

Strategy 2023-2028

Ready for
lift off!



EDUCATION
.ORG

Improving
evidence

Strengthening
systems

Transforming
lives



Strategy summary

Our vision is:

A world where the education of all children and young people is transformed by the best evidence.

Our mission is:

To improve the learning of every child and young person by helping leaders access and use the best evidence to guide their national policies and plans.

Our tagline is:

Improving evidence. Strengthening systems. Transforming lives.

Our guiding principles are:

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Independence | Transparency | Collaboration |
| Inclusion | Impact Focus | Agility |

Our strategic goals – 2023-28:

1. Establish an evidence synthesis gold standard for education system leaders
2. Catalyse a transformation in the way education leaders work with evidence
3. Lead a global movement to build an education knowledge bridge

Contents

An introduction to Education.org	2
The challenges	3
Our response so far	6
Our guiding principles	8
Our Journey to 2028: Strategic goals and objectives	10
Annex: Complementarity with other initiatives	16
References	17

An introduction to Education.org

Education.org is an independent, non-profit initiative dedicated to bringing the best available evidence to education leaders around the world at a time of global crisis in teaching and learning, where knowledge about effective policies and practices are insufficiently communicated, adopted and used.

We aim to improve the learning of every child and young person by helping those leaders access and use the best, most applicable evidence in their decision making.

We aim to be a ‘constructive disruptor’, shaking up the status quo and challenging conventional thinking and approaches. Since its inception in 2020, Education.org has focused on establishing the exact needs of education leaders by identifying the key components of the ‘Education Knowledge Bridge’ needed to meet this global crisis, and by refining its own methods of evidence synthesis to deliver the best possible guidance for those leaders.

In our first three years, we are already seeing clear and concrete results from governments using our evidence and tools. We have forged official partnerships with the Ministries of Education in Kenya and Sierra Leone and are actively exploring similar agreements with other African countries.

Education leaders value our practical problem-solving focus, which is always

“... we are already seeing clear and concrete results from governments using our evidence and tools.”

tailored to their individual countries’ challenges, as well as our team’s painstaking efforts to incorporate previously unpublished, but highly relevant, research findings.

We are now planning the second phase of our organisational growth, from June 2023 – 2028, during which we aim to build on the lessons we have learned, further systematise our work, and invest in scaling up our activities to expand out impact.

We have developed three strategic goals to guide our growth in the next five years, each of which has a series of objectives and intended outcomes to focus our work in that area. These objectives will evolve and change as we achieve them,

We are grateful for the tremendous support of our partners and look forward to taking the next stage of this journey together.



Randa Grob-Zakhary
Founder & CEO



Jan Mischke
Chair of the Board

The challenges

A wealth of **EVIDENCE AND EXPERIENCE** is **NOT BEING USED** by policymakers and practitioners



260 MILLION children are not in school¹



The world is not on track to achieve **SDG 4** which is: “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”^{3,4}



7 IN 10 children are not achieving basic literacy and numeracy²



At least **ONE IN FIVE CHILDREN** is not reached by traditional schooling⁵



Education reforms are **NOT SCALING UP**³



Covid 19 has widened **LEARNING DISPARITIES** especially among girls and those with learning differences⁶

The challenges

There is a wealth of evidence and experience being generated within the education sector in response to these challenges, but it is not being adopted by education policymakers and practitioners.

There are two main reasons for this:

1. Education evidence is often neither accessible nor useful for policymakers.

Much of the research and data currently being produced in global education is developed with other audiences in mind, such as technical specialists or programme implementers. It is rarely accessible or useful to those tasked with rolling out national strategies, plans or guidelines. Furthermore, it does not necessarily help them with the practical business of translating policies into action and impact.

It means that:

- **Evidence is** often created by, and for, other education researchers. It tends to be **backward-looking, rather than forward-thinking**.
- It does not speak to leaders in decision-ready system-level language, nor does it match their priorities. **It is often technically dense and without contextual, relevant, actionable guidance** for national education plans or policies.
- The evidence is usually drawn from elite academic sources **and is often missing valuable 'real-world' contributions and local context from the frontlines, especially in the Global South**. Policymakers, therefore, often see research evidence as irrelevant or inappropriate to their own national circumstances.

