refugee children in 10 countries over the crucial next seven months. In April the UK provided an additional £5 million to Education Cannot Wait to keep the most vulnerable children, including refugees, safe and learning during COVID-19. And we will lend our full weight to global efforts, including the UNICEF-led campaign, to ensure all children can return to school when it is safe to do so, including refugee children.

Education: Disability

22 Jul 2020 | 73818

Asked by: Harriett Baldwin

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on the education of children with disabilities in countries eligible for Official Development Assistance.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Department for International Development

Before the pandemic, children with disabilities were already among the most marginalised. Emerging evidence suggests the impact of COVID-19 on their education will be significant in ODA eligible countries. Many children with disabilities are excluded from remote learning and as they lack assisted learning devices at home, accessible content and one-to-one support.

That is why the UK's Ed Tech Hub is working to ensure distance education is inclusive for all learners, including those with disabilities. Through our flagship Girls' Education Challenge Fund and the Inclusive Education Initiative, we are supporting children with disabilities to access quality education and building the evidence base on how to do this most effectively. And we will lend our full weight to global efforts,

including the UNICEF-led campaign to ensure all children can return to school when it is safe to do so, and children with disabilities are not left behind.

Education: Females

22 Jul 2020 | 73817

Asked by: Harriett Baldwin

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on the delivery of 12 years of quality education for every girl in each Official Development Assistance-eligible country.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Department for International Development

The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated the global learning crisis, especially for the most marginalised. It has been estimated that, at the peak of school closures, 1.3 billion children – 650 million girls - were removed from primary and secondary education. Girls face particular vulnerabilities that mean the most disadvantaged girls are at risk of dropping out of school permanently. As the effects of the COVID-19 crisis play out, the socio-economic impact on girls' education in developing countries is becoming increasingly clear. From a learning perspective, closures – even with mitigating actions - will significantly reduce learning hours. The effects of school closures in developing countries are also much wider than reduced learning. For many disadvantaged children in developing countries, school closures expose them to increased hunger and malnutrition as well as increased risk of violence against women and girls.

The UK remains committed to 12 years of quality education for all girls. In our most recent published spend of ODA in 2018, our UK Bilateral ODA spend was £686 million and our UK Multilateral ODA spend was £293.7 million. We understand our leadership on girls' education is more urgent and important than ever. DFID is adapting its bilateral education programmes in 18 countries. The UK has announced £20 million for the UN Children's Fund crisis appeal, which includes education, and a further £5 million to the Education Cannot Wait fund to support emergency education in fragile contexts. The Global Partnership for Education, to which the UK is the largest donor, is flexing over £200 million to support education sector stability in response to the pandemic. We are also supporting efforts by UNICEF and others to support children back to school when it is safe to do so.

Our education response to the pandemic is two-fold, firstly to ensure preventative measures are taken to keep girls learning and returning to education, mitigating short term risks by focussing on safety, nutrition, wellbeing and the continuity of learning whilst schools are closed. Secondly, by supporting countries to protect and maintain their education budgets and ensuring that we build back better.

Developing Countries: Education

29 Jun 2020 | 62627

Asked by: Anthony Mangnall

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the covid-19 pandemic on girls' education in developing countries.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Department for International Development

The COVID-19 crisis has removed 1.3 billion children - 650 million girls - from primary and secondary education, putting the most disadvantaged girls at risk of dropping out of school permanently. As the effects of the COVID-19 crisis play out, the socio-economic impact on girls' education in developing countries is becoming increasingly clear. From a learning perspective, closures – even with mitigating actions - will significantly reduce learning hours. School closures in Sierra Leone during the Ebola crisis resulted in the loss of roughly 780 hours per pupil. We also understand that the effects of school closures in developing countries are much wider than reduced learning. For many disadvantaged children in developing countries, school closures expose them to increased hunger and malnutrition as well as increased risk of violence against women and girls.

