



**2022**

**YOUTH REPORT**

# *NON-STATE ACTORS IN EDUCATION:*

Who chooses? Who loses?



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**Global Education Monitoring Report series**

- 2021/2 *Non-state actors in education: Who chooses? Who loses?*
- 2020 *Inclusion and education: All means all*
- 2019 *Migration, displacement and education: Building bridges, not walls*
- 2017/8 *Accountability in education: Meeting our commitments*
- 2016 *Education for people and planet: Creating sustainable futures for all*

The Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action specifies that the mandate of the *Global Education Monitoring Report* is to be 'the mechanism for monitoring and reporting on SDG 4 and on education in the other SDGs' with the responsibility to 'report on the implementation of national and international strategies to help hold all relevant partners to account for their commitments as part of the overall SDG follow-up and review'. It is prepared by an independent team hosted by UNESCO.

The *Global Education Monitoring Report* team is responsible for the choice and the presentation of the facts contained in this book and for the opinions expressed therein, which are not necessarily those of UNESCO and do not commit the Organization. Overall responsibility for the views and opinions expressed in the report is taken by its Director.

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# Who chooses? Who loses?

## SHORT SUMMARY

This report is written in partnership with the Global Student Forum to help you learn about the youth perspective on the different roles and impact of non-state actors in education. For many, a discussion on the role of non-state actors in education quickly boils down to a debate about whether private schools support or undermine good-quality education.

But, as this report shows, the role of non-state actors impacts many more corners of the education sector, from the textbooks you use, the food in your canteens, any additional tutorial support you get, the skills you might learn at work and much more.

The report invites youth to join a call for governments to #RightTheRules which will ensure that non-state actor involvement does not compromise the promise of providing 1 year of pre-primary and 12 years of primary and secondary education free for all.

UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It seeks to build peace through international cooperation in education, the sciences and culture. UNESCO believes that political and economic arrangements are not enough to secure the lasting and sincere support of the peoples. Peace must be founded upon dialogue and mutual understanding, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of humanity. In this spirit, UNESCO develops educational tools and cultural and scientific programmes to strengthen bonds among nations, help countries adopt international standards and foster the free flow of ideas and sharing of knowledge.

**In low- and middle-income countries, one in twelve families has to borrow to pay for education.**



Since wars begin in the minds of men and women, it is in the minds of men and women that the defenses of peace must be constructed.

GLOBAL EDUCATION MONITORING REPORT

2022

# Youth Report

NON-STATE ACTORS IN EDUCATION:  
WHO CHOOSES? WHO LOSES?

# FOREWORD

**As we inch closer to the deadline for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, we see the challenges that lie ahead. The gaps are clearer and the figures speak louder than words. Globally, the call for action from youth leaders and activists to governments and decision makers has been reverberant.**

I am the appointed representative for the Global Student Forum, the world's first and only independent, democratic and representative student governance structure dedicated to promoting the rights and perspectives of student organizations and movements at the global level. We are proud to have authored the 2022 Youth Report with the GEM Report team at such a critical time amid the global pandemic.

Although public education has been labelled as inclusive and accessible to students of all backgrounds, the data in the 2022 GEM Youth Report expose some of the gaps that continue to exclude some of the most marginalized children. One third of household education expenditure in low- and middle-income countries comes from those whose children attend public schools. The sharp cost of public education is felt by those who are trapped by poverty. We call on governments to scrutinize the cost of education for families and ensure that 1 year of pre-primary and 12 years of primary and secondary education are truly free for all.

While we advocate for states to recognize their obligation to finance high-quality primary and secondary education for all children and youth, it would be myopic to ignore that non-state actors provide education for 350 million primary and secondary school students around the world. Non-state actors, motivated by a range of reasons, from charity to profit, play a significant role in many education systems into whose fabric they are intricately woven. However, we need to be mindful that non-state actors should not become an obstacle to free, inclusive and accessible education.

We need to ask where and how non-state actors are effective in fulfilling our common goal of education for all. Should non-state actors' participation in education be encouraged, contained or prevented? While the answer to this question is indeed highly specific to each country's economic, social, political, historical and cultural context, the principles of equity and inclusion should be respected.

I implore you to join our #RightTheRules campaign to hold governments to account for their commitments and continue these much-needed discussions with your minister of education. Let's move forward together with a greater sense of urgency for action.



**Dr. Musarrat Maisha Reza,**  
Global Student Forum and youth  
representative of the *Global  
Education Monitoring Report's*  
Advisory Board

*Maisha*

**Education is transformative for the self and wider society. Enshrined in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, education acts as the catalyst for human flourishing through the actualization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**

This is no less true in higher education, which is a source of dissemination of knowledge and implementation of principles on sustainable development, to equip and empower the next generation of young activists and socially responsible citizens.

Yet the desire to 'build a better world through higher education' is hindered by numerous equity and accessibility issues. The rise of non-state actors and non-traditional agencies' provision and intervention in higher education serves as both an integral opportunity and a significant challenge. While the innovation of non-state actors allowed for the digital 'reconfiguration' of higher education campuses during the COVID-19 pandemic, such involvement has not always resulted in a balanced reshaping of the social and digital infrastructure of higher education. New public-private partnerships continue to blur the boundaries between academic and corporate environments, demonstrated in the rise of non-state actors in course delivery, academic quality assessment, technological development, research outcomes, data privacy, and scholarship and stipend provision.

As multinational corporations continue to expand across borders, a new form of student – the offshore student – has emerged, whose existence marks a simultaneously intriguing and uncertain development in higher education. Meanwhile, costly third-party providers now support admissions for enrolling at prestigious universities, influencing the global recognition of qualifications and interregional mobility. Curricula and pedagogical structure now reflect corporate interests, demonstrated in the increase of private topic-based funding in post-secondary education institutions. Private technological development continues to favour the Global North while disadvantaging the Global South, burdening many peoples with increasingly systemic – even intergenerational – debt to afford such technologies.

Even with some having easier access to these technologies, significant ethical questions remain regarding surveillance, inclusiveness and the implications of these technological tools on public health and well-being. In an era where inequalities in education – within societies and between countries – intersect with existential crises including climate change and pandemics, the maintenance of free and independent teaching and research must be recognized as essential to endorse collective holism for sustainable development.

The Global Student Forum, the umbrella organization of the world's major student federations, stands in solidarity with the #RightTheRules campaign. The regional partners – the All-African Students' Union (AASU), the Commonwealth Students' Association (CSA), the European Students' Union (ESU), the Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU), and the Organización Continental Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Estudiantes (OCLAE) – welcome the GEM Youth Report *Who chooses? Who loses?*, calling for the monitoring of educational affordability and the regulation of private education. With education recognized as a key instrument for the achievement of the SDGs, examining the impact of non-state actors in higher education and the wider education sector is essential to ensure transformative change in an increasingly complex world.



**Ellen Dixon**



**Giuseppe Lipari**



**Ettore Bucci**

Global Student Forum

# GET INVOLVED

Join our campaign calling for governments to **#RightTheRules** and ensure that non-state actor involvement does not compromise their promise of providing one year of pre-primary and 12 years of primary and secondary education free for all.



**In low- and middle-income countries, 1 in 6 families has to save, while 1 in 12 has to borrow to pay for education.** In Haiti, Kenya, the Philippines and Uganda, at least 30% of families borrow for education.