2. The education sector has not yet developed a culture that values contextual evidence for policymaking.

Academics, practitioners and leaders are divided by different cultures and incentives in education, and often work in isolation instead of collaborating to address the massive global challenges they face. They lack the infrastructure, incentives and culture to bridge the gaps between them. For example, academic papers published in journals can be difficult for policymakers to digest, because of their diverse and often conflicting information, and to translate the evidence into policy. Meanwhile, practitioners find it challenging to relate the findings to their everyday classroom practice.

It means that:

- **Education lags behind other sectors** – such as health, where evidence-based policymaking is more firmly established – **in identifying and investing in the know-how for evidence synthesis and knowledge translation**.
- Using evidence more effectively is considered a side issue and not applicable to daily work and routine policy cycles and, therefore, **long-term capacity improvements are rarely made**.
- Education lacks independent evidence providers, so **research often reflects donors' well-intentioned but biased agendas**.

The need for an Education Knowledge Bridge

Education.org believes it is not a lack of new evidence, but the inability to use what we know, that makes our education crisis worse. The absence of a well-functioning 'Education Knowledge Bridge' forms a 'knowing-doing' gap that prevents leaders and practitioners from making best use of the evidence and knowledge that would lead to better policy and practice, and improved educational outcomes for the world's children and young people.



Our response so far

1. Developing a unique Education Evidence Pathway, distilled from the best available global evidence, to provide actionable insights for leaders.

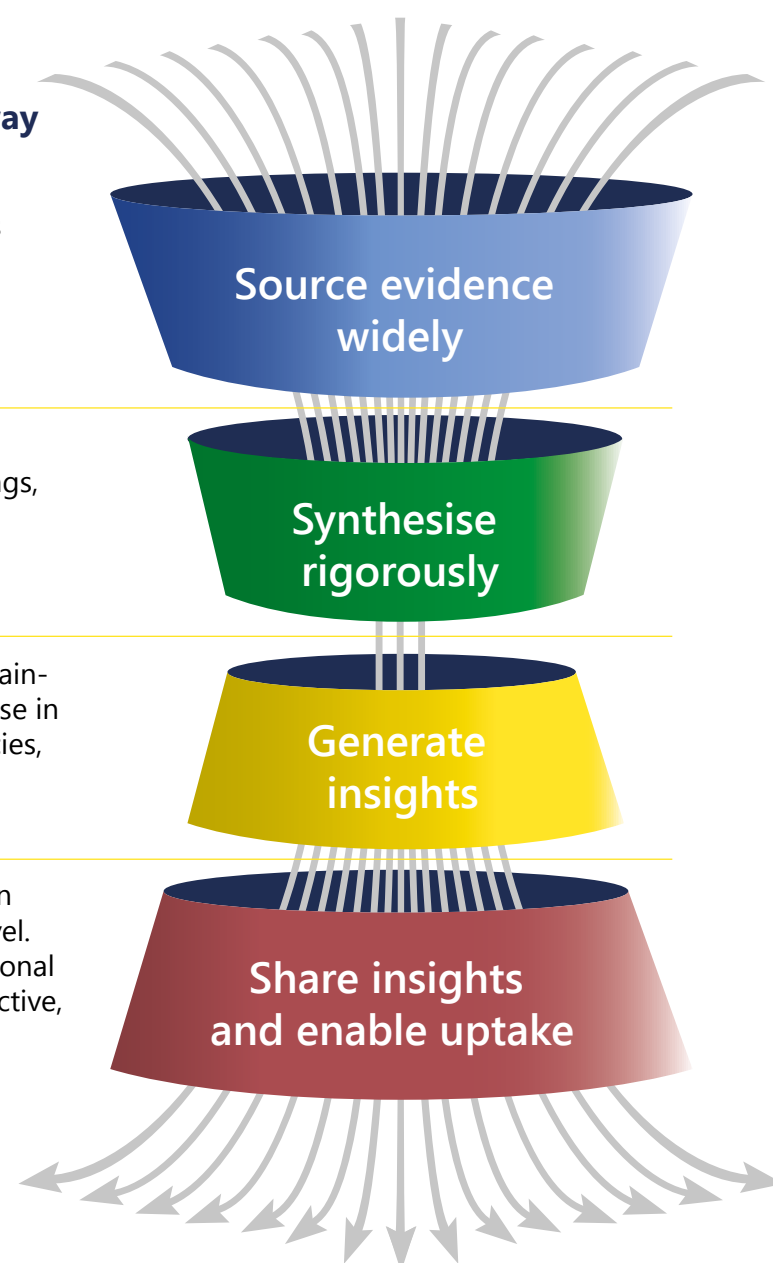
How our Education Evidence Pathway works – a simplified overview

