Sustainable Development Goal 4:
Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030

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Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025

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Progress in various SDG 4 targets:
Early childhood education (ECE)

Target 4.2 *"Ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education"*

Expansion of ECE through different approaches

- Expanded access to early childhood education services through **public, private and/or community-based services** without a prioritization of a single-age and providing services to all children in the official ECE age range

- Adopted a **progressive universalization** approach, starting with offering one year of ECE for all children, with the public sector taking the lead, aiming to gradually increase the number of years of ECE through public, private and/or community-based services

- Adopted a **pro-poor policy strategy**, prioritizing children from disadvantaged households in their expansion efforts and introducing free and/or compulsory pre-primary education.

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Despite progress, the number of out of school children in Africa remains high

OUT-OF-SCHOOL RATE IN AFRICA (2019)

PRIMARY — 18.8
LOWER SECONDARY — 36.7
UPPER SECONDARY — 57.5
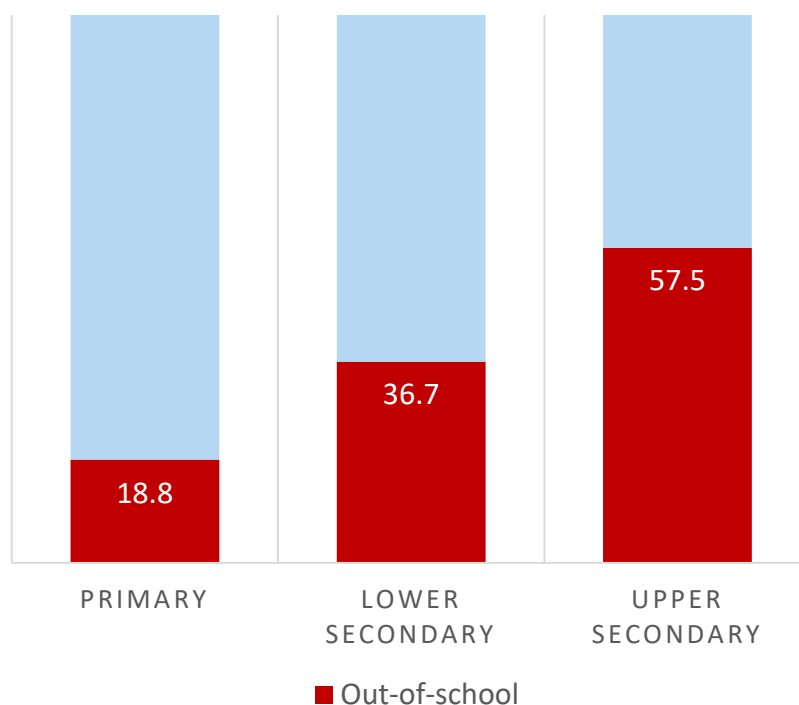
■ Out-of-school

Given the fast-growing African population, if the last two decades trends in out-of-school rates were to remain unchanged,

it would take **100 years** to achieve full school attendance for all children of primary school age,

235 and 280 years, respectively, to achieve zero out-of-school rates among lower and upper secondary school age children.
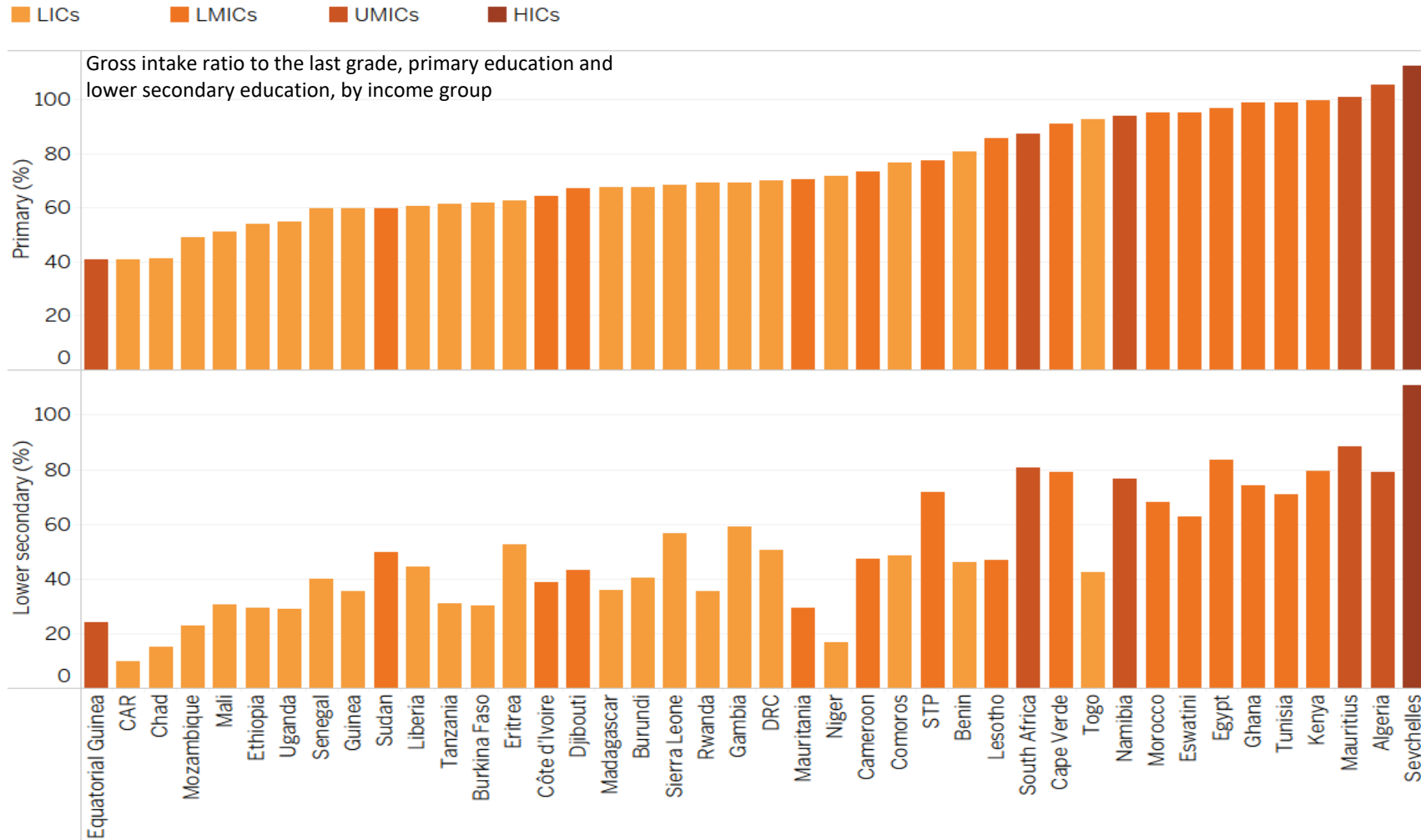
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Despite progress, the number of out of school children in Africa remains high.
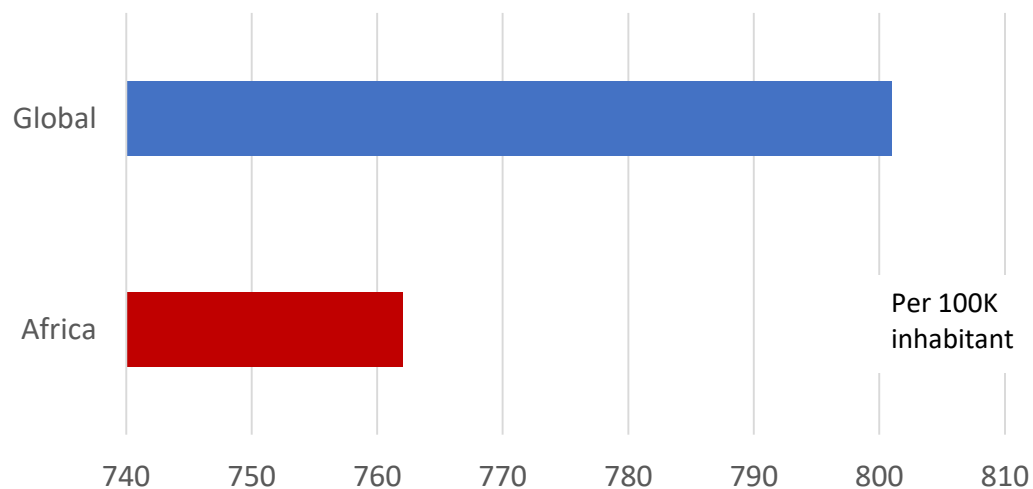
Progress in various SDG 4 targets:
Universal primary and secondary education