**Families in the poorest countries are paying the most for education.** Households cover 39% of the total cost of education in low- and lower-middle-income countries, compared with only 16% in high-income countries, with the government covering the remainder.

**Public education still has many hidden costs.** About one third of household primary and secondary education expenditure in low- and middle-income countries comes from households with children in public schools. Much of the cost comes from school uniform and other school supplies; these accounted for almost two fifths of the amount households were spending on education in 15 low- and middle-income countries.

**Private schools and private supplementary tuition are pushing up these costs for households.** Globally, 3.2% of household budgets is spent on education on average but that rises to 6% in countries where a high share of enrolment is in private schools.

**One in four countries does not regulate the amount of fees charged by private schools.** In low- and lower-middle-income countries, poor parents employ a variety of strategies to cope with private school expenses, including resorting to unregistered and cheaper schools, which are likely to have poor facilities and offer lower quality of instruction.

We call for governments to:

- » Monitor household spending on education – and make sure the poorest are neither priced out of high-quality schools nor stratified into lower-quality schools.
- » Improve the enforcement of regulations of private education but also use such regulations to promote equity and inclusion in education.

Go to the end of this report to find out:

- » What percentage of families have to borrow money to afford their children's education in your country.
- » What share of the education bill is being covered by households in your country.

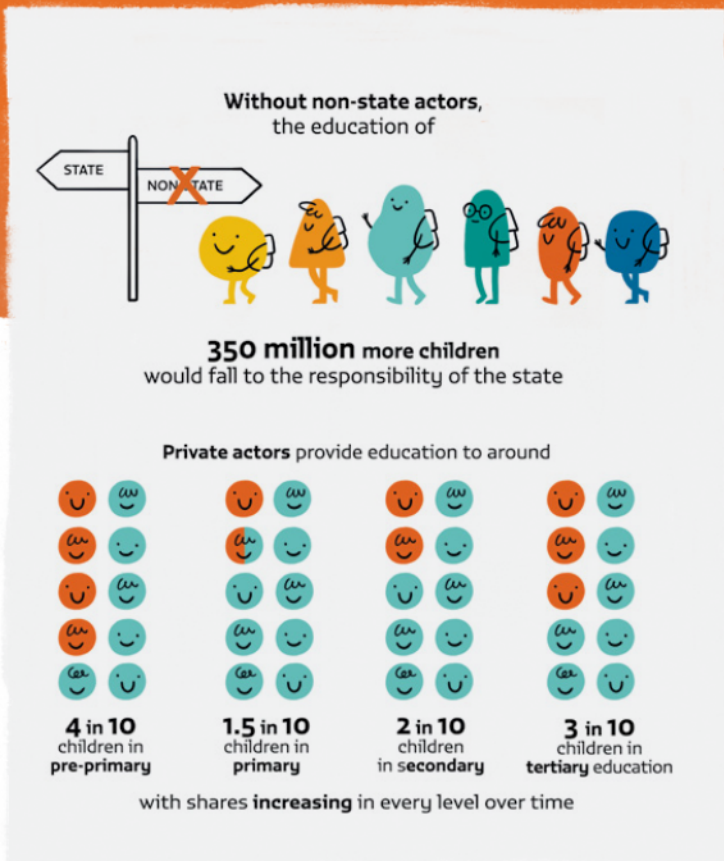
**... AND JOIN OUR CAMPAIGN, BY TWEETING THE FINDINGS OR USING OUR TEMPLATE LETTER TO WRITE DIRECTLY TO YOUR EDUCATION MINISTER.**



# KEY MESSAGES

**There is no part of education in which non-state actors are not involved.**

Put simply, without non-state actors, the education of 350 million more children would fall on the state. But non-state engagement also affects the textbooks children use, the food in their canteens, the additional tutorial support they get, the skills they learn at work and much more.



**Most people support public education.**

Three in four people in 34 middle- and high-income countries would prefer more public spending on education, with support increasing the more unequal the country. Almost 9 in 10 people think education should primarily be publicly provided.



Non-state actors set up low-cost private schools in Ghana. The influx of these schools led to competition for quality education; however, it also **INCREASED THE EXCLUSION OF MARGINALIZED GROUPS, ESPECIALLY THE POOREST.**

Some faith-based schools provided scholarships to some brilliant but needy students. Some also provided study materials and uniforms to support poor schools in some communities.

*BISMARCK, 31, GHANA*



Education, as a fundamental human right, should be **PUBLICLY FUNDED AND FREE.** Public, free and quality lifelong learning is not only essential on an individual level but a **CORNERSTONE OF A HEALTHY DEMOCRACY.** Private provision of education risks undermining democratic norms and social cohesion by inviting the influence and decision making of actors not accountable to citizens over a universal right. Blending public and private provision, however well-intentioned, will also create a hierarchy within education and inequality of opportunity.

*GEORGIA, 29, UNITED KINGDOM*

### But such support has gradually eroded in several low- and middle-income countries.

Where public schools were in short supply and their quality had deteriorated, many families voted with their feet. The share of private institutions worldwide increased by seven percentage points in about 10 years: to 17% by 2013 in primary and to 26% by 2014 in secondary education. It has remained roughly constant since. In Central and Southern Asia, the share of private enrolment is 36% in primary and 48% in secondary education.

### Public education is not free.

Households account for 30% of total education spending globally and 39% in low- and lower-middle-income countries. This is partly due to wealthier families trying to give their children a competitive advantage. But a large part of spending is spent on pre-primary, primary and secondary education that governments committed to provide free of charge. About 8% of families borrow to pay for education, rising to 12% in low-income countries and 30% or more in Haiti, Kenya, the Philippines and Uganda.

### Public education is often not inclusive.

Many public education systems fail to prevent stratification and segregation. An index of social diversity in schools, based on Programme for International Student Assessment data, found that Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico had similar high levels of stratification in 2018, although only Chile tends to be criticized for the high share of private institutions in its system.

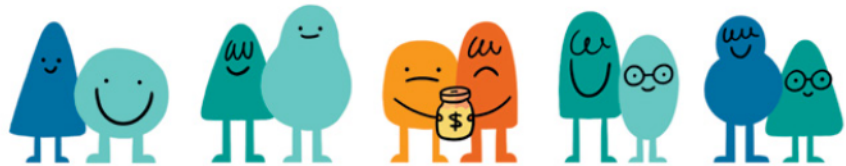


Publicly provided education in Guinea is not sufficient, is not available and, above all, not of good quality because the existing schools are almost all dilapidated. Those in the interior of the country are in need of teachers. Where there are teachers, they are not well trained or they have training but it is outdated. Privately provided schools have somewhat adequate infrastructure, but you just have to note the lack of control of their operations by the state.

*MAMADOU, 25, GUINEA*

**Costs for private education are a major issue for the poorest parents.**

**One in five families**



has to **save** to pay for **school fees**.

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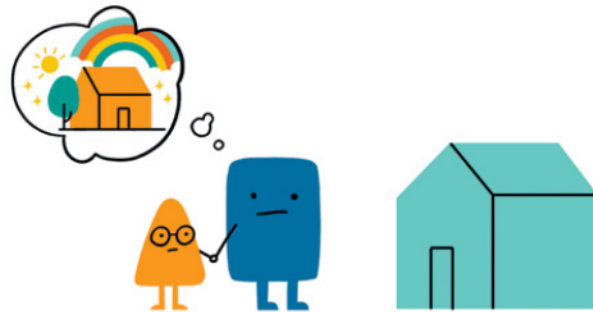
The governments should invest in public education to guarantee its quality. What happens in my country, Brazil, is that the public education at the schools is bad quality; only the richest who study at private schools have access to quality education and, as a result, are admitted to the best universities, which are all public. The private universities, where most of the poor students go to, have no quality and should be more fiscalized.