Source widely: Work with education leaders to define their priorities, then source the most relevant evidence globally, including locally-generated, previously-underused and unpublished 'grey' literature.

Synthesise rigorously: Create a coherent picture from the mass of evidence and findings, appraising sources for quality, relevance and context, distilling key conclusions.

Generate insights: Translate findings into plain-language actionable insights for leaders to use in national, regional and global education policies, plans and investments.

Enable uptake: Share guidance with decision makers, including in-person at ministerial level. Support governments to strengthen professional skills and institutional systems, ensuring effective, sustainable evidence use.



We consult education ministers, deputies and policy directors to ensure from the start that education system leaders' needs are addressed, so that our work is impactful. We choose topics based on those needs, prioritising issues that affect the most marginalised hard-to-reach children and young people.

We cast our net far and wide in gathering education evidence, considering a wide range of research and data, including non-governmental

reports and programme evaluations, government documents and PhD thesis. This invisible or 'grey literature' may not make it into official studies, but it often contains valuable nuggets of insight.

As we sift and scrutinise the evidence, we draw out the insights that are most pertinent to our target audience, studying successes and failures in response to comparable challenges around the world.

Having gathered and analysed the evidence, we package our findings into user-friendly guidance and tools that governments can use with confidence. We make the evidence actionable

by providing in-depth guidance across critical themes, rather than suggesting one-off 'magic bullet' solutions.

2. Developing a deep understanding of education leaders' needs

Education.org has a sophisticated knowledge of the unique requirements of education leaders at national, regional and international levels, based on our own robust networks and our multi-sector expertise across policy and planning, evidence

synthesis, knowledge translation, organisational transformation and executive-level decision-making. Our offices in Kenya and Switzerland are ideally positioned to maximise impact in Sub-Saharan Africa, and globally.

3. Engaging intensely with Ministers of Education, and other leaders

Our growing reputation for an independent, unbiased approach adds distinct value to current sector actors and activities. We listen and learn to understand the complexities of national contexts,

and tailor our advice and design programmes to increase the integration and use of evidence in decision making.

4. Proving the impact of our unique approach

Education.org has been operational only since 2020, but already it has forged an excellent international reputation for the quality of its analyses, evidence synthesis and policy briefs – as well as for an agile approach which is responsive to leaders' needs and changing priorities.

For example:

- Our Covid-19 trackers of school openings and policy changes in 2020 guided ninety national education responses to the pandemic.
- Our [White Paper: Calling for an Education Knowledge Bridge](#), published in 2021, created a ground-breaking analysis and innovative approach to increasing the role of evidence in educational decision making worldwide.
- Our evidence synthesis on [Accelerated Education Programmes](#) and accompanying high-level policy guidance brief, [The Post-Covid Recovery: Imperative Essential Leadership Lessons for Closing the Learning Gap](#), have already impacted 2.5 million out-of-school children and young people through policy change in Kenya and Sierra Leone.



©Shutterstock

Our guiding principles:

Independence

We are independent and non-partisan.

Education.org's agenda is defined by the policy and practice landscape, with a focus on national needs and priorities, rather than a client-service or donor-led intervention. Our independence is important as we seek to address fundamental constraints in a sector that is fraught with biases and competing agendas.