Target 4.1,
"Governments commit themselves to ensuring that "all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education"

CESA
"Improved completion rates at all levels"

Gross intake ratio to the last grade, primary education and lower secondary education, by income group

Legend: LICs, LMICs, UMICs, HICs

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Progress in various SDG 4 targets:
Equal access to technical, vocational, and tertiary education

African youth enrolled in TVET:
comparison with global ratio

Global

Africa

Per 100K inhabitant

740   750   760   770   780   790   800   810

With 10M youth enrolled in TVET, the average of young people between 15 and 24 years old who are enrolled in vocational education is 3%.
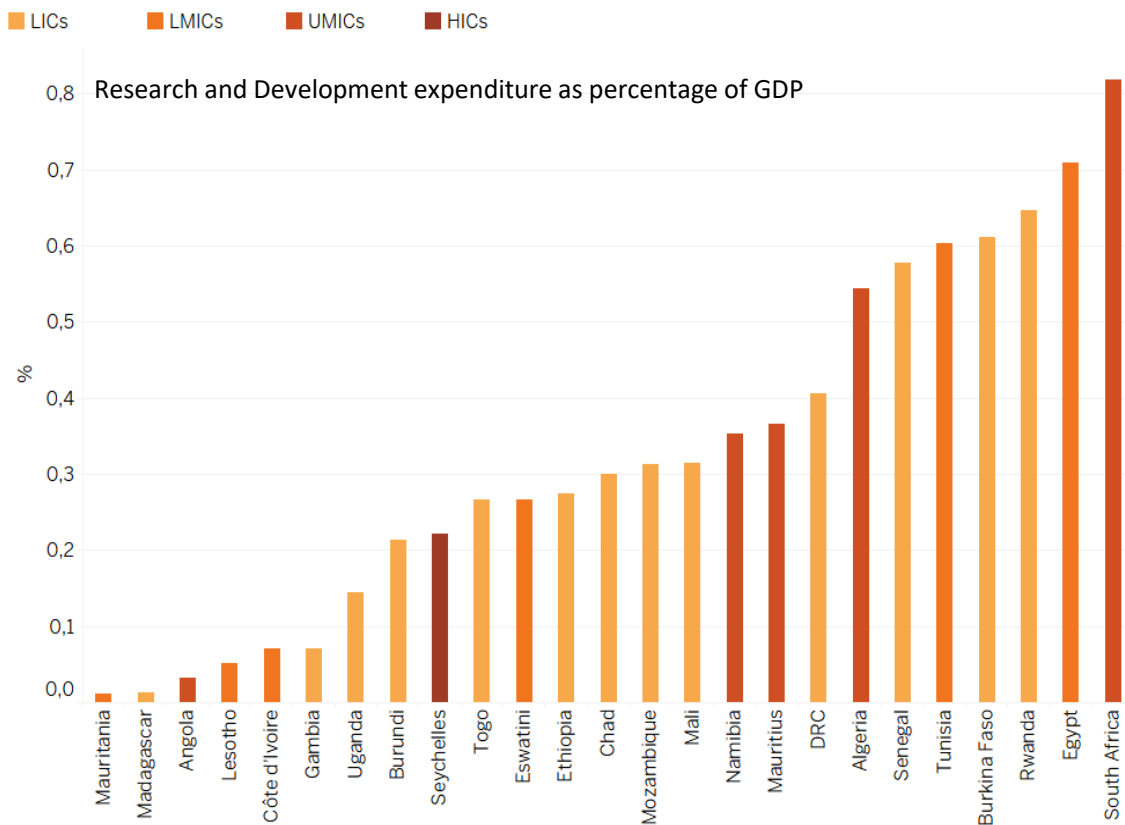
lack of adequate funding

