

### *Insight - Learning crisis*

While an increasing number of children in developing countries have access to education, globally, six out of ten children and adolescents are not learning a minimum in reading and mathematics, according to a [new UIS paper](#)\*. The total – 617 million – includes more than 387 million children of primary school age and 230 million adolescents of lower secondary school age. This means that more than one-half – 56% – of all children won't achieve minimum proficiency levels by the time they should be completing primary education. The proportion is even higher for adolescents at 61%.

Sub-Saharan Africa has the single largest number – 202 million – of children and adolescents who are not learning. Across the region, nearly nine out of ten kids between the ages of about 6 and 14 will not meet minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics.

One of the main problems is the issue of education quality and what is happening within the classroom itself. Research by the World Bank\*\* (2018) based on data from nationally representative surveys from seven Sub-Saharan African countries, representing close to 40 percent of the region's total population suggests that students receive two hours and fifty minutes of teaching per day—or just over half the scheduled time. In addition, large shares of teachers do not master the curricula of the students they are teaching; basic pedagogical knowledge is low; and the use of good teaching practices is rare. Exploiting within-student, within-teacher variation, the analysis finds significant and large positive effects of teacher content and pedagogical knowledge on student achievement. These findings point to an urgent need to explore why teachers do not master curricula, why teaching time is limited, and why there are within-teacher and within-student variations, so that there can be improvements in education service delivery in Sub-Saharan Africa.

#### References:

\*UNESCO 2017: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/blog/new-data-reveal-learning-crisis-threatens-development-around-world>)

\*\* World Bank 2017: Background Paper to the 2018 World Development Report. What Do Teachers Know and Do? Does It Matter? Evidence from Primary Schools in Africa: