

The logo for 'results' is centered within a white speech bubble shape. The word 'results' is written in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font. The speech bubble has rounded corners and a small tail pointing towards the bottom-left.

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Building on Strong Foundations: The U.S. Role in Tackling the Learning Crisis

June 20, 2023



The Global Learning Crisis

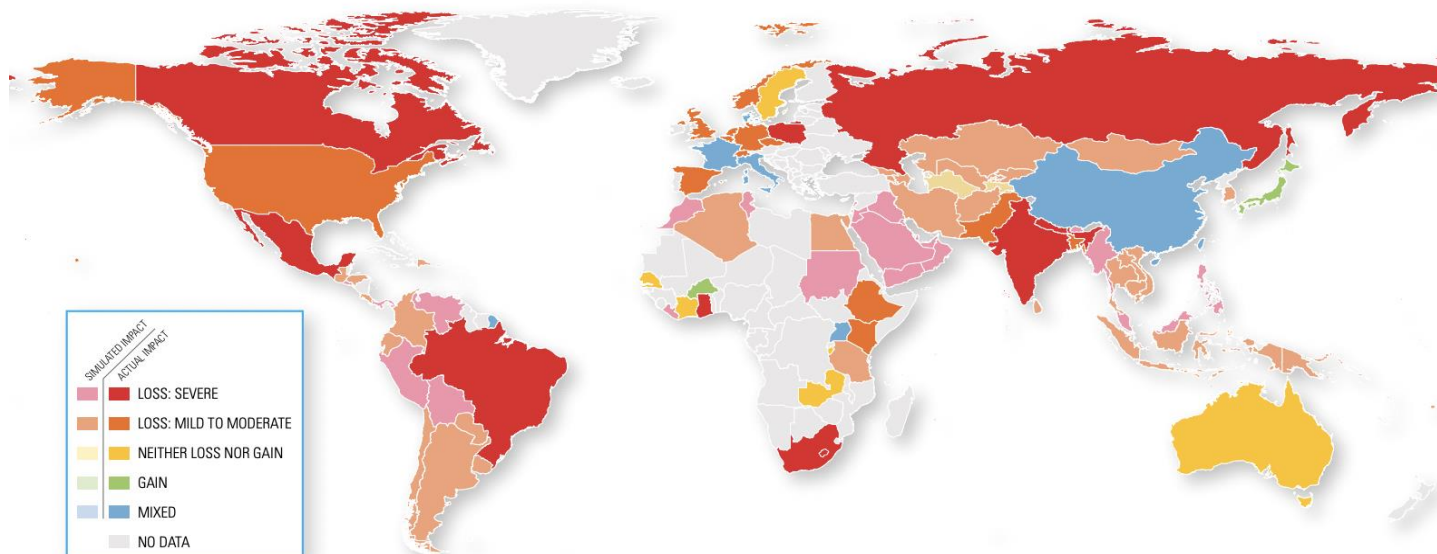
The Global Learning Crisis

- More than **90% of the world's children** have had their education disrupted by the pandemic.
- In 2021, **244 million children and young people were out of school.**
- Nearly **370 million children** worldwide missed out on daily nutrition provided by **in-school meals.**
- The longer vulnerable and marginalized children are out of school, the less likely they are to return;
- These factors have created a **learning crisis.**

Global Impact

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FIGURE 3. Impact of school closures on learning result, based on literature as of 28 February 2022



Source: Based on 65 studies reporting simulated (lighter shades) and actual observed (darker shades) learning losses/gains, covering a total of 104 countries and territories.

Note: Categorization of severity of learning loss is based on the distribution of values ('Severe' = top tercile of distribution). Losses are considered severe if $>=0.30$ decrease in standard deviations, $>=6$ months behind, $<=30$ per cent of in-person equivalent, $>=5$ percentage points decrease in share of students able to do tasks/reaching proficiency, $>=10$ per cent decline in performance, $>=10$ per cent decline in learning-adjusted years of schooling, or $>=50$ per cent decline in instructional loss (average share of the school year lost). Losses are categorized based on the largest reported loss, regardless of age/grade and subject.

Source: "Where Are We in Education Recovery" by UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank

Global Economic Impact

“The staggering effects of school closures reach beyond learning. This generation of children could lose a combined total of US\$21 trillion in lifetime earnings in present value or **the equivalent of 17% of today’s global GDP** – a sharp rise from the 2021 estimate of a US\$17 trillion loss.”