Transparency

We aim to foster transparency around the use of evidence, and model this in the ways we work and spend the resources that we have.

Education.org's credibility is built on our work being conducted transparently and following a pre-specified analytic protocol. Publishing these protocols on a public website builds trust that our findings can be used for decision-making purposes. Reporting transparently on our activities and use of the financial resources entrusted to us ensures our partners know we operate efficiently and with integrity.

Collaboration

We leverage networks and build bridges across communities and organisations to democratise the use of evidence. We strive to amplify existing knowledge and collaborate effectively with those who work with us.

We maximise the potential for change by bringing the right content and people together, and by using the most effective channels for meaningful engagement. We combine evidence with practical experience and build purposeful partnerships and networks with others who will work with us.

Inclusion

We strive to design and implement an inclusive approach in everything we do. Equity is at the heart of our mission to reach every learner, particularly the most marginalised and hard to reach children and young people.

We aim to diversify the sources and broaden the range of valued evidence in the education

sector, elevating local evidence and experiences into wider application and knowledge. We translate global evidence into local contexts; and prioritise our work on issues that most affect the learning of the most marginalised children and young people.

Impact focus

We focus on changing education policy primarily at the country level, monitoring impact so that our work promotes more effective use of national resources and better learning outcomes.

We focus on the concerns of education decision-makers across government and society; and want to maximise use of existing, rather than create new, evidence. We identify dynamic partners, best practices, and unexpected successes to enable the implementation of evidence into policies and practices that address barriers to learning.

Agility

We are agile in the way we work, across all stages of development and delivery. We put a premium on adapting to needs, and evolving our activities and competencies to reflect what we are learning along the way.

An ability to reflect and adapt quickly to changing circumstances is a critical part of our culture and skillset. We plan carefully but build in opportunities for rapid testing and refinement. Since launching Education.org on the eve of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, we respond nimbly and effectively to changing needs, unafraid of complexity and uncertainty, alive to new and unexpected opportunities.



©Unsplash



We are independent and non-partisan.



We aim to foster transparency around the use of evidence.



We leverage networks and build bridges across communities and organisations to democratise the use of evidence.



We strive to design and implement an inclusive approach in everything we do.



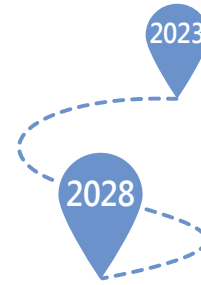
We focus on changing education policy primarily at the country level, monitoring impact so that our work promotes more effective use of national resources and better learning outcomes.



We are agile in the way we work, across all stages of development and delivery.

©Unsplash

Our Journey to 2028



Strategic Goal 1:

Establish an evidence synthesis gold standard for education system leaders

Education.org will pioneer and promote a new method of evidence synthesis specifically for leaders shaping decisions about education systems around the world; and provide syntheses and policy papers addressing the most important issues they face.

Our Objectives:

Education.org will:

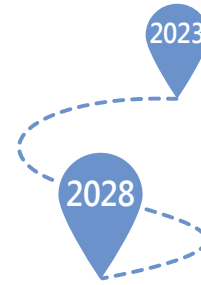
1. Improve, codify and communicate the methodology of its unique synthesis process focused on actionable evidence for decision makers.
2. Define and build the operating model to support this synthesis work at sustainable scale, embedding an equity lens in making decisions about topics of focus, sourcing and analysing evidence, generating insights, and supporting uptake.
3. Develop and pilot implementation of an evidence typology framework to increase the inclusion of relevant contextual evidence in plans, policies and guidelines, shaped by an International Working Group of leading education knowledge actors and practitioners.
4. Conduct a growing number of high-quality evidence syntheses per year by 2028 on key questions and issues for education decision makers, beginning with priorities in Sub-Saharan Africa and considering geographic expansion as opportunities and capacity allow.
5. Promote development within the education sector of skills related to evidence synthesis and knowledge translation; and expand Education.org's network of professional and dedicated supporters committed to grow our work, influence, and profile.
6. Identify and adapt existing and new enabling technological tools to expedite and simplify the ways evidence synthesis for decision makers are both produced and used (such as automated language processing and AI).