The UK's response to the pandemic is two-fold, firstly to ensure preventative measures are taken to keep girls learning and returning to education, mitigating short term risks by focussing on safety, nutrition, wellbeing and the continuity of learning whilst schools are closed. Secondly, by supporting countries to protect and maintain their education budgets and ensuring that we build back better. DFID is adapting its bilateral education programmes in 18 countries. The Global Partnership for Education, to which the UK is the largest donor, is flexing over £200 million to support education sector stability in response to the pandemic. The UK has also announced £20 million for UNICEF's crisis appeal, which includes education, and a further £5 million to the Education Cannot Wait fund to support emergency education in fragile contexts.

Global Partnership for Education: Overseas Aid

08 Jun 2020 | 54099

Asked by: Kate Green

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, pursuant to the Answer of 2 June 2020 to Question 49674, whether her Department plans to provide additional funding to the Global Partnership for Education to sustain education systems in the global south during the covid-19 pandemic.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Department for International Development

We are at an unprecedented moment when almost the entire school-going population is out of school, affecting more than 1.5 billion children, half of them girls. Girls' education is a top UK development priority and my officials are assessing how multilateral and other

investments can mitigate short-term risks while schools are closed and protect education systems and finance for the medium to long-term.

The UK is the largest donor to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). We have supported GPE to urgently repurpose resources to support distance learning and help countries prepare plans to re-open schools through a dedicated \$500 million COVID-19 accelerated funding window.

British Overseas Territories: Coronavirus

08 Jun 2020 | 51573

Asked by: John Spellar

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps the Government is taking to help the Overseas Territories maintain access to education during the covid-19 pandemic.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The UK Government is firmly committed to supporting the Overseas Territories (OTs) in dealing with Covid-19. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development are leading a cross Whitehall effort, working closely with the Governments of the permanently inhabited Overseas Territories, and the Minister for the Overseas Territories and Sustainable Development is in regular contact with the political leaders and Governors of the Territories to ensure support meets the individual needs of each OT.

Education is, constitutionally, the responsibility of the locally elected Territory Governments, but the UK Government is committed to supporting the Territories to handle the impact of the pandemic, including maintaining access to education.

Erasmus+ Programme: Coronavirus

04 Jun 2020 | HL4742

Asked by: Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to develop a replacement for the Erasmus+ student exchange programme; and whether this has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Answering member: Baroness Berridge | Department for Education

The government remains open to participation in some elements of the next Erasmus+ programme. This will be subject to our ongoing negotiations with the EU.

We are, in parallel with the negotiations, developing a domestic alternative to Erasmus+, to ensure we are prepared for every eventuality as the government remains committed to international exchanges in education, both with the EU and beyond.

We are working closely with the devolved administrations as we develop the alternative scheme, as our intention is that this will be UK-wide, and are consulting with a range of stakeholders.

The development of the scheme has not been affected by COVID-19.

[Coronavirus: Children](#)
22 May 2020 | HL4037

Asked by: Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures being developed to support street children during the COVID-19 pandemic (1) the Department for International Development, and (2) the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, are aware of; what measures the Government are implementing in the UK; and what steps they are taking to involve specialist expert organisations in the development of such measures.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The UK is committed to protecting the most vulnerable children in the world. We are working with international partners to ensure that child protection is integrated into a comprehensive, multi-sectoral response to Covid-19 which supports the most marginalised and vulnerable groups around the world, often with limited or no state protection, including children who live and work on the streets. We provide significant support to protect children from violence in conflict and humanitarian crises and to reduce their risks of exploitation and neglect. We welcome the statement made by the Chairpersons of the 10 UN Treaty Bodies on 24 March calling for a human rights approach in fighting COVID-19 and in the subsequent guidance provided by other Treaty Bodies, such as the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Providing financial support to UNICEF enables the UK to protect vulnerable children across the world who would be significantly affected by the spread of COVID-19, and through emergency grants to "Education Cannot Wait" we are supporting children in 16 Covid-19 hit countries. We are also working to ensure that existing UK programming is responsive to the challenge of supporting those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Work on supporting street children in the UK does not come under the remit of the Department for International Development or the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

[Developing Countries: Education](#)
11 May 2020 | 42018

Asked by: Harriett Baldwin

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of the use of satellite technology in delivering remote learning to children that are not

attending school as a result of (a) the covid-19 pandemic and (b) other reasons.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Department for International Development

DFID is helping to deliver remote learning to children during the COVID19 crisis through radio, television and many mobile telephone networks that are providing educational applications free of charge.

