

Why Nutrition in School Age Children Is Important, and Even More Important as a Consequence of COVID-19

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November 10th 2020

**Global Child Nutrition Foundation 2020
Technical Meeting:
Return to School**

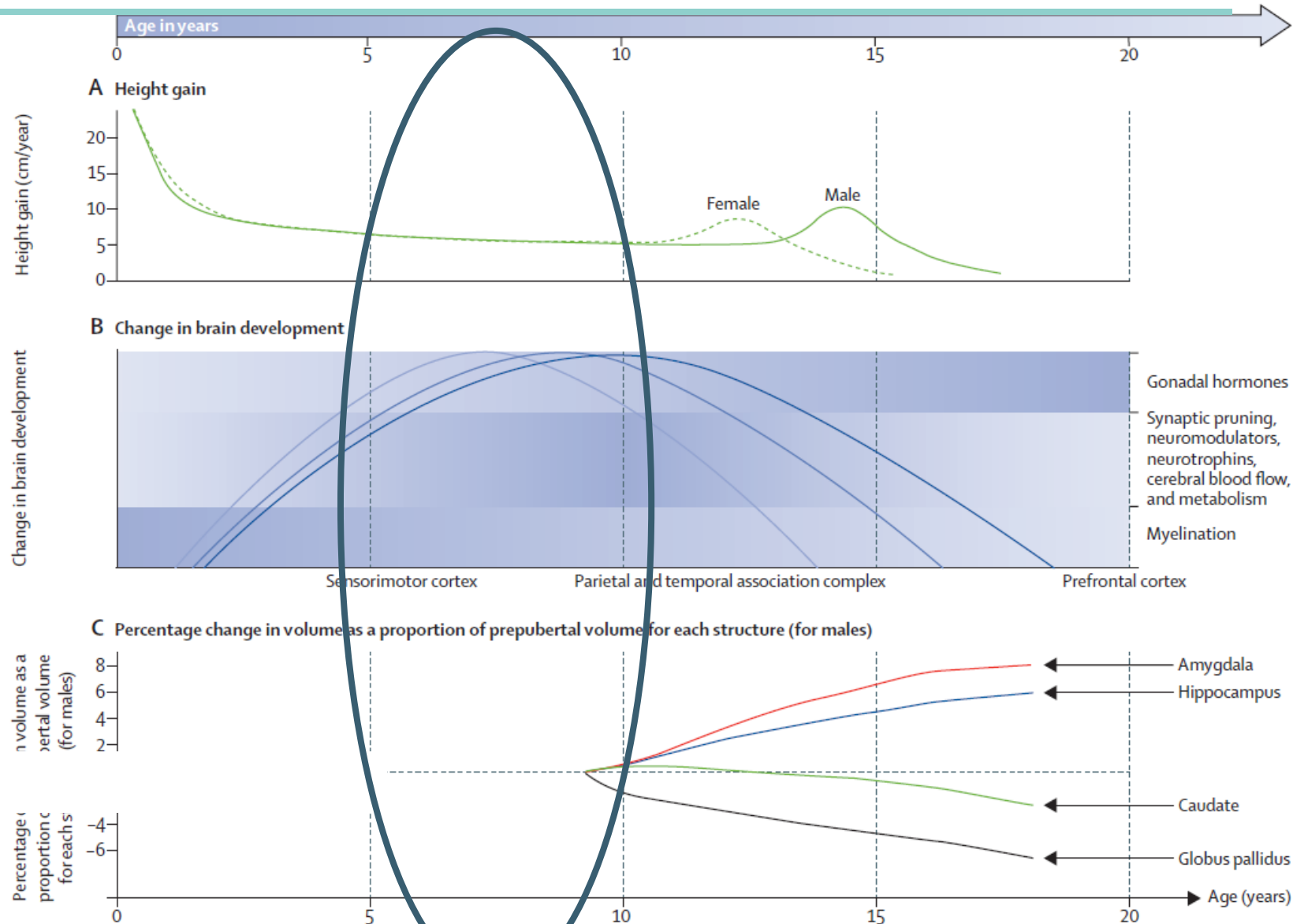


IBRD 42647 | September 2017

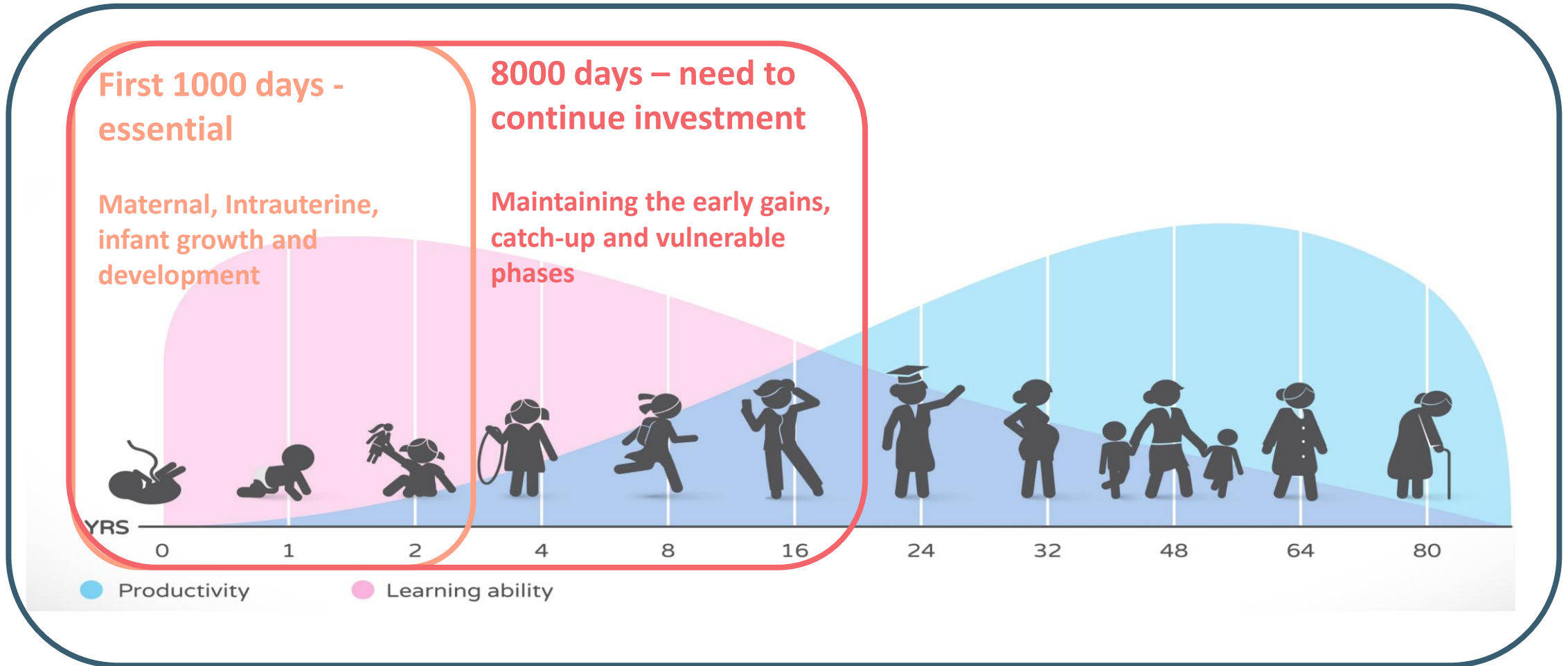
Legend:

- <7%
- >7-10%
- >10-13%
- >13-17%
- No data

Human development to 20 years of age



A journey along the life cycle - the importance of promoting healthy growth throughout the first 8,000 days of life



The 8,000 days: a new paradigm



Focus on the first 1000 days is an essential but insufficient investment



Broadening of investments in human development to include scalable interventions during the 7,000 days can be achieved cost-effectively

