MEASURING WHAT MATTERS:

INSIGHTS ON THE VALUE OF WHOLE CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Spirituality

Values

Life skills

Social & emotional learning

Academic knowledge

Health

Student engagement

Safe environments

Academically challenging learning

Community

Adult support

PORTICUS

ACER

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
ANLAS	Analysis of National Learning Assessment Systems
ASCD	Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
CASEL	Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
MWM	Measuring What Matters (Programme)
OAA	Optimising Assessment for All
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PISA-D	PISA for Development
SABER	Systems Approach for Better Education Results
SSES	Study on Social and Emotional Skills
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UIS	Institute for Statistics (UNESCO)
WCD	Whole Child Development

Report Notes:

I.   Data captured in 2019. Report published 2020.

II.   This study encompasses the survey results of twenty-one global sites (listed on Table 3) that are part of the Measuring What Matters programme

III.   To access other Appendices, including the Policy document analysis, as well as copies of the full policy survey in English and French – please go to the Porticus website

1. Context of the Report

There is increasing global momentum supporting approaches in Whole Child Development (WCD) [1], evidenced by a growing number of countries and development partners incorporating elements of WCD in their policy, curriculum and standards documents. Despite this momentum, there is limited knowledge of how national and city education systems define a WCD approach and their progress towards embedding this approach in education policies and practice. In an effort to better understand this, ACER undertook this study on behalf of Porticus to further our knowledge of the ways that holistic development is defined, measured and valued at an education policy level, particularly for those children and youth facing extreme adversity. As such, this study informs Porticus' Measuring What Matters (MWM) programme which aims to strengthen the integration of WCD measures into education systems at the individual, school and system levels.

There is compelling evidence for education systems to shift from a focus on subject content to a broader set of skills and competencies. The challenges of current global societies have prompted the development of integrated education models and policies that respond to the learning and development needs of the whole child (Suarez-Orozco & Sattin-Bajaj, 2010; Griffith & Slade, 2018). These holistic development models recognise that although academic knowledge is important, in order to provide a foundation for lifelong learning and success, there is a critical need to focus on a broader set of skills and competencies. A way of addressing the need for broader competencies and skills is through supporting WCD approaches across all levels of an education system. WCD is a holistic development approach which aims to create the conditions within education systems and school communities that aims to develop the whole child, physically, socially, emotionally, and academically, with the active engagement and support of the community. It recognises that all children, particularly those facing extreme adversity, require a range of knowledge, skills, experiences, and core values that will enable them to engage as productive and ethical citizens.

The wider community, including schools and families, also play a crucial role in cultivating the set of skills and competencies necessary to help children and youth grow and achieve their full potential. This is particularly important for individuals experiencing adversity, as adversity factors can negatively impact on their learning and engagement in school and work environments. For children in extreme adversity (chronic and sustained stress caused by factors such as poverty, conflict, displacement or social exclusion), interventions which aim to develop resilience, self-efficacy and emotional self-regulation in a supportive learning environment can have a positive impact on children and their communities (Killen, Van der Riet, O'Neill, & Zondi, 2008; Masten, 2011; Skovdal & Campbell, 2015).

For the purposes of this report, ACER focused on the national systems that are part of Measuring What Matter partner initiatives (listed on Table 3) and findings were analysed on the basis of detailed survey responses from these sites. Through a combination of survey responses and policy analysis, this study considered the extent to which the sites have progressed from policy formulation, to planning for integrating WCD approaches in the education system.

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[1] WCD encompasses several terms, such as social and emotional learning, 21st century skills, transversal competencies: global competencies, and life skills.

1.2 Executive Summary of Findings

Results from the study show there is a growing recognition by governments of the value of whole child development; as evidenced by high-level commitments in aspirational statements and goals, and institutional frameworks. This is also evident by the inclusion of WCD (and equivalent) within national and city education policies, sector plans, curriculum documents, and to some extent in assessment frameworks. Crucially, children and youth facing extreme adversity are recognised by all sites in this study, broadly and within a local context, as a priority group deserving of special attention in the education system. They are either identified in national education policies or specific policies targeting certain populations facing extreme adversity or populations that are excluded and marginalised from the education system. However, characteristics of disadvantage differ across the sites, which reflects the diversity of children and youth facing extreme adversity.

How is WCD defined and presented in education policies?