Anticipated outcomes:

- Education.org's qualitative evidence synthesis approach and methodology are increasingly recognised as a valuable contribution to decision-making inside the education sector.
- Increasing numbers of leaders making or influencing decisions about education systems in national, regional, and global organisations have used Education.org's high-quality evidence syntheses in developing national plans, policies and guidelines – especially for improving learning for the hardest to reach children and young people (for example: girls, displaced learners, and those with learning differences).
- A new typology for 'grey' literature in education widens the range of relevant sources regularly used by education leaders in defining new approaches to long-standing challenges.
- A dedicated and growing community of thematic and regional synthesis champions and contributors are supporting Education.org's work.
- A strengthened infrastructure for evidence syntheses in the education sector is established as a freely-available global public good.

"Our ambition to embed a high-quality standard for evidence synthesis that speaks to leaders influencing decisions about education systems is the cornerstone of the impact we want to make, building on the first synthesis we developed and tested in 2022."

Our Journey to 2028



Strategic Goal 2:

Catalyse a transformation in the way education leaders work with evidence

Education.org will catalyse a transformation in the way education sector leaders, starting in Africa, work with evidence, by increasing their commitment and capacity to put evidence at the centre of system-level decision making.

Our Objectives:

Education.org will:

1. Explore alternative country models for strengthening a long-term evidence culture among education ministers and policy directors.
2. Grow its existing partnerships in strengthening ways of engaging and using evidence for decision making with the Ministries of Education in Kenya and Sierra Leone, to cover at least ten additional countries in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2028, depending on country model/s defined in objective 1.
3. Establish an 'African Education Leadership Council' for Ministers of Education and Senior Officials to identify key issues for syntheses and provide a forum for mutual support and leadership.
4. Develop at least three exemplars for the creation and use of education evidence synthesis across Africa; and develop a standard toolkit for institutional evidence infrastructural strengthening (including processes, reviews, and incentives) that can be adapted to different national contexts.

Anticipated outcomes:

- There is a growing community of political leaders and senior education officials in Africa who are committed and able to use and promote high-quality evidence syntheses in their decision making.
- The body of high-quality evidence applicable for education system leaders, starting in Africa, grows and is informed by their requests and recommendations.
- Global, regional, and national leaders influencing education systems recognise the role of syntheses in elevating priorities for new research.
- Funders recognise and routinely support activities and investments related to the flow and use of research products.

"We have entered into official partnerships with the Ministries of Education in Sierra Leone and Kenya and are exploring new country relationships and alternative models of effectiveness. Through these deep partnerships we will foster stronger institutional commitment and capacity to put evidence at the centre of decision making."

Our Journey to 2028



Strategic Goal 3:

Lead a global movement to build an Education Knowledge Bridge

Education.org will lead a global movement committed to building an Education Knowledge Bridge, by forging a network of individuals and partnering with organisations who share its commitment to evidence-informed policymaking.

Our Objectives:

Education.org will:

1. Advocate for and support implementation of the recommendations of Education.org's White Paper on building an 'Education Knowledge Bridge'; working with partners from diverse communities and organisations who share our vision and mission.
2. Crystallise and communicate the innovative approaches and methodologies we are developing and applying.
3. Amplify the voices of actors and communities whose work is in greater need of uptake; and heighten the use of locally generated evidence and its place in regional and global syntheses.
4. Elevate the evidence needs related to the most marginalised and hard to reach children and young people.

Anticipated outcomes:

- The recommendations of Education.org's White Paper are increasingly being implemented by the different actors it seeks to influence.
- Increasing numbers of education professionals, researchers and policy makers are interested and involved in the production and use of evidence syntheses.
- Evidence synthesis increasingly addresses issues related to the hardest to reach learners, through disaggregating evidence, insights, and knowledge translation for smaller sub-populations.
- Education.org partners are making more evidence-informed portfolio and investment decisions.
- Education evidence actors on the frontlines recognise the added impact of having their work included in syntheses.
- Academic, development, humanitarian and philanthropic actors consistently seek to identify leadership priorities and challenges in their focus areas.