*BIANCA, 22, BRAZIL*

### No one type of provider delivers education of better quality than any other.

Data from 30 low- and middle-income countries show that, once household characteristics are accounted for, the apparent premium from attending private school drops by half to two thirds. In a sample of 49 countries, the richest are almost 10 times likelier than the poor to go to private school. And parents who can choose schools do so because of religious beliefs, convenience and student demographic characteristics rather than quality, about which they rarely have sufficient information.

Data from **30 low- and middle-income countries** found that the benefits of attending **private school**



drops by **half to two-thirds** after adjusting for **household wealth** and **selection** issues.

"

The most common tax is the 'class' or 'school fund'. This is a flat tax each pupil pays for stationery or other costs which should be paid by local authorities. But in many cases, it is not. Even though compulsory collecting of these funds is banned by law, it is veiled as a 'voluntary donation' with the peer pressure of obligation attached.

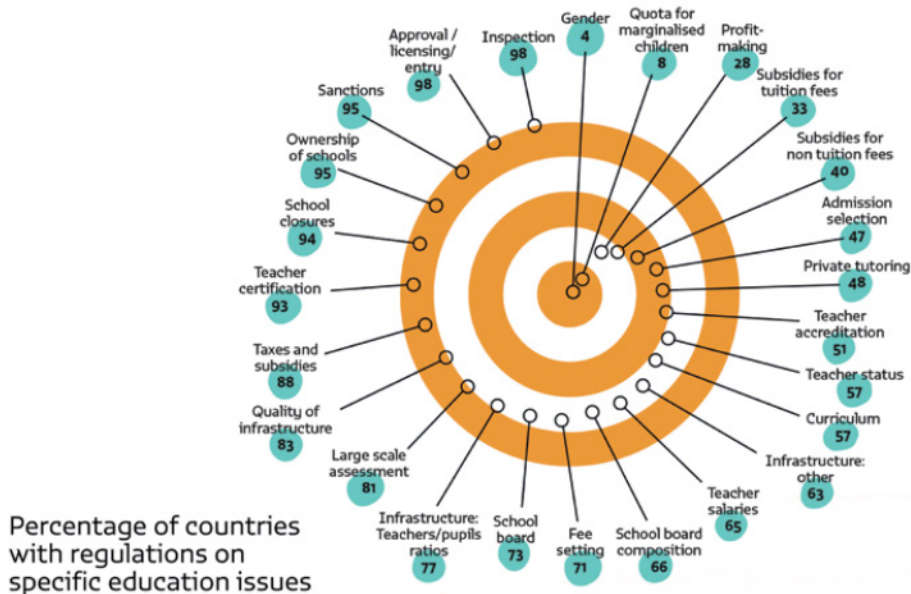
*ONIȚA, 24, ROMANIA*

"

There are no fees for public education in Austria. However, hidden costs are everywhere, starting with school materials, lunch, public transportation tickets, and including extracurricular activities, school trips and tutoring. Summing up the hidden costs per day is always a shock.

*ALEXANDRA, 21, AUSTRIA*

## #RightTheRules: Many countries do not have enough regulations protecting equity and quality in education



### Regulatory, monitoring and enforcement capacity tends to be low where the need is high.

Analysis of 211 education systems for the Profiles Enhancing Education Review (PEER) website shows that regulations tend to focus on registration, approval or licensing (98%), teacher certification (93%), infrastructure (80%) and teacher/pupil ratios (74%). Regulations are less likely to focus on quality or equity: 67% regulate fee setting, 55% prevent selective student admission procedures in non-state schools, 27% ban profit making and only 7% have quotas supporting access of disadvantaged groups. Private tutoring is unregulated in 48% of countries and regulated only in commercial legislation in 11% of countries.

Government has to play an oversight role through the Ministry of Education to monitor implementation of curriculum. It should be able to certify all learning centres to ensure they are of a good quality, train teachers [and] design an academic curriculum.

However, there are so many schools, especially private schools that are not of good quality, with unqualified teachers, yet no deliberate efforts have been made by the government to improve this. This affects learning outcomes.

LYNDA, 27, UGANDA

"

I think governments should extend a supervisory role to private schools to ensure that what is taught and the schools' principles and monetary rules do not conflict with what the country stands for.

*AWUKAMA, 24, GHANA*

**Non-state actors are even more present in early childhood, technical, tertiary and adult education.**

This is sometimes at the expense of equity and quality. In the United States, profit-maximizing universities have been linked to the deterioration of student outcomes. Institutions providing training through market competition, such as Australia's VET FEE-HELP loan programme and India's National Skill Development Corporation, were forced to rethink accountability and monitoring processes to increase the quality of private provision and improve employability outcomes.

**Governments need to see all education institutions, students and teachers as part of a single system.**

Standards, information, incentives and accountability should help governments protect, respect and fulfil the right to education for all and should prevent them from turning their eyes away from pockets of privilege or exploitation. Publicly funded education does not have to be publicly provided, but disparity in education processes, student outcomes and teacher working conditions should be addressed head-on. Efficiency and innovation should not be a commercial secret; rather, they should be diffused and practised by all. To achieve that, transparency and integrity in public education policy processes need to be maintained.

"

Government has a leading role to play in promoting quality assurance in institutions of learning and ensuring that everyone gets access to top-quality education.

*OSMAN, 26, SIERRA LEONE*

"

I am following a part-time Master degree programme at a private university at the moment. Unfortunately, it was hard to find a publicly provided course that gives me the flexibility to combine education with work.