limited strategic vision in managing the subsector
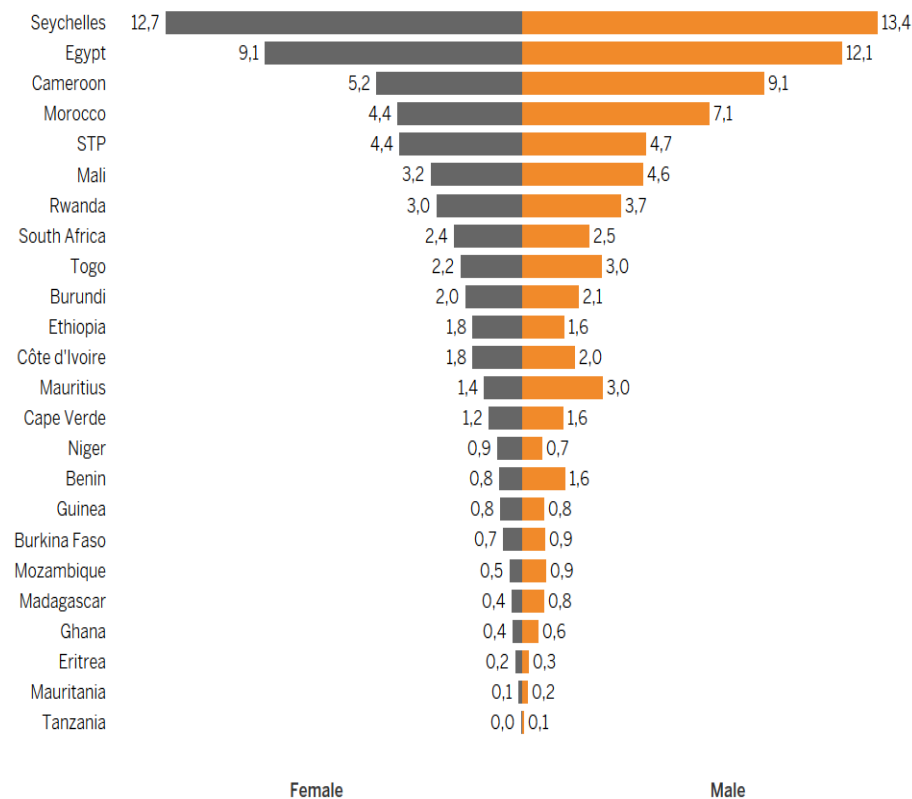
persistent social misconception of TVET

Transition from informal to formal market and capitalizing on the realities of the informal market in designing TVET and school-to-work transition models with the AU's target of 1% of GDP to be invested on R&D

Structural reforms in designing TVET programmes and shifting to a competency-based training (CBT) approach while implementation effectiveness varies across countries

Progress in various SDG 4 targets:

Relevant skills for decent work

Research and Development expenditure as percentage of GDP

Legend: LICs, LMICs, UMICs, HICs

Countries (x-axis): Mauritania, Madagascar, Angola, Lesotho, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Uganda, Burundi, Seychelles, Togo, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Chad, Mozambique, Mali, Namibia, Mauritius, DRC, Algeria, Senegal, Tunisia, Burkina Faso, Rwanda, Egypt, South Africa