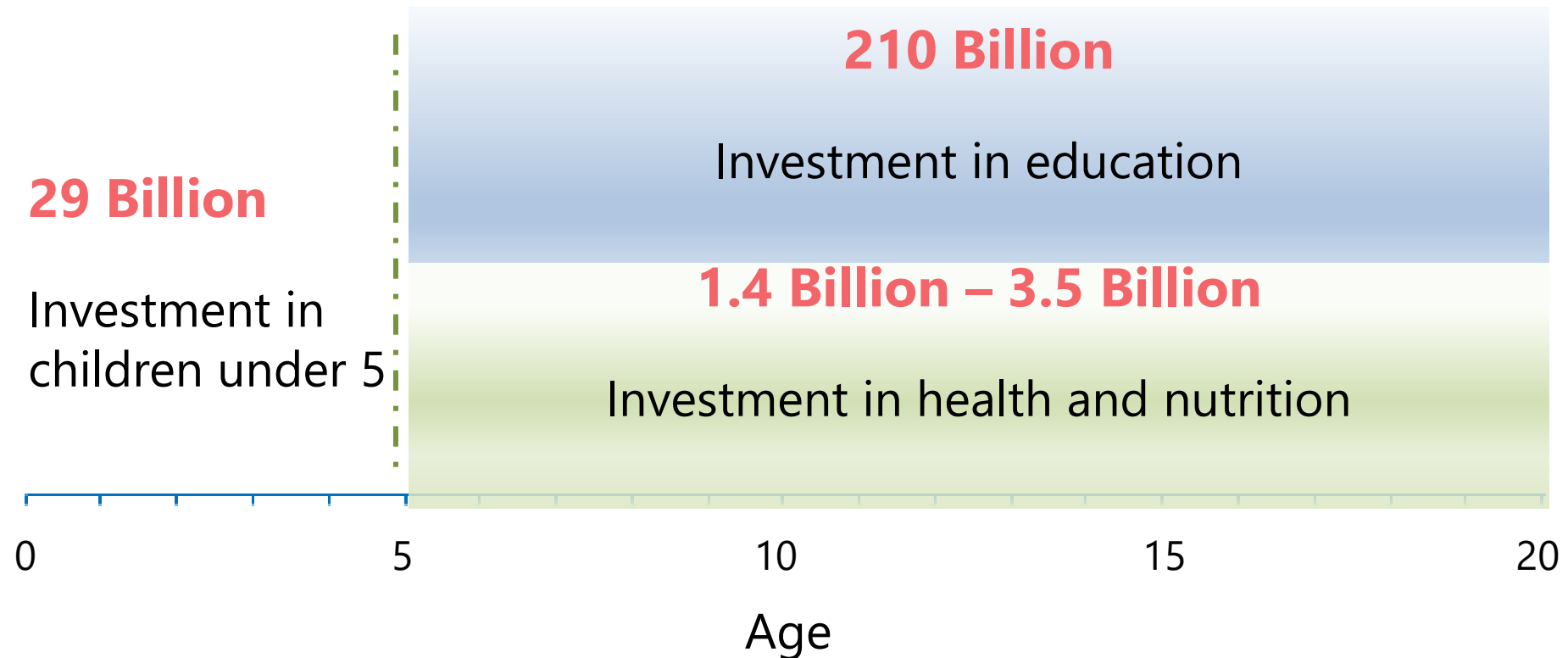


Well-designed health interventions in middle childhood and adolescence can leverage current substantial investments

Bundy, D. A. P., N de Silva, S Horton, D T Jamison, G C Patton. 2017. *Child and Adolescent Health and Development* (with a Foreword by Gordon Brown). Volume 8: in *Disease Control Priorities* (third edition): edited by Jamison D T, R Nugent, H Gelband, S Horton, P Jha, R Laxminarayan, C Mock. Washington, DC: The World Bank

We are investing in the learning but not in the learner

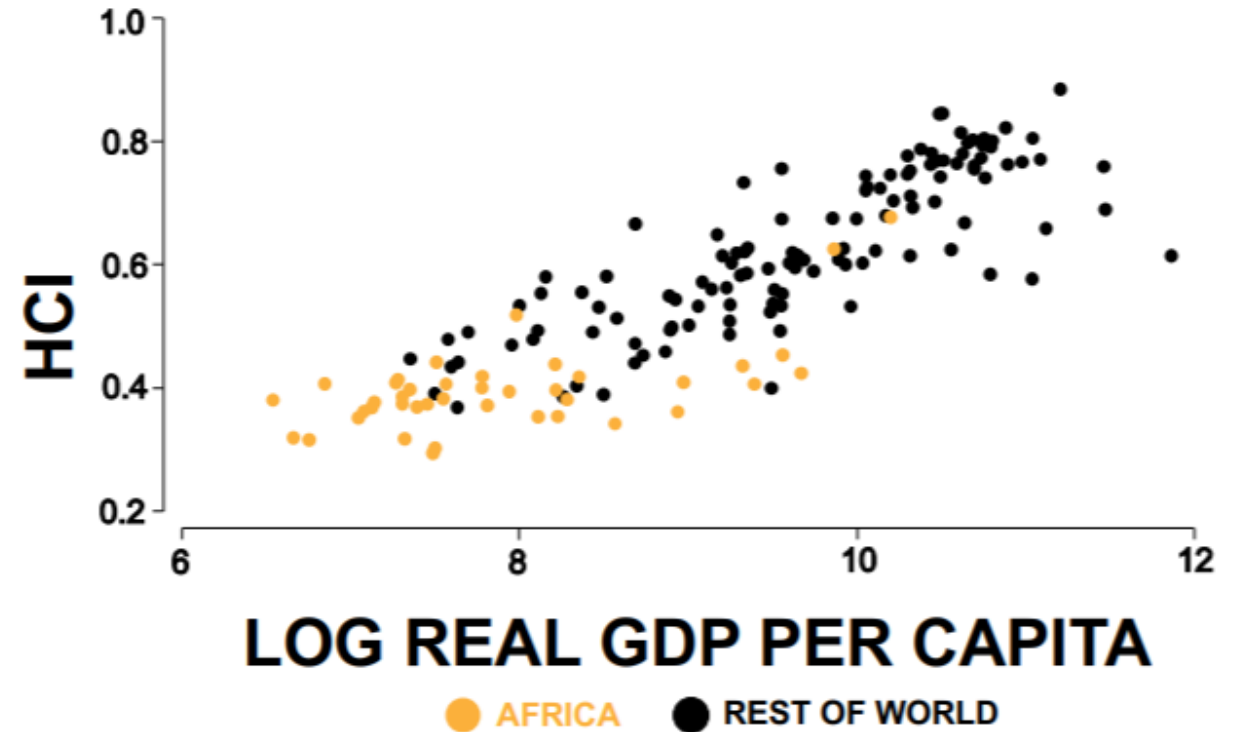
Estimates of public spending on children and adolescents in LLMICs (US\$ billion per year)