*SEBASTIAN, 28, AUSTRIA*

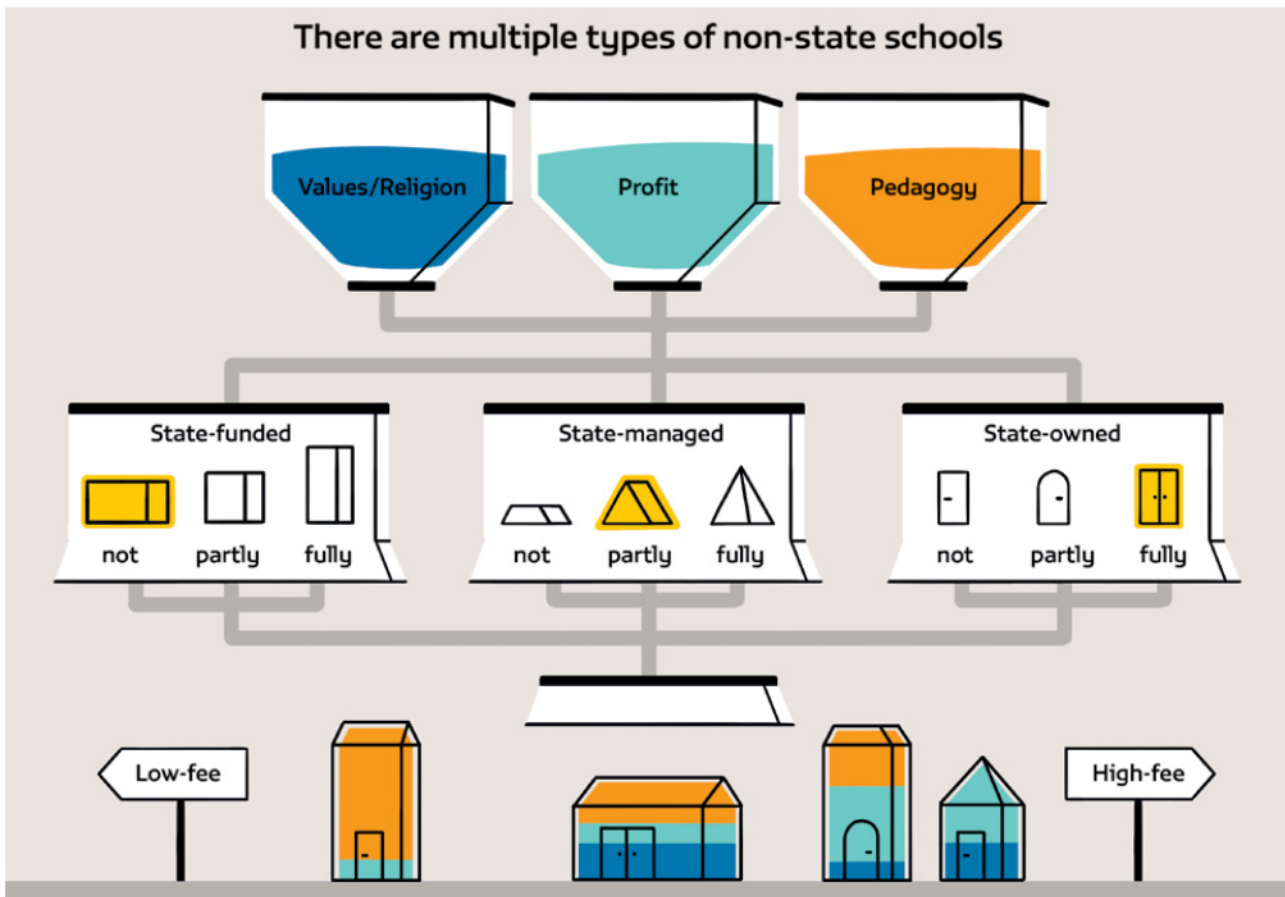
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I think governments have a responsibility to ensure every young person can access a high level of education and this means ensuring that a similar and high standard of education is provided in both private and public schools. They must take on the responsibility of ensuring there are no inequalities in our education systems.

*NEVILLE, 18, IRELAND*

## MYTHS ABOUT STATE AND NON-STATE ACTORS IN EDUCATION PREVAIL

Ten recurring myths about state and non-state actors in education are questioned throughout this report.



**Myth 1. State and non-state actors can be clearly distinguished.** Discussion of non-state actors in education typically involves a binary classification: public and private schools. In practice, the landscape is more complex and distinctions are far less clear-cut. Non-state actors are highly heterogeneous. They enter the education sector for diverse reasons related to ideas, values, beliefs and interests. Many enter into formal or informal organizational arrangements with government, including contracting and public-private partnerships, which blur distinguishing lines.

**Myth 2. The extent of privatization is known.** Descriptions of trends in the role of non-state actors often rely on the share of private institutions in total enrolment. But how do countries account for public school teachers who supplement their income by teaching students after hours? How public is an education system that outsources textbooks, assessment or data management, or even catering and transport? Is a government policy written by a lobbyist still considered public?



I think that student loans should be forbidden, because they are a disincentive to study. Access to education should be free for all students; all barriers related to the cost of education are a violation of the key concept of education as a human right.

*GIUSEPPE, 24, ITALY*

**Myth 3. The private sector is to blame for privatization in education.**

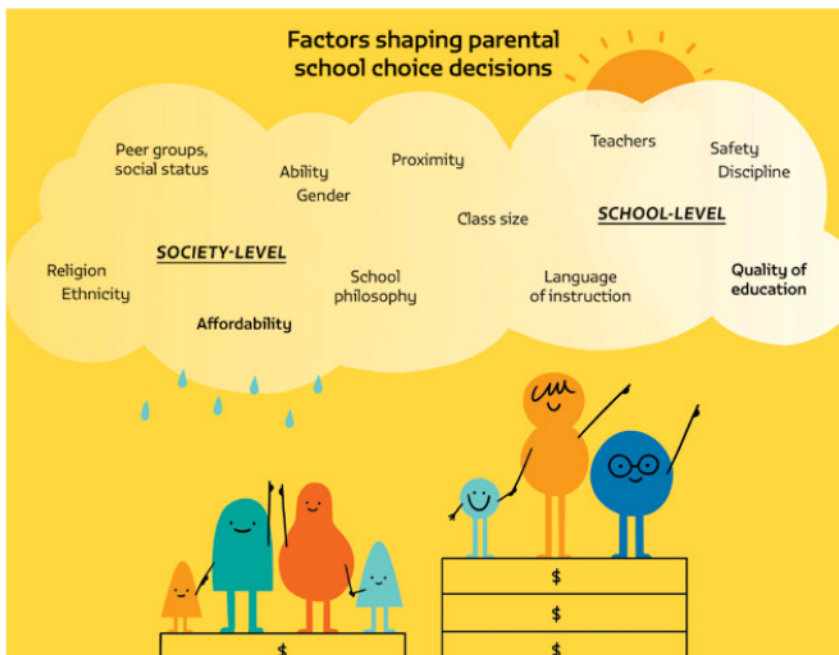
The vast majority of private providers are single proprietor schools. They emerged in response to genuine parental concerns about public school quality lowered by neglect. When the decline in quality became clear, rich and, to a lesser extent, poorer households left the public system, which undermined its support and left it underfunded. Elitism among political leaders increased their tolerance for inequality and reduced their commitment to protect public education and the disadvantaged populations that benefited from it.

**Myth 4. Public education is equitable.**

Households often incur high education costs through hidden fees, avoidable out-of-pocket payments and additional expenditure to compensate for what public schools do not offer. While it is common to criticize education systems that have opened the doors to non-state providers that exacerbate inequality, many public education systems fail to prevent stratification and segregation.

**Myth 5. Parents base school choice on robust information about quality.**

A foundational assumption among supporters of non-state schools and school choice is that parents, as consumers, have access to information about the best schools and use it efficiently. In practice, data on schools' impact are too complex to manage and communicate. And parents often ignore such information, choosing schools that appeal to them for other reasons: religious beliefs, convenience and students' demographic characteristics.



Education is a human right, not a business. There should be no profit made.

*NEVILLE, 18, IRELAND*



My parents' decision on school choice was mainly based on their income level.

*KEXFORD, 30, GHANA*

“ My parents prioritized a public school to ensure diversity in my schoolmates. Private schools typically attract a segment of people with resources, which my parents did not believe was necessary nor healthy or helpful to my development – as a human being or in my educational growth. My parents would have the resources to send me to a private school but chose not to due to the above.

FREDERIKKE, 29, DENMARK



to go to **private school** in a sample of **49 countries**.

“

A private school that charges a considerable amount of fees will incentivize teachers and the board to provide students with opportunities that a government school could not. Furthermore, government schools in India really lack facilities including the ability to transition all teachers and students to online learning.

ELINA, 17, INDIA

#### **Myth 6. Competition leads to school improvement.**

Accountability and healthy competition motivate some people to improve. In the economic sphere, firms compete to survive, as profit making is why they exist. But it is not clear how such dynamics play out in education. Studies that demonstrate system-wide effects of competition are rare, due to the complexity of the subject matter, and findings have been inconclusive. Worse, competition can lead non-state schools to pander to parents' aspirations, against good pedagogical practice.

#### **Myth 7. Private schools and universities are better.**

Comparison of public and private school examination pass rates is the usual evidence relied upon by the media and read by parents. In practice, student intake varies, with better-off, well-educated and highly aspirational parents far more likely to choose a private school. Private schools, in turn, may be able to screen students to maximize the possibility of top results. When such factors are controlled for, the gap between public and private schools is usually slashed or eliminated.

#### **Myth 8. The private sector is a solution to the out-of-school challenge.**

With more than 350 million primary and secondary school students enrolled in private institutions, it would be a crisis if these students switched over to the public education system. However, private schools are booming in urban areas, where enrolment levels are already close to universal. They are largely absent in rural areas. And in low- and middle-income countries, children from the richest 20% of households are 10 times more likely to attend a private school than their peers from the poorest 20%.

#### **Myth 9. The private sector is a solution to education financing gaps.**

There are often high hopes that the private sector can play an important role in financing education to help achieve SDG 4. Yet there is no evidence so far that it is willing or able to do so. But it could make other contributions, for instance

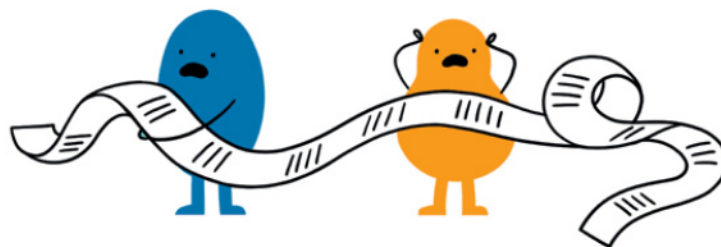


through tax, especially in low- and lower-middle-income countries where domestic revenue mobilization rates are low and opportunities for tax evasion and avoidance are rife. The private sector could also take a stronger lead in skills development and childcare services in line with national regulations.

**Myth 10. Regulations can address all concerns about non-state provision.**

There is consensus that non-state activity in education should be regulated. But regulations do not meaningfully address how to promote system-wide equity and quality. Few governments monitor whether the flight of wealthier households to private schools segregates the education system or how household education spending increases inequality. Many governments allow selective school admissions. Few regulate private supplementary tuition or lobbying, which remains largely undefined under the guise of partnerships. Even fewer have the resources to implement and enforce regulations effectively.

Low- and middle-income countries lost **US\$200 billion** in tax revenue,



which **exceeds total official development assistance.**



The education system in Hungary is not the best, unfortunately. There are good things in it, but the way teachers teach is really bad. Because of this, almost every student has to go to a private teacher, usually for maths, chemistry, physics and foreign languages. The sad part of it is that children have around three, four or five lessons per week, which is a lot, and because of this, the teachers at schools don't really want to do more free lessons for the kids who need help to understand the topics. Because of this, I needed to go to a private math teacher three times a week. It cost me a lot of money, and it says a lot about our education system.

*JÁZMIN, 19, HUNGARY*



Tutoring was unregulated and ranged from professional tutoring 'agencies' to retired teachers to friends of friends who were knowledgeable in certain areas but without any qualifications. Ironically, those from already privileged backgrounds were usually charged less (or not charged at all from 'friends of parents') than lower-income families without highly educated contacts who were at the mercy of private agencies.

*GEORGIA, 29, UNITED KINGDOM*

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Far from a simple public vs private dichotomy, there is a variety of non-state school types. Moreover, the role of non-state actors extends well beyond provision of schooling to many other interventions at various education levels and through multiple channels of influence. The question for policymakers is not just whether non-state involvement in education meets agreed standards of quality, but also how non-state actors help or hinder efforts to ensure equity and inclusion in education.

Two strategic directions, relating to funding and provision, stand out in relation to governments' task of protecting and fulfilling the right to education. First, governments pledged in 2015 that all children and young people would have free, publicly funded access to 1 year of pre-primary and 12 years of primary and secondary education. However, with one in three countries devoting less than 4% of gross domestic product (GDP) and less than 15% of total public spending to education, many do not match this commitment with the required funding. Second, governments need to decide how strong a role they will play in delivering and managing education. Their perspectives vis-à-vis school choice and non-state actors vary widely.

Various non-state actors have become more visible in many aspects of education. Businesses make choices about whether education is a lucrative activity and how to market their goods and services, but also to whom they are answerable: just shareholders or others as well? Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations choose priorities and decide how to address them: Should they fill gaps or advocate for the state to do so? Foundations also set priorities and choose how to influence society and how closely to work with education systems. Teachers and their organizations make choices that can strengthen or erode trust in public education systems.

The report's rallying call – Who chooses? Who loses? – is an invitation for policymakers to question relationships with non-state actors in terms of fundamental choices: between freedom of choice and equity; between encouraging initiative (i.e. improving quality anywhere in the system) and setting standards (i.e. improving quality for all learners); between population groups of differing means and needs; between their immediate commitments (i.e. 12 years of free education under SDG 4) and those that are to be progressively realized (e.g. post-secondary education); and between education and other social sectors.

With these thoughts in mind, the following recommendations were framed to help #RightTheRules to ensure that equity in education is protected in financing, quality, governance, innovation and policymaking. The aim is to harness the contributions non-state actors can make to deliver education of quality without sacrificing equality. Mobilizing this potential could also challenge governments to purposefully address low quality and inequality in public provision.



Markus Grolik

## 1. Does the financing of education favour some learners and exclude others?

**Fulfil the commitment to make 1 year of pre-primary and 12 years of primary and secondary education free – but publicly financed does not necessarily mean publicly provided, as long as equity can be ensured**

**Governments should make education of good quality free at the point of access.**

They need to ensure that households do not pay for education goods and services that their countries have committed to make available free of charge.

**Governments need to monitor out-of-pocket education spending, using household income and expenditure surveys.**

They often turn their eyes away from less-well-documented costs that increase inequality.

**All providers, state and non-state, must offer the same conditions to students.**

A commitment for education to be publicly funded does not mean that all education must be publicly provided. But all education institutions should be treated as part of a single system with common rules, financial support and oversight mechanisms.



“ In my school, there were many hidden costs, uniforms [and] necessities such as pencils, pens and also an iPad which was needed as we used them instead of textbooks. It wasn't an optional choice and left many families in an uncertain position of whether they could or couldn't afford it.

*NEVILLE, 18, IRELAND*

**Any attempts to diversify provision should be designed in a way that ensures equity.**

Contracting out public school management, subsidizing private schools' operational costs or providing funding to households to attend the school of their choice can easily end up benefiting learners who are well off.

**Schools should not select students.**

Countries are committed to non-discrimination in education, a principle that must be reflected in school admission policies. Moreover, the right of families and students to choose schools should not exacerbate inequality.

“ My parents and I based my school decision mostly on our financial situation. I was 22 and I was accepted into all the top universities in the Philippines, even the private ones with fully funded scholarships. However, I still had to consider living expenses, so I entered the public university with the lowest cost of living.