Less than half of the sites surveyed had a formal definition of WCD or equivalent. All of these sites used language that emphasised holistic development in their definitions. The most frequently cited WCD conceptual framework themes [2] were life skills, health, social and emotional learning, community, and values. There was minimal similarity between the definitions of WCD and the prioritisation of the WCD approach in the sites' education policies. This was evidenced by the sites identifying WCD themes, other than those in their formal definitions, as having the highest priority in their education strategies and policies. For example, academic knowledge was prioritised in the education policies of nearly all of the sites; however, it was not explicitly captured in the definitions of WCD. Life skills and social and emotional learning were prominent in the definitions, but this was not reflected in educational policy. This finding indicates that there is a lack of consistency between what Ministries of Education consider to be important at the strategic level and what is prioritised at the policy planning level. These findings show that across different sites and within each education system there is a focus on holistic development; however, there is a general lack of consensus on the meaning of WCD. This also indicates that there is a mismatch between what is considered whole child development and how this is represented in education strategies and policy, including curriculum, pedagogy and assessment documents.

What are the key reasons that motivated systems to invest in WCD?

Sites' primary motivation for investing in a WCD approach was that it would have a positive impact on the holistic development of the child. More than half of the sites identified a number of key reasons that motivated them to invest in WCD; including to improve academic outcomes of students, to increase completion rates in secondary education, and to improve long-term life outcomes. The endorsement of these reasons for investing in WCD aligns with the priority placed by the sites on improving academic knowledge. Sites had a number of context specific reasons for choosing to invest in a WCD approach, including increasing students' resilience, completion rates in primary education, and the inclusion of students previously excluded from education. Sites also placed an emphasis on improving the overall wellbeing of students and safety in schools. Slightly

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[2] WCD conceptual framework themes refers to the 11 key themes that comprise the conceptual framework of this study: values, life skills, social and emotional learning, spirituality, academic knowledge, student engagement, adult support, community, academically challenging learning, safe environments, and health.

lower priority ratings were placed on the WCD areas of social and emotional learning, safe environment, life skills, and student engagement.

It is important to note that these findings show that while WCD is promoted at the policy level, the extent to which it is integrated into education systems may be limited, particularly in regard to resourcing and capacity building of teachers and school leaders. Many sites emphasised the importance of teacher quality standards as essential to implement the WCD approach, but it was not evident in this study that the inclusion of a WCD approach in pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher development was common. Sites also recognised that stakeholder consultation and outreach were essential to the successful implementation of WCD approaches. Furthermore, the findings indicate that a WCD approach to teacher and school leadership development, and community engagement had not been consistently implemented across sites; even though these were identified by the sites as central motivating factors to support the approach. Sites recognised the critical need of having qualified staff who understood the concepts and value of a WCD approach as crucial to the success of the approach, although many face significant challenges in supporting this at the education system, school and classroom levels.

What are the challenges to implementing a WCD approach?

Overall, the top three key challenges identified by the sites in implementing a WCD approach in their systems were policy constraints (e.g., no official WCD definition or clear policy), teacher training and development, and resource constraint difficulties (e.g., monitoring progress and financial constraints). Engaging community groups, accessing and funding professional learning for school leaders and teachers, and addressing the diverse needs of the student populations were also identified as major challenges.

The sites identified other challenges, specific to their context. The examples of these challenges were not representative across sites but indicate that some sites are aware of context specific issues. The examples provided included addressing the expectations from vocational education and higher education systems, continuity of the implementation of public policy, and promoting evidence-based policy implementation.

A few sites found that some issues were particularly difficult to address in education policies and the implementation of policies: including child safety, health and nutrition, substance abuse and teenage pregnancy as issues. The sites also noted contextual factors such as insecurity in the country, and poverty, as key challenges impacting the implementation of WCD approach.

What impacts (measures or plans) are expected by embedding a WCD approach in education policies?

Where sites had indicated a key reason (motivation) for investing in a WCD approach in their education system, they were then asked if they were monitoring changes or planning to do so in the near future. In this way, having a strategy in place is interpreted as the site expecting WCD approaches to have an impact on a specific area motivating WCD investment.

The key reasons for investing in a WCD approach included aspirations to improve academic outcomes of students, to increase completion rates in secondary education, and to improve long-term life outcomes.

Overall, these findings indicate that sites consider that there will be positive impacts and improvements achieved by implementing and monitoring a WCD approach in specific areas including academic knowledge, student engagement, safe environments, adult support, health, social and emotional learning, and community.

The findings show that sites are more likely to use existing information systems to gather data and monitor identified areas of academic knowledge, for example, student academic outcomes, completion of primary and secondary school. Sites are likely to use school determined and other measures to monitor safety in schools, social and emotional learning (including student resilience and wellbeing), student engagement, and adult support (including teacher and school leadership).

How is a WCD approach applied to support children and youth facing extreme adversity?
The study determined that there were genuine attempts by governments to include children and youth facing extreme adversity, relevant to the local context, within a WCD approach. Sites reported a diverse range of what can be considered extreme adversity, which were predominately specific to the site context and their societal challenges.