"This goal aims for outcomes that will both contribute to and benefit from achieving Strategic Goals 1 & 2. Our White Paper advocating for an 'Education Knowledge Bridge' in 2021 has inspired the creation of new initiatives related to evidence use and knowledge brokering in the education sector. Over the next five years, and closely linked to the implementation of our other Strategic Goals, we will forge a network of individuals and partner with organisations who share our commitment to evidence-informed policymaking."

Annex: Complementarity with other initiatives

The table below shows complementarity with various agencies and actors; demonstrating how Education.org builds on their strengths, functions, and mandates through complementary and collective action.

Types of Organisations	Their focus	Education.org will:
Government Partners	Provide free quality education for all (SDG4) through developing and implementing education plans, policies, guidelines, and programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make it easier to access and use available evidence in plans, policies, and guidelines to reach the most marginalised children and young people.• Elevate partners’ know-how in strengthening institutional evidence culture.• Assist national teams to elevate evidence-based perspectives in dialogues with donors and partners.• Create and harness opportunities to step up visibility, political commitment, and funding for evidence synthesis and use.
Civil Society Organisations	Ensure the delivery of safe, quality education especially for the hardest to reach children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connect local actors with global knowledge and activities and strengthen synthesis expertise.• Amplify evidence in greater need of visibility and uptake through their member organisations and networks.• Energetically leverage the Education.org network for joint advocacy and messaging.
Multilateral Agencies	Spur economic development, by providing advisory services, technical assistance and funding to the public and private sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contribute to closing the gap between funded and used research.• Extract maximal value from agency reports, briefs, etc typically published outside of academic or professional journals.• Contribute to their knowledge sharing and policy reform objectives by providing high quality syntheses and policy papers for sharing across their networks.
Bilateral Donors	Fund education and development programmes for country partners from donor government resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complement portfolio and investment decisions with a stronger contextual evidence base.• Channel and integrate global and country mission experiences into evidence syntheses.• Contribute to their knowledge sharing and policy reform objectives by providing high quality syntheses and policy papers.
Philanthropic Organisations	Act as development partners, providing financial and other resources, expertise, networks, and advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer a new channel for effectively amplifying the work of grass roots grantees.• Heighten impact potential for own research investments.• Share current perspectives on challenges and issues faced by policy leaders and shifts needed in funding incentives.
Think Tanks	Develop research on policy problems, incubate thinking on solutions, and convene relevant actors or influencers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contribute an additional technical pillar for convening around syntheses for leaders.• Develop perspectives on potential new policy areas for focus.
Academia	Conduct research and support professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spotlight policy pain points for research agendas.• Create greater visibility for research activities and outputs.

References:

¹ <https://www.educationcannotwait.org/resource-library/global-estimates-number-crisis-affected-children-and-adolescents-in-need-education>

² <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/publication/state-of-global-learning-poverty>

³ <https://gdc.unicef.org/resource/years-dont-wait-them-increased-inequalities-childrens-right-education-due-covid-19>

⁴ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>

⁵ https://ncld.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/1-in-5-Snapshot.Fin_.03142017.pdf

⁶ <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/covid-19-and-girls-education-what-we-know-so-far-and-what-we-expect-happen> and ncid.org

Education.org is an independent, non-profit initiative, dedicated to bringing the best available evidence to education leaders worldwide.

Our mission is to transform the learning of every child and young person by helping leaders access and use the best evidence to guide their national policies and plans.

We are distinctive in adding value both as a 'knowledge bridge' – connecting the right evidence with the right policy makers – and a 'knowledge integrator' in making this evidence useful.

For more information about who we are and what we do, visit us at www.Education.org. There you can see our [Evidence Syntheses](#) with accompanying [High-Level Policy Guidance](#) and [Country Case Studies](#); our manifesto on building a global [Education Knowledge Bridge](#); and a deeper look at our unique approach to [widening the evidence base in education](#).



EDUCATION
.ORG

Improving evidence | Strengthening systems | Transforming lives



Education.org