*RAVEN, 22, PHILIPPINES*

**Non-state providers funded by the state should not charge any fees.** While all countries should aim to ensure that pre-primary, primary and secondary education are free, many are far from this ideal. Even government-dependent private institutions charge fees.

**Profit making is inconsistent with the commitment to guarantee free pre-primary, primary and secondary education.**

Regulating or banning profit making can be used to address school choice policies that exacerbate inequality.

“ My school was publicly funded. I didn't even look at privately operated schools due to the fact that my family would not be able to afford it.

*NEVILLE, 18, IRELAND*

“ Education is not a good to be sold and should in no way be a mechanism for profit. Profit making education reinforces unequal structures and fights social mobility and equal opportunity. Just as education can be the greatest equalizer – across genders, economies and social backgrounds within countries as well as across regions – it can also be the root of reinforcing inequality and suppress peoples and communities. Banning profit making in education is the first step of ensuring equality and that education promotes talent over privilege. Education is something you make, not something you buy.

*FREDERIKKE, 29, DENMARK*

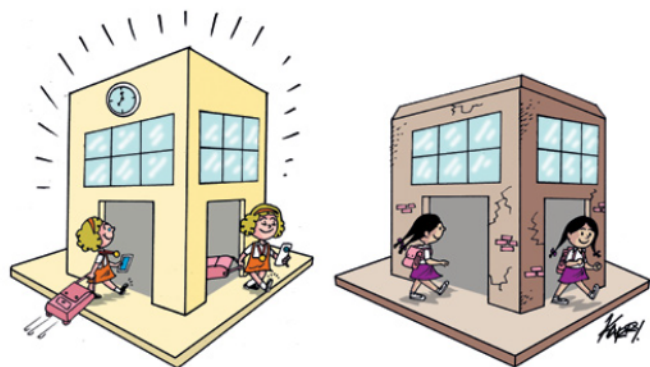
## 2. Do all learners receive the quality of education they are entitled to, or are some short-changed?

**Establish quality standards that apply to all state and non-state education institutions**

**Governments need to establish quality standards that apply to all education institutions.** Quality standards, covering not just inputs but also results, protect those who have the most to lose. They should also cover safety and inclusion. They should relate to where schools are and help them improve. Their achievement should be assessed for each school, state or non-state, and publicly reported.

**Teachers should be valued as professionals in all schools.** Teacher qualifications and professional development opportunities should not vary by provider. Segmented teacher labour markets and wide inequality

in teacher pay and conditions are strong signs of a malfunctioning education system. Governments need to gradually address all the root causes of such imbalances.



“ The whole concept of public and private schools creates a divide among students coming from different socioeconomic backgrounds. It is almost like putting students who go to private school on a pedestal and providing them with facilities and resources that make them more likely to succeed. I think public education should be provided to all to level the playing field, ensuring that the resources provided to each school are adequate and of good quality.

ELINA, 17, INDIA

#### Quality assurance mechanisms need to be in place to monitor and enforce standards.

Government oversight through school inspections, evaluations and learning assessments should be common, regardless of provider, but the design of these mechanisms should take into account the state's capacity to implement them.

### 3. Are regulations effective and feasible or do they have unintended consequences that harm disadvantaged learners?

#### Establish common monitoring and support processes that apply to all state and non-state education institutions

#### Governments need a clear vision and framework of how they want to engage non-state actors and communicate this vision through regulations.

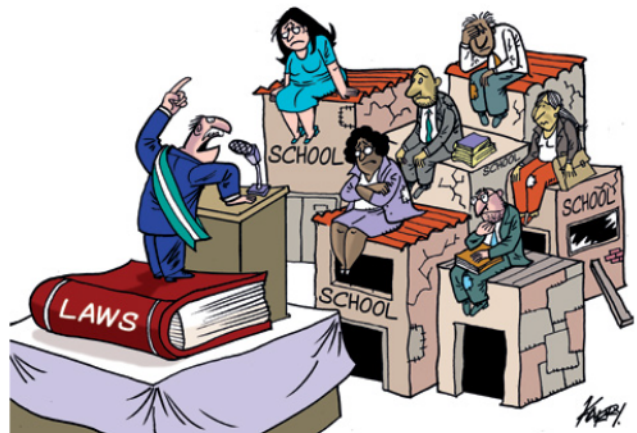
Regulations should focus not on administrative details and unrealistic standards but on education processes and results and be periodically reviewed and adjusted in a transparent and participatory way, with input invited from state and non-state schools.

#### Countries need stronger quality assurance processes in technical, vocational and tertiary education.

As governments subsidize individuals or contract with companies to promote training, they need to protect the most disadvantaged, who are vulnerable to fraud. For-profit universities have come under scrutiny for offering poor-quality education and engaging in malpractice.

#### Governments need to prevent private supplementary tuition from having a negative impact on system quality and equity.

Policy responses vary from tutor teaching permit requirements to online registers for better oversight. Bans are also an option but may lead to informal markets. The priority should be on addressing root causes, such as low teacher pay and high-stakes final examinations.



**Education providers should always be regulated as education entities by education authorities and never just as commercial entities by market regulators.** Some providers are regulated as businesses in early childhood care and education, private supplementary tuition and vocational training. Similarly, other providers are supervised by ministries of social protection or by religious authorities.

“ Education is not a commodity; students are not customers. Education should be free, and if private actors are the ones hindering that feat, measures should be taken by the government to regulate them.

CHIDUBEM, 21, NIGERIA

**Regulations need to be simple, transparent and efficient.** The paradox is that regulatory capacity is lowest where the need for it, and the potential for corruption, is highest. Where capacity to monitor and enforce impractical rules is lacking, regulations become irrelevant and counterproductive.

**Governments need to be honest about the causes of the phenomenon they want to regulate.**

Common monitoring and support processes are necessary, showing that governments care for all children’s education, irrespective of the school type they attend. Governments also need to build a relationship of trust with non-state providers, communicating the right incentives for them to run their schools effectively.

#### 4. Are good ideas for education nurtured or stifled?

**Facilitate the spread of innovation through the education system for the common good**

**Policymakers should be able to identify innovation and should give good ideas time and space to develop.** Nobody has a monopoly on good ideas. Education is a social endeavour and a complex system. The challenge for policymakers is to encourage innovation, especially when the general public is likely to prefer conformity over experimentation.

**The government should work in partnership with all actors to build an education system that works for all, prioritizing a consultative approach.**

A culture of trust needs to be built to promote innovation. Creating conditions and offering platforms for multiple actors to interact and cooperate can help the public education system benefit from different views and sources of expertise to remain relevant.



**“** I personally believe that non-state actors have created more innovative models for education than the public sector has. For example, Khan Academy or the facilitators for MOOCs [Massive Open Online Courses] have been so successful in providing new ways for engaging education in learning technology.

I feel like most innovation has been pushed into the private sector, largely due to its competitive environment, but it has resulted in some creative ways to engage in education. I mean, how could we have engaged in education in lockdown if Zoom and other online video conference facilities did not exist? The issue is when these systems become exploitative and start to defeat their purpose: demanding payment for technology that should support a public good – although it is way ahead of our current ‘free’ systems that are too bureaucratic and siloed to be able to provide the creativity the private sector is currently engaging in.