The sites reported varied areas of extreme adversity as being medium to high priority areas for their government to address within a WCD approach. These priority areas included children and youth with special needs, those experiencing abuse or trauma, children affected by poverty, victims of bullying and school violence, cultural minority groups, rural populations, displacement, and out-of-school children. Community violence, youth suicide and child labour were considered lower priorities by most sites. The types of adversities identified by the sites were not associated with a country context in terms of income level, human development status, insecurity or educational standards. However, high-income sites identified youth at-risk of suicide as an adversity and placed it as a high priority, whereas, access to education for girls' and rural populations were identified as a high priority by low to upper-middle income sites.

At the policy level, there is evidence of enabling legal and policy frameworks (high-level strategy) supporting the inclusion of extreme adversity groups in the education system, resourcing through targeted government and external financing, and the establishment of institutional structures to support better policy coordination and programme implementation. This finding suggests that most sites have an existing policy framework in place that supports children and youth in extreme adversity, and some have strong intentions to further integrate the needs of these groups in the education system through the curriculum. At the planning level, there are clear strategies being adopted by governments to support marginalised children in the classroom, such as the introduction of mother-tongue instruction, specialised teacher training, and parent education programmes.

The sites identified resource constraints, contextual factors, and lack of high-level support as the three major challenges in developing an inclusive education system for children and youth in extreme adversity. Within these, quality training in areas such as special needs education, and deficiencies in the teacher education system were identified as significant barriers to supporting a WCD approach. This raises some concerns about the provision of comprehensive pre-service and in-service teacher training, and the level of support given to teachers and educational leaders. This has an impact on their ability to implement a WCD approach in the classroom and address the

needs of children facing extreme adversity. Overall, the challenges that countries and cities are facing are high-level institutional barriers as well as contextual difficulties.

These findings suggest that systemic changes are needed, coupled with the appropriate resourcing to support implementation of robust monitoring and evaluation systems. These systems would provide governments with the necessary data to make relevant policy decisions and programme interventions to ensure the equitable inclusion of children and youth facing extreme adversity in national education systems. The study found that sites are using the information they collect to identify extreme adversity groups, but it is not clear how the data is being used to track the outcomes for these children. Monitoring of expected impacts or changes in key areas of WCD varies greatly. For the most part, sites that are not currently monitoring change do not have a plan to do so in the near future. A consistent approach to reporting and suggestions of measures against WCD areas, such as those included in the conceptual framework, may be of use to sites who do not currently have a WCD monitoring strategy.

Policy interventions
In reflecting on the insights gathered from this study, six policy interventions emerged that could, if applied, further support national and city education systems to embed a WCD approach and contribute to improved learning and development outcomes.

1. Develop a clear definition of WCD
2. Strong policy enabling frameworks
3. Integration of WCD approaches in the curriculum
4. Prioritise investment in teacher training and teaching pedagogy
5. Strengthen engagement with parents and the community
6. Develop robust monitoring and evaluation systems

1.3 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework, which was developed as part of this study, was informed by WCD approaches identified in the literature, such as the ASCD whole child approach and Porticus' lens of WCD. It was also guided by the policy documentation provided by sites and informed by their responses to the policy survey questions. While it was not the intent of this study to derive or impose a definition of WCD, for a policy level analysis to be valid, reliable and comparable, some broad parameters around concepts were applied. The policy documentation informed the dominant themes and terms relating to WCD, including for example, social and emotional learning, 21st century skills, transversal competencies and life skills. The study also focussed on identifying the key factors relating to extreme adversity. ACER identified 11 dominant themes that formed the basis for this study.

Figure 1 WCD conceptual framework themes

Table 1 WCD conceptual framework key themes and terms	
Health	**Values**
Hygiene	Acceptance of others and difference
Physical and mental well-being	Consideration
Physical development	Honesty, trustworthiness
Physical fitness	Integrity
Nutrition	Respect for others
	Respect of rules
	Self-respect
	Understanding, tolerance and inclusion
Safe environments	**Spirituality**
Caring school community	Compassion
Connected and belonging	Faith
Trust	Hope
	Mindfulness/Awareness
Student engagement	**Academic knowledge**
Attitudes	Arts
Adaptability	Digital literacy
Curiosity	Information literacy
Differentiated instruction	Languages
Engaging with others	Literacy (reading and writing)
Imagination	Mathematics and numeracy
Inclusive learning environment	Science
Initiative	
Motivation	
Open-mindedness	
Perseverance	
Personal responsibility	
Adult support	**Life skills**
Encouraging, interesting and personable teachers	21st century competencies
High expectations – attendance, success, behaviour	Collaboration
High quality teaching and teachers	Communication
Holistic development of individuals	Creative thinking
Nurturing individual personalities/attitudes/values	Critical thinking
Nurturing learning environments	Global competencies
Personalised learning environments	Metacognition (memory, reasoning, self-regulation)
Significant adversities	Problem-solving
Positive and caring adults	Transferrable skills
Academically challenging learning	**Social and emotional learning**
Academic excellence	Coping skills
Curriculum that challenges students	Emotional self-regulation
Further education and career ready	Empathy
Higher order thinking and problem-solving skills	Establish and maintain positive relationships
Learning a second language and culture	Identity
	Resilience
	Responsible decision making
	Self-efficacy
	Self-reflection