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/overview>

COVID's impact on foundational skills

- **70% of 10 year olds in low- and middle-income countries experience “learning poverty”.**
- **In some countries, as many as 9 out of 10 children are missing out on valuable literacy and numeracy skills by third grade.**
- **Girls, children with disabilities, and youth living in remote areas faced greater barriers during Covid-19, and many have yet to return.**

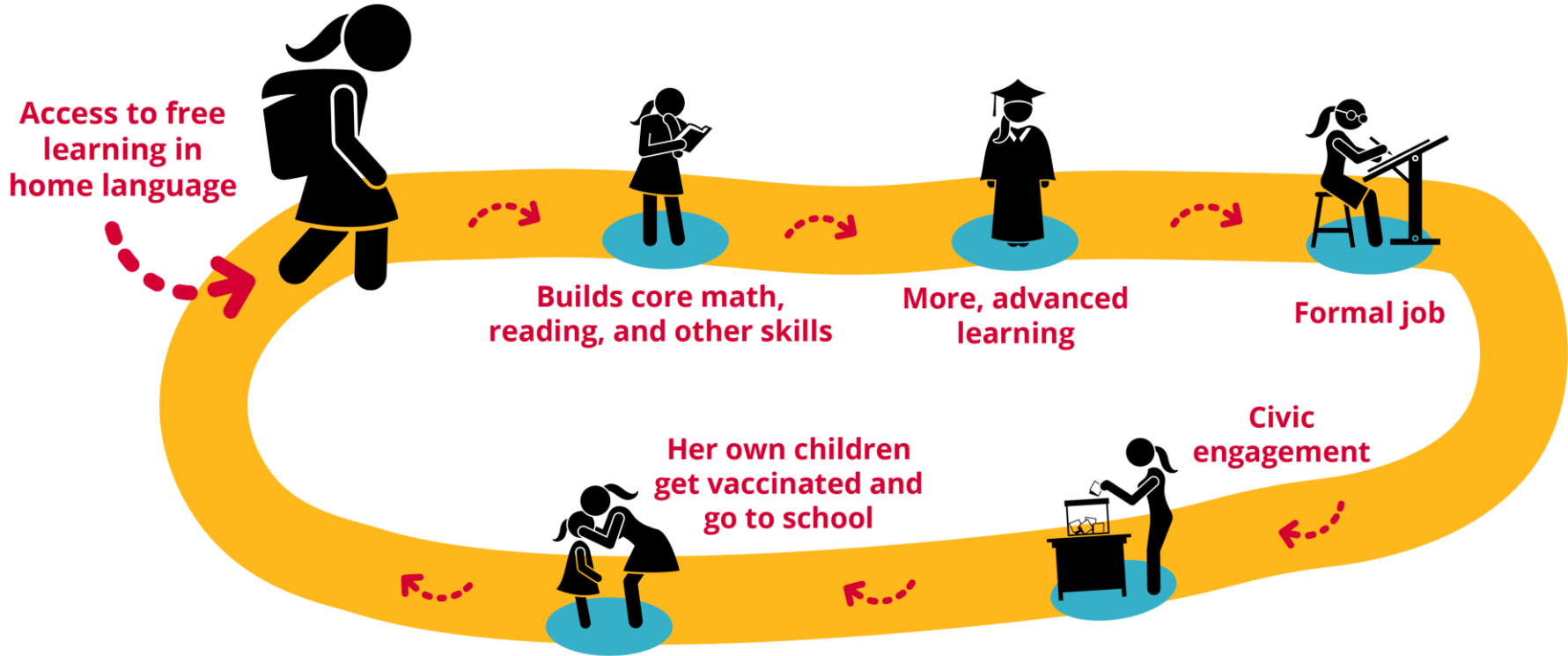


Photo Credit: USAID Liberia

What is Foundational Learning?

- Simply put, foundational learning is the “basic literacy, numeracy, and transferable skills that are the building blocks for a productive life of learning.”
- From an economic perspective, foundational learning is the beginning of “human capital development” because countries where children have the opportunity to master reading and math see increased annual economic growth, more youth completing secondary school, and more children living past the age of 5. “Globally, there is a 9% increase in hourly earnings for every extra year of schooling.”
- **In a nutshell, foundational learning sets children and communities on a pathway towards growth and self-reliance.**

Foundational Learning pays off for generations



The Opportunity of Learning

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- Quality education can **end cycles of poverty** by increasing future wages, preventing child marriages, and reducing infant mortality.
- A child born to a mother who can read is **50 percent more likely to survive** past age 5 than a child born to a non-literate mother.
- Achieving universal primary and secondary education would help more than **420 million people to move out of poverty**.
- **Reducing barriers to education** would empower more girls, low-income children, children with disabilities, and youth affected by conflict to learn; Only 1 in 3 girls in low-income countries completes lower secondary school.

Action is needed to address these learning gaps

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Congressional action to pass the READ Act (S.41/H.R. 681) will:

- **Direct USAID to implement literacy and numeracy programs** to ensure access and learning for millions of children who are out of school, particularly girls and boys affected by conflict and crises.
- **Improve coordination** between U.S. agencies, partner countries, implementing agencies, and multilateral organizations like the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) & Education Cannot Wait (ECW).
- Ensure accountability through **rigorous monitoring, evaluation, and reporting** on foundational learning programs.

The transformational power of foundational learning is within reach

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- <https://results.org/wp-content/uploads/edprimerFINAL.pdf>

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