*ELLEN, 26, NEW ZEALAND*

**Governments need to nurture innovation in the public education system.** They need to convey the message that they are committed to excellence. They should monitor learning and its determinants, evaluate where good practices are taking place, provide resources enabling practitioners to exchange experiences, pilot good ideas and scale them up.

**“** The NGOs, especially student organizations, had the most defining role in my development. They developed most of my advocacy, teamwork, task management, assertiveness, flexibility and social skills. Apart from my own example, volunteer-based NGOs in several fields provide skills which are not developed in schools.

*ONITA, 24, ROMANIA*

**Governments should look for lessons from non-state actors.** Contextualized and flexible approaches to teaching marginalized learners, which may be practiced in non-state schools, can generate new insights, which governments should benefit from.

**The government’s role is to create the right environment to produce innovation.**

Education should not be seen as a market where education ‘producers’ outcompete other providers. Instead, new ideas need to be shared, tested and, if proven, adopted, with the state helping them spread through the education system and non-state actors volunteering them for the common good rather than economic motives.

**“**

Schools are very disconnected from our reality.

*BIANCA, 22, BRAZIL*

## 5. Are all voices given equal opportunities to shape the public debate in education?

**Maintain the transparency and integrity of the public education policy process to prevent the influence of vested interests**

**Policymakers need to take into account insights and perspectives from all stakeholders.** But just as policymakers should be open to hearing multiple voices, it is also essential for communications with public officials about education legislation, policy and regulation to be transparent. Some actors may be working to increase their market share or political power rather than for the public good.

**Governments need to monitor and safeguard against lobbying by vested interests to prevent them from unduly influencing public policy.**

To maintain trust in public policy processes, a range of measures to promote transparency can be applied, depending on capacity, including rules against lobbyists and their sponsors taking public office, rules against government officials taking positions from which they could derive private benefit after leaving office, and freedom of information acts which promote disclosure of donations to political parties and meetings with senior government officials. These recommendations also apply to international organizations, all of which need a clear policy of engaging with non-state actors that prioritizes equity and inclusion.

“ There were many times when I was able to participate in policymaking as a student leader – in youth listening sessions, roundtables and conversations with policymakers. I think that young people should be given more chances to influence policymaking.

**RAVEN, 22, PHILIPPINES**

“ I think private actors have too strong an influence on education policy compared to how small a role they play in creating fair opportunities for access and participation in education.

**MARTINA, 26, MALTA**

“ Private actors completely revised the education policy of my country four decades ago, in one of the fastest neoliberal reforms to an education sector ever seen. Now we get reports from academics that much of the research funding going into the tertiary sector and educational policy is influenced by privatized agreements, meanwhile the financial struggles of the primary and secondary schools and the impact of school boards influences the scope for interpreting educational policy set by the Ministry of Education.

**ELLEN, 26, NEW ZEALAND**





## PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES THAT HAD TO BORROW AND SAVE FOR EDUCATION:

Country	Borrow for education (%)	Save for education (%)
Philippines	36	42
Kenya	33	32
Uganda	33	32
Haiti	32	28
Zimbabwe	22	16
Indonesia	20	25
Burundi	19	12
Zambia	19	25
U. R. Tanzania	17	18
Nepal	16	13
Guatemala	15	33
Honduras	15	18
Viet Nam	14	29
Sudan	14	14
Rep. Moldova	13	14
Cameroon	13	21
Egypt	11	6
Nicaragua	10	25
Madagascar	10	17
Guinea	10	7
El Salvador	10	21
Ghana	10	21
Congo	10	18
Cambodia	9	33
Malawi	9	12
Benin	9	15
Burkina Faso	9	16
Bolivia	8	33
Mauritania	8	6
India	8	11

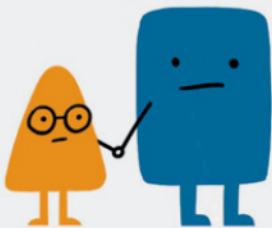
Country	Borrow for education (%)	Save for education (%)
Myanmar	8	15
Côte d'Ivoire	8	17
Rwanda	7	8
Bhutan	7	23
Mongolia	7	16
Bangladesh	7	6
D. R. Congo	7	17
Tajikistan	6	10
Ethiopia	6	9
Chad	6	16
Sri Lanka	6	9
Senegal	6	8
Somalia	6	7
Nigeria	5	31
Togo	5	10
Tunisia	5	6
Pakistan	5	7
Armenia	5	3
Yemen	5	3
Ukraine	4	6
Angola	4	11
Palestine	4	4
Niger	4	4
Afghanistan	4	8
Jordan	3	3
Kyrgyzstan	3	9
Uzbekistan	2	10
Mali	2	5
Georgia	1	3

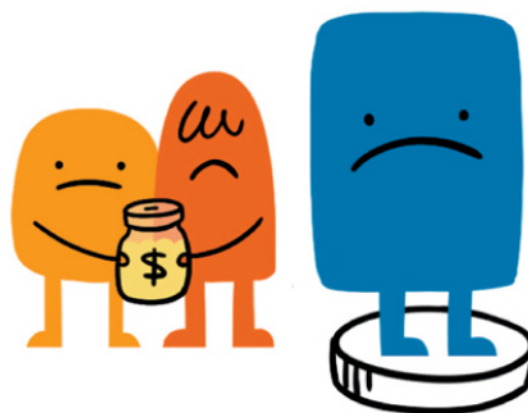
**Source:** GEM Report team analysis based on the Global Index Database.

# PERCENTAGE OF EDUCATION EXPENDITURE FINANCED BY HOUSEHOLDS:

	Governments	Households
<b>Low income</b>		
Liberia	27	73
Uganda	41	59
Niger	42	58
Rwanda	43	57
Madagascar	44	56
Gambia	46	54
Benin	47	53
D. R. Congo	58	42
Sudan	61	39
Mali	65	35
Togo	68	32
Guinea	71	29
U. R. Tanzania	72	28
Chad	72	28
Sierra Leone	73	27
Burundi	89	11
Mozambique	90	10
Ethiopia	95	5

**Source:** GEM Report team analysis based on national household budget survey reports and UIS and OECD data.





	Governments	Households
<b>Lower middle income</b>		
Haiti	19	81
Nigeria	28	72
Bangladesh	29	71
Ghana	33	67
Mauritania	41	59
Myanmar	42	58
Pakistan	43	57
El Salvador	44	56
Angola	48	52
Lao PDR	49	51
Egypt	50	50
Nepal	50	50
Nicaragua	53	47
Honduras	54	46
Zambia	55	45
Senegal	55	45
Indonesia	56	44
Sri Lanka	56	44
Palestine	56	44
Cameroon	59	41
Kenya	59	41