Community (family, school, community and global community)
Citizenship
Community engagement
Diversity
Global citizen
History of indigenous peoples
Migration background
Promotion of peace
Relationships (families, friends)

Table 2 below lists a number of adversity factors that were identified in the literature and informed this study.

Table 2 Key factors affecting children and youth facing extreme adversity

Adversity factors	
Adverse childhood experiences*	Mental/physical illness
Adverse cultural practices*	Out-of-school children
Abuse (neglect, mental, emotional, physical and sexual)	Poverty and economic hardship
	Refugees
Child labour	Sexuality*
Conflict and war	Special needs and disability
Cultural minorities	At risk of suicide
Displacement	Toxic stress*
Geographically isolated (rural, remote, regional)	Community violence
Girls' education	Bullying and school violence
Marginalised*	

*Note: Terms were not included in the survey as they were identified as terms participants may not be familiar with. These terms were kept as they were presented in the adversity literature.

2. Method

2.1 Study design

The World Bank's Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) tool (World Bank Group, 2019) for monitoring the development of policy and institutional frameworks in education systems, has been adapted in this study to help identify the different policy indicators at the strategic and planning levels. The model is based on the assumption that policies supporting WCD, which are integrated and aligned across all three levels (strategy, planning and practice levels) within an education system, can contribute to WCD outcomes. The focus of this study is on the first two levels of policy embeddedness: strategy and planning. This study explored the extent to which the sites have progressed from policy formulation, to planning for integrating WCD approaches in the education system, to applying the policy at the local and school levels.

The study involved two complementary strands, policy survey (across 32 sites with 21 sites responding) and policy document analysis (analysis of secondary policy data across eight sites) and was based on a mixed-method approach. A higher-level analysis of the summary information

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of 24 participating sites was conducted to find the conceptual framework WCD key themes that were prominent in the Brookings Institution's *Visualizing the Breadth of Skills Movement Across Education Systems* study (Care, Anderson, & Kim, 2016). Noting that 21st century skills cited by Brookings fall under the life skills theme (specifically communication, creativity, critical thinking and problem solving) in the conceptual framework.

This study adapted the Brookings Institution study's methodology to conduct a policy document analysis. The Brookings' study gathered information in four skills categories. For this study, the skills categories were revised to broaden the focus to WCD. The most current, publicly available policy documents were sourced from national education websites and excluded programme documents. Policy documents were also requested from MWM partners and site contacts, and where documents were not available through these channels, secondary sources were used. Relevant policy documents included in the analysis were strategic and planning policies including vision/mission statements, national education policies and/or national education sector plans. Curriculum documents used for the analysis were national curriculum frameworks and sub-sector curriculum documents at the primary and lower-secondary education levels. In addition, inclusive policies were included to identify policy responses to adversity groups of children and youth.

The document analysis focused on the basic education level, defined by the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) as comprising of primary education to lower secondary education (typically finishing at 14 to 16 years of age). The findings were presented in a short case study for each site, discussing the degree to which WCD is embedded at the strategic and planning policy levels in each education system. A particular focus of the discussion included the extent to which policies are embedded to support the inclusion of children and youth facing extreme adversity.

The policy survey was used to gather in-depth information from the sites about the value and promotion of WCD within their education systems, and on policies regarding children and youth facing extreme adversity (see Appendix 5 available on the Porticus website). The survey was developed based on the research questions and was designed to take up to one hour to complete. It included a combination of closed-response questions (e.g., Likert scales) to establish quantitative indicators, and open-response questions in order to obtain more qualitatively rich data. The survey was translated from English into French and Spanish, and all versions were administered via a secure online survey tool.

Table 3 lists the MWM programme sites invited to be involved in this study. Sixty-six percent (21 of the targeted 32 sites) participated in the policy survey. A response rate of 50% and above was better than expected and a good response rate compared with similar surveys conducted in the field. Twelve sites completed the English version of the survey, five completed the Spanish version and two completed the French version. The Spanish and French responses were translated to English for the data analysis.