HUMAN CAPITAL INDEX IS LOWEST IN AFRICA

Human Capital Index (HCI)

- Human capital is defined **as the sum of a population's health, skills, knowledge, experience, and habits** and seeks to quantify scale of human capital in all countries
- Human capital - largest component of global wealth, but its contribution to wealth in rich countries (70%) far exceeds that in poorer countries (41%)



Middle Childhood: The Cross-Roads of Life-Long Behaviours



NUTRITION TRANSITION

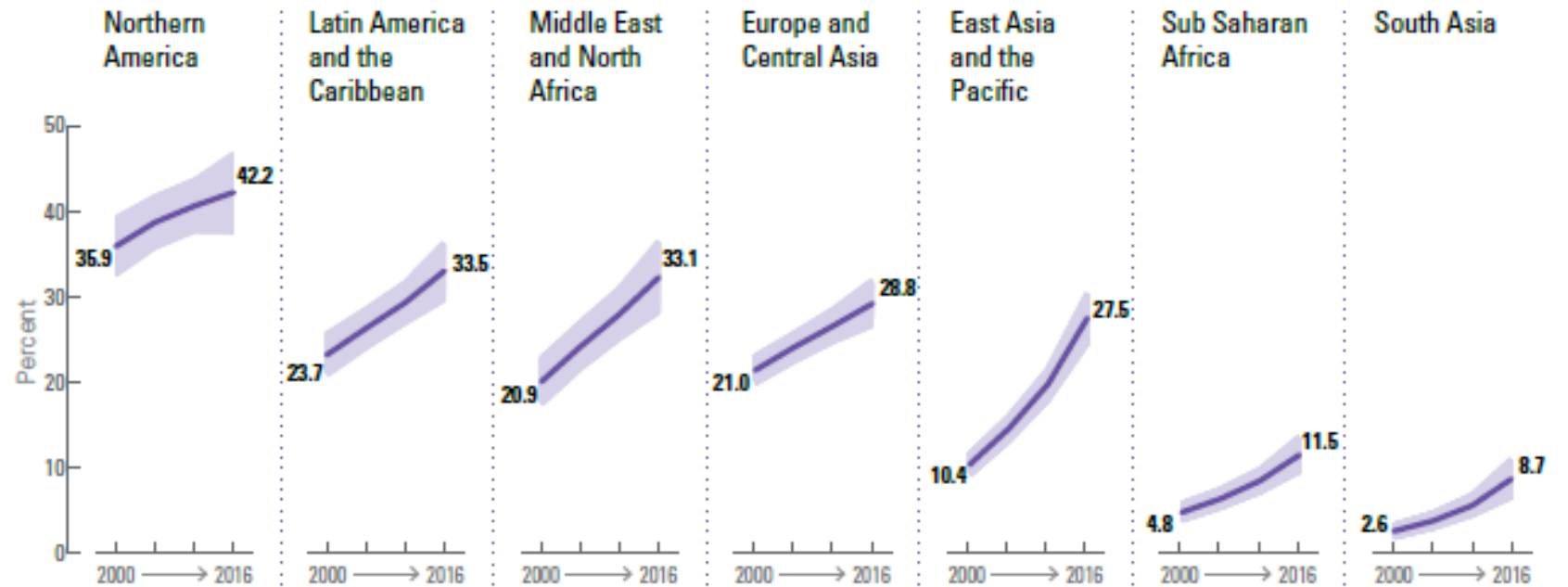


Overweight prevalence continues to increase in all regions

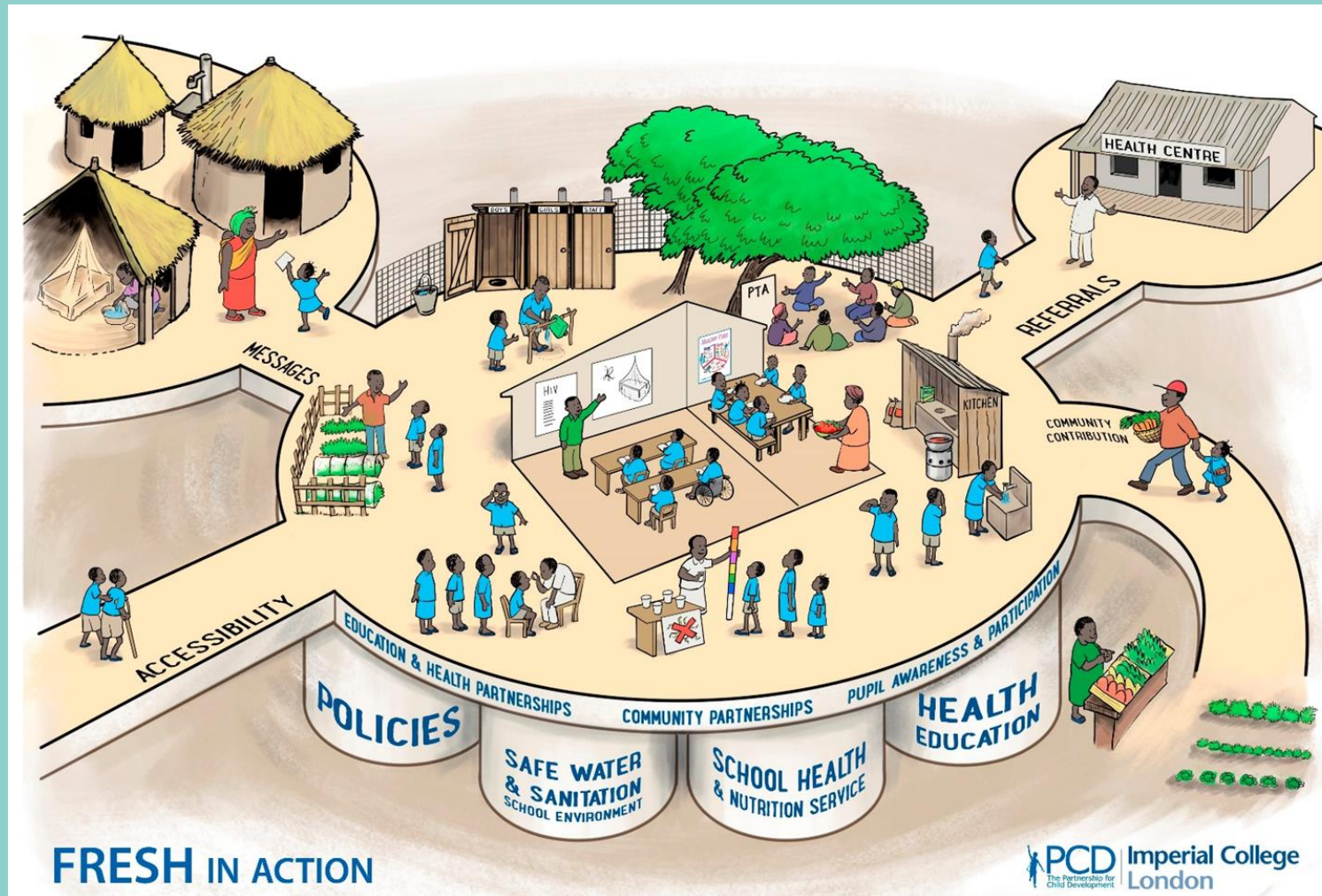


Of the **638 million** school-age children globally, a total of **131 million** are affected by overweight or 20.6%.

School-age children (5–9 years)