Proportion of youth enrolled in vocational education

Country	Female	Male
Seychelles	12,7	13,4
Egypt	9,1	12,1
Cameroon	5,2	9,1
Morocco	4,4	7,1
STP	4,4	4,7
Mali	3,2	4,6
Rwanda	3,0	3,7
South Africa	2,4	2,5
Togo	2,2	3,0
Burundi	2,0	2,1
Ethiopia	1,8	1,6
Côte d'Ivoire	1,8	2,0
Mauritius	1,4	3,0
Cape Verde	1,2	1,6
Niger	0,9	0,7
Benin	0,8	1,6
Guinea	0,8	0,8
Burkina Faso	0,7	0,9
Mozambique	0,5	0,9
Madagascar	0,4	0,8
Ghana	0,4	0,6
Eritrea	0,2	0,3
Mauritania	0,1	0,2
Tanzania	0,0	0,1

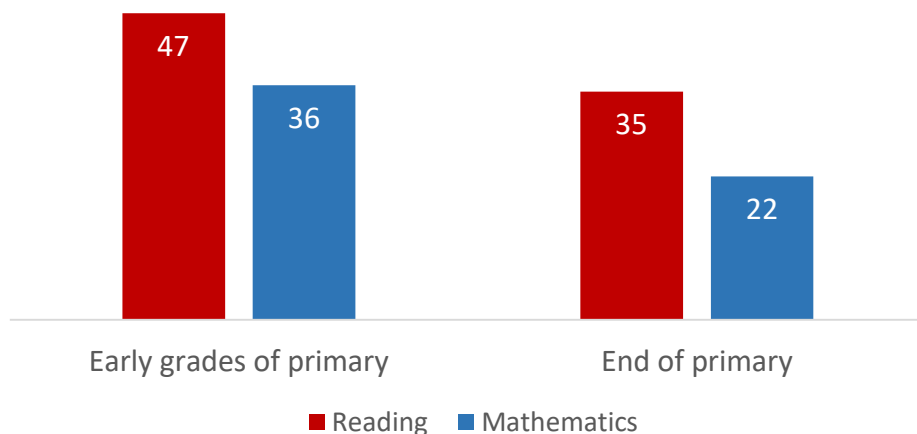**Despite the weak performances achieved so far on the main related indicators, the policies, and programs in education over the past decade did little to improve learning outcomes. The World Bank estimates 87% children in Sub-Saharan Africa are in Learning Poor**

Proportion (%) of children with minimum proficiency in Africa

	Early grades of primary	End of primary
Reading	47	35
Mathematics	36	22

■ Reading   ■ Mathematics

In addition, the education disruptions caused by COVID19 pandemic, exacerbates the learning poverty due to inequality in accessing digital learning opportunities.

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Progress in various SDG 4 targets: Gender equality & Inclusion

The continent is still facing disparities within and between countries to ensure learning for all.

Overall gender inequality in school attendance has declined sharply and has almost disappeared, skewed to income level and geography, are still prevalent.

Completion rate by household income level

- Richest
- Poorest
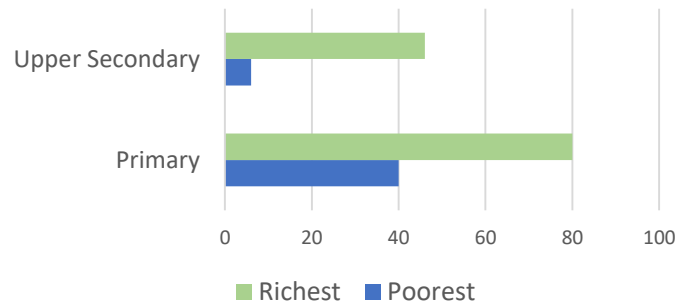
12% in rural area   **34%** in urban area

complete upper secondary education

SDG 16: Strong institutions for Education

Ensuring that national education systems are backed by strong institutions guarantees that high quality public expenditures are channeled towards education

Sub-Saharan Africa's

4.4% of GDP

16.8% of national expenditure are spent in education

However:
❑ The situation vary a lot from one country to another, with a many countries spending less than these average
❑ In addition, these financial resources need to be equitably allocated, efficiently use to achieve results and managed transparently.

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On average, the pupil–teacher ratios are 29, 37 and 24 at the preschool, primary and secondary levels respectively.