Table 3 MWM Programme site participation

Sites	
Bhutan	**Mauritania**
Bogota, Colombia	Mongolia*

Cambodia	Moscow
Daegu, South Korea*	**Nepal**
Denver, Colorado	Ottawa, Canada
DRC*	**Panama**
Ecuador	Paraguay*
Ethiopia	
Guatemala	**Senegal**
Hangzhou, China*	Sintra, Portugal
Helsinki, Finland	Suzhou, China*
Hiroshima, Japan	The Gambia
Honduras	Turkey*
Houston, USA	Vietnam
Manizales, Colombia	Zambia*

Note: Eight policy document analysis sites (bold text), 21 policy survey sites (normal text) and nine sites did not complete the survey (those with *).

2.2 Study limitations

This study was designed as a baseline assessment of WCD that warrants further research and monitoring over time. There are also existing arrangements in place to evaluate the impact of the individual MWM initiatives. The study focused on 32 countries; this is not a representative sample. The policy document analysis was limited to publicly available policy documents and was conducted for eight sites and not for all 32 sites. The 24 sites were informed by less extensive, older information extracted and then analysed from the Brookings' study.

3. Findings

3.1 WCD in education policies (strategy, planning and practice)

3.1.1 WCD site definitions

Not all countries and cities have a formal definition of Whole Child Development. Those that do, highlight attributes relating to life skills, health and social and emotional learning.

Nearly half of all survey respondents (10 of the 21 sites) indicated that their country or city had a formal definition of Whole Child Development. It was not clear from the responses how these definitions were derived by each country or city, whether from a theoretical basis or from a common understanding of WCD. However, some sites referenced their legal and policy frameworks in their formal definitions, such as the constitution, legal instruments, relevant policies and curriculum frameworks, such as the constitution (Vietnam), legal instruments (Japan and Colombia), relevant policies (The Gambia and Panama) and curriculum frameworks (Finland and Ecuador).The most frequently cited WCD concepts in the formal definition provided by the 10 sites were life skills, health, social and emotional learning, community and values. 10 out of the 11 WCD themes in the conceptual framework are represented in the formal definitions provided by sites, with the exception of safe

environment. In general, the definitions included terms such as 'holistic child development', 'whole child development', and 'growth of the whole child'. In general, the definitions included terms such as 'holistic child development' (The Gambia), 'whole child development' (Vietnam), and 'growth of the whole child' (Denver, Colorado). Japan's definition emphasised the role of schools in providing curriculum and the foundation 'in order to accomplish the well-balanced development of individual students as human beings. Portugal's definition focused on the importance of citizenship, especially in regard to the skills that contribute to its development by children and youth.

Importantly, academic knowledge was not prominent in the WCD definitions, though it was overwhelmingly identified as the key driver that motivated the sites to invest in WCD. This is consistent with the policy document analysis, which found academic knowledge to be the most prominent theme reflected in education policies and curriculum documents across all sites but was less commonly identified in their vision/mission statements.

These findings indicate that while academic knowledge may be prioritised in the education system, it is not explicitly captured in the aspirational goals or overarching definitions of WCD. It indicates a lack of consistency between what sites consider to be the most important attributes of WCD at the strategic level, and what is prioritised at the policy planning and practice levels.

Notably, of the 10 sites that had a formal definition of WCD, four highlighted the importance of WCD in early childhood, as referenced in their education sector plan, legal code, early childhood development policies and curriculum framework. This approach is supported by international research which suggests that interventions in the early years improves WCD outcomes, especially for children and youth facing extreme adversity (Heckman, 2006, 2019). Similarly, evidence from the policy document analysis showed that early childhood education was central to many national education policies. In general, the definitions included terms such as 'holistic child development' (The Gambia), 'whole child development' (Vietnam), and 'growth of the whole child' (Denver, Colorado). Japan's definition emphasised the role of schools in providing curriculum and the foundation 'in order to accomplish the well-balanced development of individual students as human beings. Portugal's definition focused on the importance of citizenship, especially in regard to the skills that contribute to its development by children and youth.

Example of strategies for including ECD in Ethiopia's Education Sector Plan

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is a priority under Ethiopia's Education Sector Plan, which recognises that quality education in a 'healthy environment' can improve student learning outcomes in later years. The government has committed to expanding ECCE provisions for children aged 0-6 years through numerous strategies. This includes expansion of services to the most disadvantaged areas with a target Gross Enrolment Ratio of 80 per cent by 2020, enhanced teacher qualifications to improve education quality at the pre-primary level, the establishment of child health and nutrition programmes, parent education programmes, and increased community awareness and advocacy campaign.