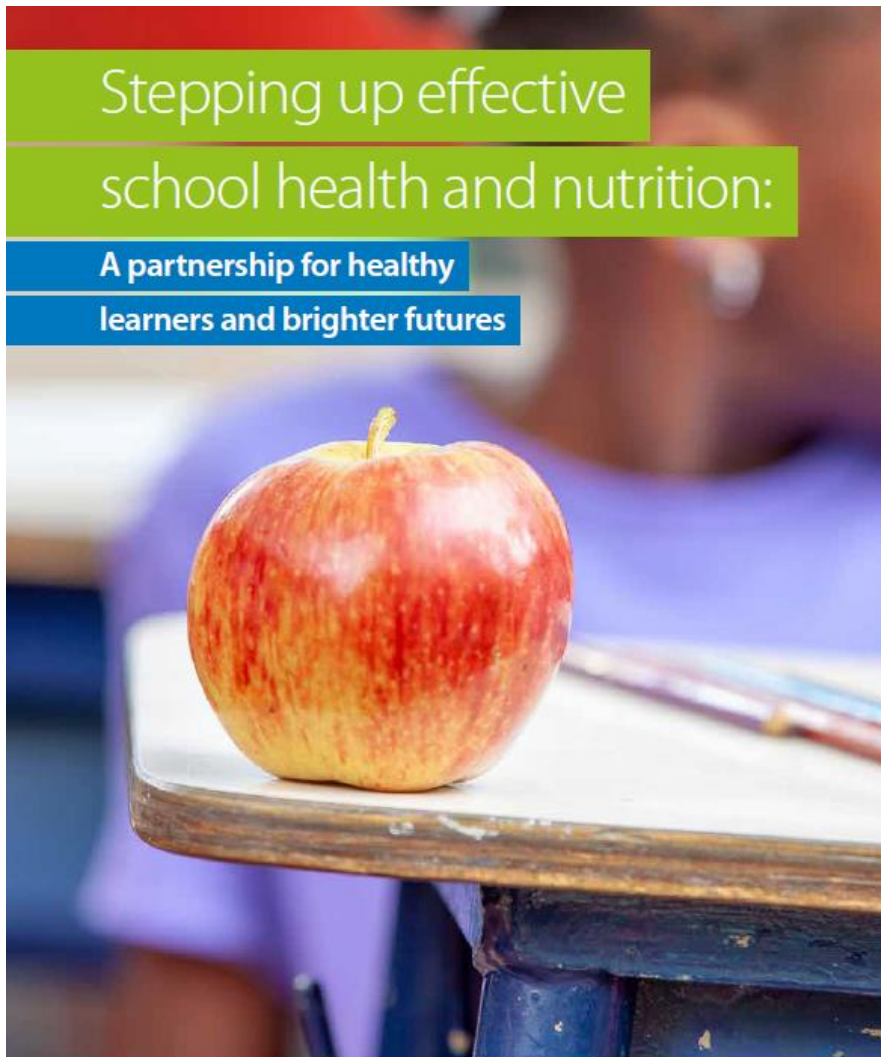
The school as a platform



FRESH (2000)
(Focusing
Resources on
Effective
School Health)

**UNESCO,
UNICEF, WHO,
WORLD BANK**

Stepping-up effective School Health and Nutrition



Stepping up effective
school health and nutrition:

A partnership for healthy
learners and brighter futures

- A renewed and collective commitment to advance effective