At the preschool and secondary levels, only a few countries have average ratios above 35 pupils per teacher

African Governments have introduced changes:

Education workforce management policies and systems

Use of civil servants, contract staff and volunteers, teachers being paid by parents, and use of untrained and/ or unqualified teachers, are employed in different countries to obtain a reasonable number of teachers while keeping the corresponding wage bill under control

Boost for revitalizing the teaching workforce

The ongoing expansion of the education workforce requires broader conversations about the financing priorities of both governments and development partners.

Progress in various SDG 4 targets:
Teachers
Target 4.c

CESA
"Revitalize the teaching profession to ensure quality and relevance at all levels"

The COVID19 pandemic and its consequences on education systems
- Despite governments' best efforts across the continent to reach children through remote learning, 1 out of 2 students from pre-primary to upper secondary education, could not be reached.

Limited financing for education
- While governments have committed, themselves in the framework of SDG4 goals to allocate at least 20 percent of their public expenditures to education, many countriesoin the continent are still far from this benchmark even before the COVID19.

- The African Union estimated that the immediate response to the COVID19 will cost close to 130 billion USD from the African States' public resources and as a result limited budget for education has accentuated the difficulty of reaching every learner

Digital Divide
- Digital divide still exists and exacerbated by COVID-19 pandemic
- Limited access to distance learning platforms;
- Lack of digital devices and connectivity at home and in education and training facilities; and
- Unpreparedness and limited capacity of learners teachers to adopt online learning approaches – especially for those living in rural areas.

Lack of timely and quality data
- Data is still an issue: Most African countries lack up-to-date data on education, ranging from enrolment, retention, learning assessment, teacher profiles, expenditure, learning impact etc.
- This limitation makes it difficult to measure performance against set targets within a country and secure comparable data between and among countries.

COVID-19-induced opportunities & building forward better:

- **Increased deployment of digital technology in education**

Deployment of distance learning platforms, access devices, learning materials digitization, capacity building of teachers, etc.

- **New partnerships and coalitions established**

Public private partnerships built around the need to continue education during school closures.

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Key messages

Focus on foundational learning from an early stage to raise knowledge and skill levels

- To break the cycle of learning poverty, countries need to put emphasis on foundational skills driven by basic reading and mathematics at early grades. The earlier that learning takes place, the better.

Focus on inclusive education and Training systems to reduce number of schools' dropouts and accommodate diversity

- Need to reduce dropout rates through, among others, school feeding, free uniforms, and books. Children belong to school.
- Leave no-one behind is a promise that should drive initiatives to educate girls, children living with disabilities, and other people who have historically been excluded from education.
- Invest and implement Skills and competency recognition systems for skills acquired informally

Prioritize digital connectivity and capacity enhancement to achieve learning for all and skills development

- Operationalize the AU DOTSS framework by fostering partnerships with private sector (telecommunication firms), tech companies, e.g. GEC to expand access to online learning resources to all children, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable.
- Prioritize teacher training, including digital skills for pedagogy, by exploring innovative ways to reduce the shortage of qualified teachers, especially by using ICT.

Develop efficient and innovative education and training funding mechanisms

- Build partnership with the private sector to increase domestic resources for education.
- Allocate more funding to neglected but critical sectors, such as early childhood education, technical and vocational education, where early investments pay off in the long run.

Key messages

Invest in developing more resilient education systems
- Adopt risk informed education sector planning approach to develop resilient education sector plans.
- Approach should integrate assessment, teaching and learning, monitoring and evaluation within the same framework.
- Increase country digital technology

Invest in improving education information management systems synergies with Labour market data
- Dedicate financial resources in national budgets for the collection ,analysis and dissemination and management of education and labor market data and information management systems.
- It is critical to promote education and training relevance including through on job training programmes to reduce the mismatch between education and the labour market skills needs and facilitate quicker school to work transitions.
- Establish effective coordination mechanisms and functional data repositories at the levels of the Regional Economic Community and African Union to enhance harmonization between different education data producers