3.1.2 WCD in education policies

For most of the sites, WCD approaches appear to be referenced regularly and well-integrated in higher-level documents such as national education policies and strategies, sector plans and curriculum frameworks (where these exist). More than two-thirds of the sites (14 of the 21 sites) recognised the importance of WCD as articulated in their official policy or strategy on WCD (including 21st century skills, social and emotional skills, transversal competencies, etc.). These responses are presented in the Evidence Map which provides a representation of the most common response, or extent of the WCD approach, in education strategies and policies for each conceptual framework theme (See Table 4).

According to the sites, the areas of WCD most consistently included in education strategies and policies, curriculum, pedagogy and assessment documents as a focal area were academic knowledge, values, and social and emotional learning. However, as stated previously, there were inconsistencies in how sites prioritised the different aspects of WCD in their definition and policy frameworks. While academic knowledge, student engagement and safe environments had a prominent focus in policy documentation, this was not reflected in the formal definitions of WCD. In contrast, life skills, social and emotional learning and community (including citizenship) were prominent in the definitions, but this was not reflected in the educational policy.

This disconnect could have implications for how WCD is understood by different stakeholders within an education system and how a WCD approach is expected to be integrated from the policy, planning and practice levels. For example, while many sites indicated that WCD is emphasised through quality teaching standards, this has not always translated into practice through the inclusion of a WCD approach in pre-service teacher curricular documentation and in-service professional learning.

Table 4 is an Evidence Map of the extent to which the WCD approach is embedded in education strategies and policies across sites (e.g., a large extent or focal area, a medium extent, etc.). The map shows icons of different size based on the *frequency* of all site responses for each of the WCD themes. For example, values had a high frequency of responses identifying it as a focal area in their education policies and strategies. Table 4 presents, for each site, the extent to which their policies and strategies had a WCD focus. The WCD themes are ordered as prioritised by each of the sites as represented in Table 5.

Table 4 Evidence map: The extent of WCD approach in education strategies and policies

	Academically challenging learning	Student engagement	Values	Health	Adult support	Safe environments	Spirituality	Academic knowledge	Life skills	Social & emotional learning	Community
	Academic excellence ◆ Curriculum that challenges students ◆ Preparation for further education & career ◆ Learning other languages & cultures ◆ Real-world learning environments	Attitudes ◆ Adaptability ◆ Curiosity ◆ Motivation	Acceptance of others & difference ◆ Integrity ◆ Respect for others ◆ Respect for self	Hygiene ◆ Nutrition ◆ Growth & development ◆ Physical & mental health	High expectations for behaviour ◆ Quality teaching & teachers ◆ Personalised learning environments ◆ Positive & caring adults	Trust ◆ Caring schools communities ◆ Connection & belonging	Compassion ◆ Faith ◆ Hope ◆ Mindfulness & awareness	Arts ◆ Science ◆ Languages ◆ Mathematics ◆ Literacy & numeracy	Collaboration & problem-solving ◆ Critical thinking ◆ Metacognition ◆ Transferable skills ◆ Transversal competencies ◆ 21st century skills	Empathy & reflection ◆ Maintaining relationships ◆ Resilience ◆ Self – efficacy ◆ Emotional regulation	Family ◆ Schools ◆ Local & global communities
To a large extent (This is a focal area)											
To a medium extent											
To some extent											
Not at all											

Icon key
Large extent   Medium extent   Small extent   Not at all

Table 5 Extent of representation of WCD themes in policy per site

Table showing the extent of representation of WCD themes across sites, using colored icons of varying sizes to indicate extent.

WCD Themes	Bhutan	Bogota	Cambodia	Denver	Ecuador	Ethiopia	Gambia	Guatemala	Helsinki	Hiroshima	Honduras	Houston	Manizales	Maurit ania	Moscow	Nepal	Ottawa	Panama	Senegal	Sintra	Vietnam
Academic knowledge																					
Values																					
Social emotional learning																					
Safe environments																					
Health																					
Student engagement																					
Adult support																					
Academically challenging learning																					
Life skills																					
Community																					
Spirituality																					

Icon key

Large extent   Medium extent   Small extent   Not at all

Sites were asked to prioritise the 11 WCD conceptual framework themes of a WCD approach. This produced a ranking of key themes including academic knowledge, student engagement, social and emotional learning, and values as having the highest priority in education strategies and policies. However, sites indicated that social and emotional learning was as high a priority as student engagement, but this was not reflected in the extent of its representation in the policy documents.

Table 6 WCD areas from the highest to lowest priority

Higher priority		Academic knowledge	**Placed in first position by 10 respondents**
↑		Student engagement Social and emotional learning	
		Values	
		Life skills	
		Health	
		Safe environments	
		Academically challenging learning	
↓		Adult support	
		Community	
Lower priority		Spirituality	**Placed in last position by 11 respondents**

The analysis of the Brookings Institution's *Visualizing the breadth of skills across a changing world* summary data was consistent with these findings. The focus of the Brookings' study was on "a broad skills agenda beyond traditional academic knowledge" (Care et al, 2016, p. 7). **Academic knowledge** was consistently the most prominent theme cited in policy documents for the 24 sites in our sample. Considering Brookings' focus on 21st century skills, **life skills** was the only other prominent theme in both studies. Similarly, a deeper analysis of policy documentation for eight sites showed that **academic knowledge** and **life skills** were the most common themes cited in national education policies and curriculum documents.