integrated school health and nutrition programmes, to ensure children and young people are ready to learn and thrive and can contribute meaningfully to the future of their communities and countries
- Joint partnership between
FAO, GPE, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNSCN,
World Bank, WFP, WHO

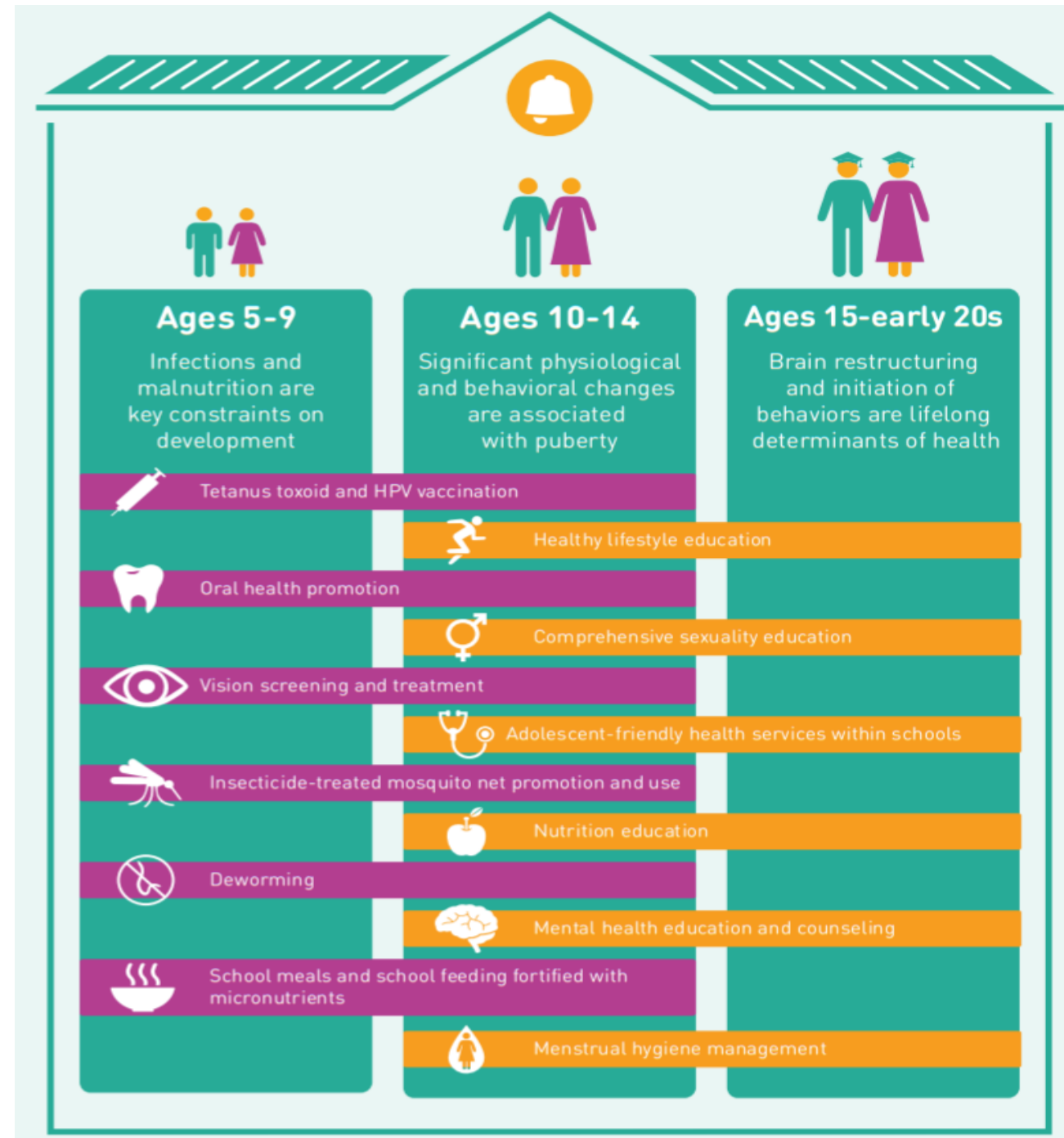
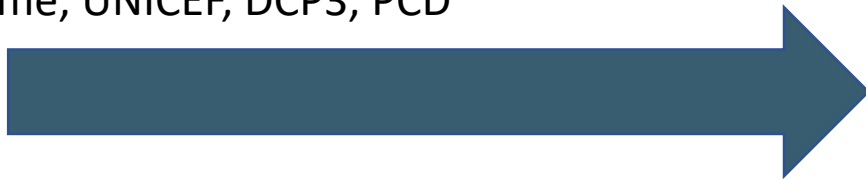