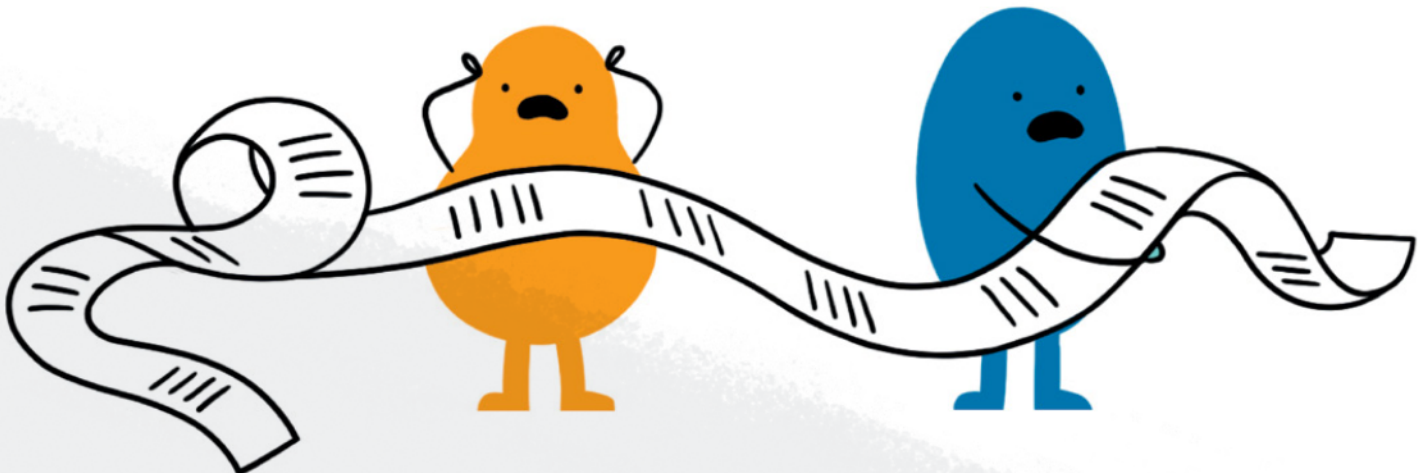
	Governments	Households
<b>Lower middle income</b>		
Mongolia	59	41
Cambodia	60	40
Comoros	60	40
Zimbabwe	60	40
India	62	38
Djibouti	62	38
Philippines	62	38
Côte d'Ivoire	64	36
Vanuatu	70	30
Morocco	70	30
Viet Nam	72	28
Samoa	76	24
Timor-Leste	78	22
Kyrgyzstan	78	22
Congo	80	20
Tunisia	81	19
Ukraine	85	15
Bhutan	86	14
Algeria	87	13
Cabo Verde	87	13
Lesotho	95	5
S. Tome/Principe	95	5

**Source:** GEM Report team analysis based on national household budget survey reports and UIS and OECD data.

	Governments	Households
<b>Upper middle income</b>		
Lebanon	26	74
Jordan	45	55
Mauritius	53	47
Dominican Rep.	56	44
Armenia	59	41
Albania	60	40
Peru	60	40
Panama	63	37
Ecuador	64	36
Fiji	64	36
Jamaica	67	33
Maldives	68	32
Colombia	68	32
Georgia	68	32
Paraguay	70	30
Brazil	72	28
Azerbaijan	72	28

	Governments	Households
<b>Upper middle income</b>		
Argentina	73	27
Costa Rica	73	27
Tonga	73	27
Turkey	76	24
Botswana	76	24
Mexico	78	22
South Africa	79	21
Serbia	79	21
Thailand	80	20
Bulgaria	81	19
Kazakhstan	82	18
Malaysia	82	18
Namibia	85	15
Belarus	86	14
Rep. Moldova	90	10
Russian Fed.	91	9
Romania	93	7

**Source:** GEM Report team analysis based on national household budget survey reports and UIS and OECD data.





	Governments	Households
<b>High income</b>		
U. A. Emirates	48	52
Uruguay	67	33
Chile	68	32
Bahrain	69	31
United Kingdom	71	29
Australia	72	28
Greece	73	27
United States	76	24
Cyprus	76	24
Rep. of Korea	77	23
Barbados	77	23
Oman	78	22
Canada	78	22
Saudi Arabia	80	20
New Zealand	80	20
Macao, China	81	19
Spain	83	17
Israel	84	16
Netherlands	85	15
Portugal	86	14
Trinidad/Tobago	86	14
Ireland	87	13
Italy	88	12
Slovakia	88	12
Latvia	89	11

	Governments	Households
<b>High income</b>		
France	89	11
Poland	89	11
Hungary	89	11
Malta	90	10
Germany	90	10
Lithuania	90	10
Czechia	91	9
Croatia	91	9
Slovenia	92	8
Estonia	93	7
Austria	94	6
Switzerland	95	5
Belgium	95	5
Denmark	96	4
Iceland	97	3
Luxembourg	97	3
Sweden	98	2
Norway	98	2
Finland	99	1

**Source:** GEM Report team analysis based on national household budget survey reports and UIS and OECD data.

This report is written in partnership with the Global Student Forum to help you learn about the youth perspective on the different roles and impact of non-state actors in education. For many, a discussion on the role of non-state actors in education quickly boils down to a debate about whether private schools support or undermine education systems.

Those who support non-state activity in education argue that it is inevitable since the state cannot cater for the full range of parental demands for education. They argue that non-state actors are better suited to be innovative and to provide tailored solutions to meet the needs even of marginalized groups. They point to the many cases where non-state actors have filled genuine gaps in education provision, often for disadvantaged groups neglected by public systems.

Those who oppose non-state activity point to problems caused by school choice. If parents can choose the school they want, without any guiding regulations, then the richest are most likely to be able to afford the best, often non-state schools, exacerbating inequality and segregation.

As this report shows, the role of non-state actors impacts many more corners of the education sector, from the textbooks you use, the food in your canteens, any additional tutorial support you get, the skills you might learn at work and much more.

The report invites youth to reflect on the findings of the 2021/2 *Global Education Monitoring Report* and join a call for governments to #RightTheRules which will ensure that non-state actor involvement does not compromise the promise of providing 1 year of pre-primary and 12 years of primary and secondary education free for all.

“ Education, as a fundamental human right, should be publicly funded and free. Public, free and quality lifelong learning is not only essential on an individual level but a cornerstone of a healthy democracy. Private provision of education risks undermining democratic norms and social cohesion by inviting the influence and decision making of actors not accountable to citizens over a universal right. Blending public and private provision, however well-intentioned, will also create a hierarchy within education and inequality of opportunity.

GEORGIA, 29, UNITED KINGDOM

“ Should non-state actors' participation in education be encouraged, contained or prevented? While the answer to this question is indeed highly specific to each country's economic, social, political, historical and cultural context, the principles of equity and inclusion should be respected.

DR. MUSARRAT MAISHA REZA,  
GLOBAL STUDENT FORUM AND YOUTH  
REPRESENTATIVE ON THE GLOBAL EDUCATION  
MONITORING REPORT'S ADVISORY BOARD

“ The whole concept of public and private schools creates a divide among students coming from different socioeconomic backgrounds. It is almost like putting students who go to private school on a pedestal and providing them with facilities and resources that make them more likely to succeed. I think public education should be provided to all to level the playing field, ensuring that the resources provided to each school are adequate and of good quality.

ELINA, 17, INDIA

“ The Global Student Forum, the umbrella organization of the world's major student federations, stands in solidarity with the #RightTheRules campaign. We welcome the UNESCO Youth GEM Report *Who chooses? Who loses?*, calling for the monitoring of educational affordability and the regulation of private education. With education recognized as a key instrument to the achievement of the SDGs, examining the impact of non-state actors in higher education and the wider education sector is essential to ensure transformative change in an increasingly complex world.

E. R. DIXON, G. LIPARI & E. BUCCI,  
GLOBAL STUDENT FORUM

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