This study adapted the Brookings' methodology for the policy document analysis of eight and four

skills categories were revised to broaden the focus to WCD.

1. The mission or vision statements on education websites (aspirational statements).
2. Whether skills related to the mission were identified, either in the mission and vision or in other documents (skills identified).
3. Evidence of integration of skills in curriculum documents (skills in the curriculum).
4. Evidence of assumptions about progressing levels of skills (skills progression).

Table 7 represents a summary of the most prominent WCD themes identified in the policy document analysis of eight sites. It displays the high-level support for WCD approaches in the education systems of all eight countries, as evidenced by the inclusion of WCD concepts in their vision and mission statements and policy documentation. The most frequently cited WCD concepts in national education policy and curriculum documents were academic knowledge, life skills, values, health and community. Out of these, the only two WCD themes that were included in the policy documents of all of the eight sites were academic knowledge and life skills. Student engagement was featured in the vision and mission statements of two sites (Senegal and South Korea), but this theme was less prominent in their policy documents. There was evidence that countries were measuring student competencies across various WCD areas through the progression of knowledge, skills and attitudes in the curriculum.

Table 7 Policy document analysis WCD themes by site

Site	Category 1. WCD in vision/mission statements (prominent themes identified)	Category 2. WCD in policy documentation (most frequently identified themes)	Category 3. WCD in curriculum documents (most frequently identified themes)	Category 4. Progression of WCD concepts in the curriculum (examples)	Category 5. The inclusion of children and youth in adversity in policies (groups identified)
DRC	Values, Community	Values, Academic knowledge, Health, Life skills	Values, Academic knowledge, Life skills, Health	Life skills	Education Sector Plan: Out of school children. Specific policies: Literacy and Non-Formal Education, and Girls' Education.
Ethiopia	Life skills, Values	Community, Academic knowledge, Health, Life skills	Values, Academic knowledge, Life skills	Life skills	Education Sector Plan: Poverty, special needs and gender. Specific policies: Special Needs/Inclusive Education and HIV/AIDS
Honduras	Academic knowledge, Community	Values, Academic knowledge, Community, Life skills	Values, Academic knowledge, Life skills	Health, Values, Community, Social & emotional learning, Academic knowledge	Education Sector Plan: poverty, cultural minority, disability National Basic Curriculum: Special Education. Specific policies: Inter-cultural Bilingual Education, Indigenous People's Plan
Mauritania	WCD identified in vision/mission statement but no explicit themes stated	Academic knowledge, Health, Life skills	Values, Academic knowledge, Life skills, Spirituality	Health	Education Sector Plan: Girls' education, out of school children and rural population.
Nepal	Life skills, Academic knowledge	Values, Academic knowledge, Health, Life skills, Community	Values, Academic knowledge, Student engagement, Life skills, Health, Community	Life skills	Education Sector Plan: Indigenous population, low castes, poverty, rural population, girls' education and disabilities/special needs.
Panama	Life skills, Academic knowledge, Values	Values, Academic knowledge, Community, Life skills	Academic knowledge, Life skills, Community	Values	Education Policy: Poverty. Specific policies: Inclusive Education.
Senegal	Values, Academic knowledge, Health, Student engagement, Community	Values, Academic knowledge, Health, Community, Life skills	Academic knowledge, Life skills, Community	Life skills, Academic knowledge	Education Policy: Out of school children and girls' education. Specific policy: Inclusive Education
South Korea	Values, Life skills, Student engagement	Values, Academic knowledge, Health, Community	Academic knowledge, Life skills, Community, Health	Health	Education Policy: low income, out of school, multicultural, rural, disability/special needs, school violence, and child abuse. Specific policy: End of Child Abuse

Icon key: Academic knowledge | Community | Health | Life skills | Social & emotional learning | Spirituality | Student engagement | Values

3.1.3. Key reasons to invest in WCD approaches

The responses from sites indicated that there were a number of reasons that motivated policymakers to invest in WCD approaches. However, there were no observable patters in the reasons identified amongst the sites or differences across regions to determine how countries and cities prioritise areas for investment in WCD.

Academic outcomes, high school completion rates and long-term life outcomes were the most common motivating factors for investing in WCD approaches.