Promoting an integrated health and nutrition package in schools

Phase-specific support across the life cycle to:

- secure gains of investment in the first 1,000 days
- enable substantial catch-up from early growth failure, and
- leverage improved learning from concomitant education investments

Global Partnership for Education, World Food Programme, UNICEF, DCP3, PCD

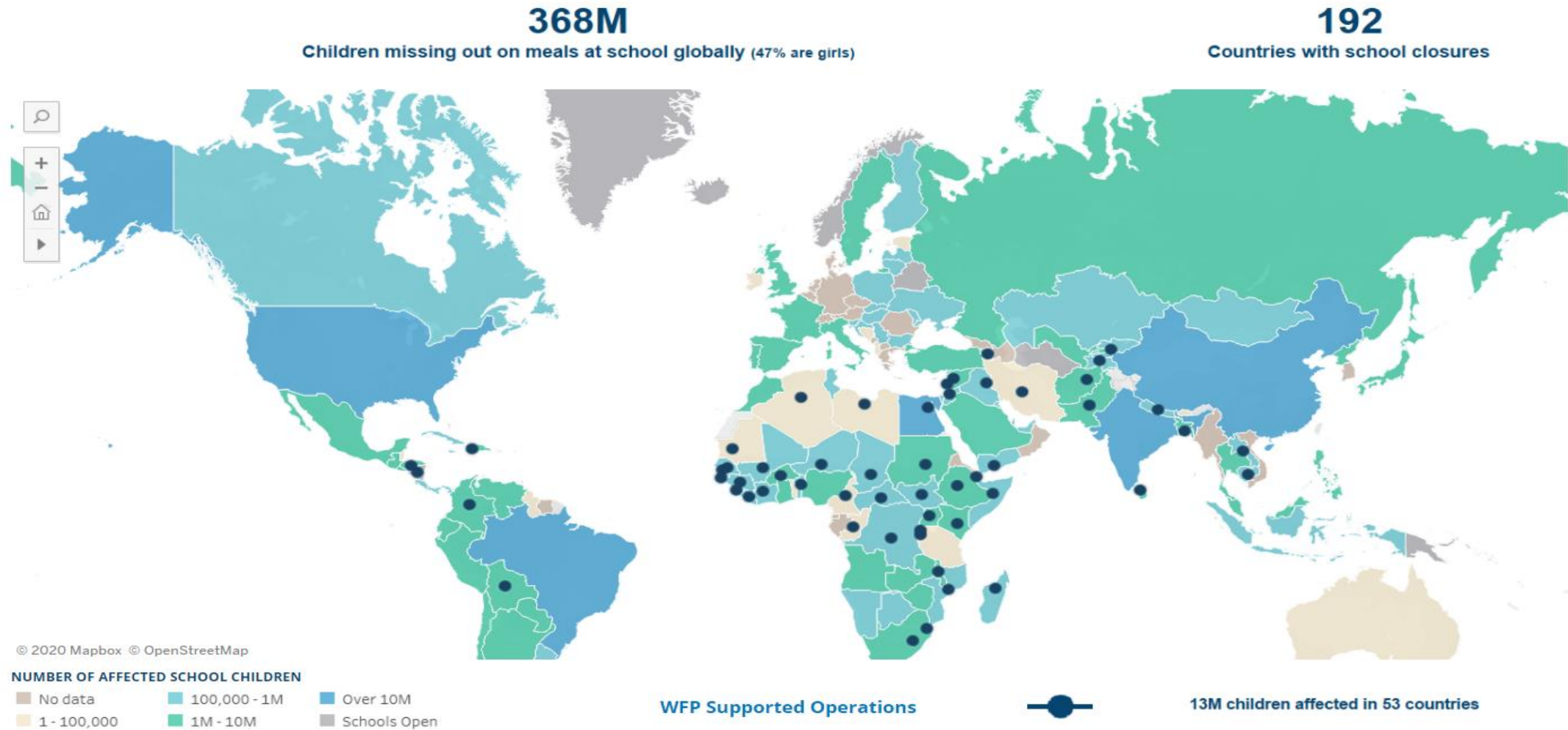


COVID-19

School based programmes in the context of COVID-19

- **192 countries** closed schools
- **1.5 billion children** no longer had access to education in schools.
- **368 million children** were no longer being fed at school
- **400 million children** were no longer benefiting from school health programmes: deworming, National Deworming Day, MHM etc

Global Monitoring of School Meals During COVID-19 School Closures



Link: <https://cdn.wfp.org/2020/school-feeding-map/>

The impact of COVID-19 on school-age children

- Children appear to have few direct health consequences from COVID-19, and appear to play little role in transmission of the virus; they are not the beneficiaries of school closure
- The longer marginalized children are out of school, the less likely they are to return, particularly girls.
- Being out of school is associated with increased risk of :
 - In girls: early marriage, early pregnancy, abuse
 - Inappropriate child labour
 - Poor educational attainment
 - Lower future earnings and career prospects

The response to the impact of COVID-19 on school-age children: **The Initial Response**

- **Countries have adapted programmes to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on the education and nutrition status of school-age children:**
 - **Provide education outside school through distance learning:**
 - **On-line**
 - **TV and other media**

Challenges: failing the vulnerable

- **The digital divide; in Africa, 10% of children have access to on-line learning**
- **Parental education level**

- **Social safety nets;**
 - **Cash transfers;**
 - **Take home rations;**

Challenges: do they reach the children?

Global Monitoring of School Meals During COVID-19 School Closures

[Click here to see the number of children missing out on school meals](#)

- All solutions
- Only WFP solutions
- Only Government solutions

71

Countries that have found alternative solutions to reach school children with meals

Select a country on the map to learn more about Governments and WFP response to the crisis



No data available

95
Countries

Programme on hold

4
Countries

Schools Open

46
Countries

Cash-Based Transfers to
schoolchildren's families

11
Countries

Various modalities

11
Countries

Take-Home Rations to
schoolchildren

49
Countries

The response to the impact of COVID-19 on school-age children: **ACTION NOW**