Satellite internet technology has specific potential benefits in reaching children in remote areas where mobile telephone coverage is limited. The DFID-funded EdTech Hub is researching how to effectively scale this type of learning in low income countries, with a key focus on the Value for Money compared to non-tech interventions.

[International Financing Facility for Education](#)

11 May 2020 | 42015

Asked by: Harriett Baldwin

To ask the Secretary of State for International Development, what support her Department is providing to the International Financing Facility for Education.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Department for International Development

The Prime Minister announced a commitment of up to £300 million for the International Finance Facility for Education (IFFEd) at the UN General Assembly in September 2019, consisting of £100 million in grant funding and around £200 million in paid-in cash and guarantees.

The UK is working closely with the Education Commission and Netherlands to finalise plans for the Facility, which will be based in London. IFFEd will be a vital tool to help ensure education systems are adequately funded during and after the COVID 19 pandemic.

7. Statements

Official Development Assistance

26 Nov 2020 | 684 cc1018-1020

Secretary of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development

Office (Dominic Raab): Madam Deputy Speaker, I will make a statement to the House on official development assistance. The House will know that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor updated the House yesterday on the economic challenges posed by covid-19. It is a truly sobering assessment. The UK is facing the worst economic contraction in almost 300 years and a budget deficit of close to £400 billion—double what we faced in the last financial crisis. Britain is responding to a health emergency, but also an economic emergency, and every penny of public spending will rightly come under intense scrutiny by our constituents.

Given the impact of the global pandemic on the economy and, as a result, the public finances, we have concluded after extensive consideration—and, I have to say, with regret—that we cannot for the moment meet our target of spending 0.7% of gross national income on ODA, and we will move to a target of 0.5% next year. Let me reassure the House that this is a temporary measure. It is a measure we have taken as a matter of necessity, and we will return to 0.7% when the fiscal situation permits.

[...]

Thirdly, we continue to prioritise girls' education, because it is the right thing to do and because the fortunes of so many of the poorest countries depend on tapping the full potential of all their people, which must include women and girls in education. Our global target, working with our partners, is to get 40 million girls into education and have 20 million more girls reading by the age of 10. It is a major priority for global Britain as a leading supporter of the Global Partnership for Education, and just next year we will raise \$4 billion globally, including through our UK-Kenya summit.

[...]

Like many in the House, I am proud of our aid spend. I am proud of the big-hearted generosity of the British public, which we amplify with our diplomatic energy on the world stage. I am proud of the huge amount we do to support the poorest and the most vulnerable, right around the world. The United Kingdom is out there every single day—our people on the ground in the disaster zones, in the refugee camps, tackling famine and drought, helping lift people out of poverty, striving to resolve conflicts and striving to build a more hopeful future for the millions of people struggling and striving against the odds. Even in the toughest economic times, we will continue that mission. We will continue to lead. I commend this statement to the House.

About the Library

The House of Commons Library research service provides MPs and their staff with the impartial briefing and evidence base they need to do their work in scrutinising Government, proposing legislation, and supporting constituents.

As well as providing MPs with a confidential service we publish open briefing papers, which are available on the Parliament website.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publicly available research briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email papers@parliament.uk. Authors are available to discuss the content of this briefing only with Members and their staff.

If you have any general questions about the work of the House of Commons you can email hcinfo@parliament.uk.

Disclaimer

This information is provided to Members of Parliament in support of their parliamentary duties. It is a general briefing only and should not be relied on as a substitute for specific advice. The House of Commons or the author(s) shall not be liable for any errors or omissions, or for any loss or damage of any kind arising from its use, and may remove, vary or amend any information at any time without prior notice.

The House of Commons accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. This information is provided subject to the [conditions of the Open Parliament Licence](#).