- Countries are in a hurry to get children back to school, and to seek to reverse the harm caused by school closures.
- UNICEF Survey of 157 countries:
 - 63 have already re-opened schools
 - 55 have set a date for re-opening
 - 39 are planning to re-open
- But even when schools are opened there needs to be support and incentives:
 - the children are hungry,
 - the longer children have been out of school, the less likely they are to return,

School Health and nutrition programmes, especially school feeding, act as a strong incentive for parents to send their children back to school, and for children to stay in school.

Provision of technical guidance

1. Joint guidance WFP, FAO and UNICEF for national governments to mitigate effects on schoolchildren
2. Support IASC Interim Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools
3. Framework for safe re-opening of schools UNICEF, UNESCO, WB and WFP



Respond in partnership

Aligned with the UNESCO-led Global Education Coalition, **WFP** and **UNICEF** are joining forces to ensure children are healthy and nourished despite the disruptions caused by COVID-19.

Objectives of the partnership

- Call on governments globally for action to ensure the 370 million schoolchildren are prioritized during the crisis response
- Support governments to find alternative solutions to deliver support to schoolchildren during school closures and develop strategies for a back to school campaign
- Provide operational support in 30 of the poorest countries to ensure that school health and nutrition packages are put in place





End the neglect of health and nutrition in middle childhood

- Nutrition interventions are crucial in supporting the health and development of children, not only during the first 1000 days, but as part of a continuum of care that extends throughout the 8000 days.
- Health and nutrition during middle childhood (5-9 years of age) have been particularly neglected, yet are key to sustaining the earlier gains, supporting learning, and creating human capital.
- Schools can provide an exceptionally cost-effective and timely platform to deliver health and nutrition interventions during middle childhood
- School health and nutrition programmes can play a key role in reversing the negative consequences of school closures in the context of COVID-19.

A photograph of two young children, a girl and a boy, smiling at the camera. They are standing in front of a white tent or canopy. The girl on the left has curly hair and is wearing a green top with a floral pattern and a leopard print skirt. The boy on the right has curly hair and is wearing a red vest over a white shirt. A United Nations logo is visible on the tent to the right.

Thank you !

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