Issues that were identified, by more than half of the sites, as key reasons to invest in WCD included: improving academic outcomes of students; increasing completion rates in secondary education; and improving long-term life outcomes. The endorsement of these reasons for investing in WCD aligns with the priority placed by the sites on academic knowledge in their education policies and curriculum documents. It is worth noting that monitoring changes in student learning outcomes and completions rates is a relatively straightforward exercise for many sites (where they have access to the information), whereas monitoring improvements in long-term life outcomes may be less clearly determined due to the complexity of measuring indicators for life outcomes.

Other key reasons for choosing a WCD approach that were nominated by many sites included:
- increasing the capacity of students to cope with challenges (resilience).
- increasing the completion rates in primary education.
- increasing the inclusion of students previously excluded from education.
- improving physical, social and emotional wellbeing of students; and
- improving safety in schools.

Slightly lower priority ratings were placed on the WCD areas of social and emotional learning, safe environment, life skills, and student engagement.

Two issues strongly endorsed by sites as being influential in the decision to invest in WCD approaches were focused on outcomes for educators and other staff. These included the improvement of professional learning outcomes of education system staff, teachers and school staff and to improve the quality of teacher education programmes. It should be noted that the sites highlighted the benefits of a WCD approach for both educators as well as students, as considerable investment is required in educators in order to successfully integrate a WCD approach in an educational system. Sites recognised the importance of having qualified, trained staff who understood the concepts and value of a WCD approach as crucial to the success of the approach, although many face challenges in this area.

While many sites recognise the importance of teacher training and development in a WCD framework, there was limited evidence of a WCD approach being integrated in teacher education and training systems.

3.1.4 Challenges to integrating WCD approaches in education systems

There was no clear consensus across the sites regarding the challenges they face in introducing and promoting a WCD approach in education systems. However, of the suggested challenges the

sites more frequently identified, engaging community groups, accessing and funding professional learning for school leaders and teachers, and addressing the diverse needs of the student populations were major challenges. This finding is aligned with key reasons to invest in WCD (e.g., teacher training, school leadership development and community engagement).

Sites were also asked to specify if there were any other challenges in introducing and promoting a WCD approach in education policies. The responses were related to constraints in policy implementation (including limited scope for implementation, and in difficulties measuring and monitoring progress) and financial constraints. Specific policy areas that were identified as challenging were: child safety, health and nutrition (e.g. Panama), and substance abuse and teenage pregnancy (e.g. Bogota, Colombia). Sites also noted contextual factors such as insecurity in the country, poverty, inequality gaps in education, and lack of community engagement as key challenges impacting the implementation of WCD approaches.

Overall, the main challenges in embedding a WCD approach within the education system can be categorised under three areas below. Most sites highlighted at least one of these three areas as a barrier to integrating WCD approaches:

- **Policy constraints**, including incoherence of policies supporting WCD and a lack of high-level commitment/awareness.

- **Teacher training and capacity**, specifically relating to a lack of understanding of WCD approaches and inconsistency in the teacher training systems.

- **Resource constraints** related to financing, infrastructure and technical capacity.

In the classroom, the key constraint noted by many sites included implementation of WCD pedagogy, such as changing beliefs of teachers, adapting to new practices, responding to the diversity of student needs, and monitoring progress. At the systems level, some sites noted the difficulty of embedding WCD while trying to ensure other strategic priorities were met, including the national goals for improving education access and quality, and promoting a culture of evidence-based policy implementation. Other systems level constraints included gaps between policy and practice, complexity of governance, and the challenges of stakeholder engagement, particularly with families and the community. Table 8 presents the key challenges sites face in embedding WCD.

Table 8 Challenges of embedding a WCD approach within education systems

Stakeholder & community engagement	Teacher training and capacity	Reliable data	Funding and resources	Attitudes of educators	Lack of cooperation or coordination	Difficulties with policy
Community participation	Conceptual understanding and capacity	Achieving national coverage of pupils in the education system	Funding	Challenge with educators not seeing how this is part of the work, and not an addition to the work	Sectoral biases and power struggles	Clearly embedding Whole Child Development in policy documents
Getting stakeholders up to speed	Teachers' professional development	Developing a reference framework	Budget	Some teachers still focus on knowledge and skills, and hold a light opinion of other domains	Competing priorities	Review of the Legal Framework for the defence of child development
Stakeholder participation	Teacher training	Accurately monitoring progress	Resource constraint	Teachers have inconsistent views on life skills, values, social and emotional development, etc.	Constant review of education policies and plans	The absence of a national curriculum
Increased involvement and discussion with families	Not enough attention to the life skills, social and emotional development etc. in teachers' education programmes		Guarantee of financing	Unfavourable educational environment	Government officials and faculty who do not meet the optimal profile	No specific policy on this
	Not clearly defined in teaching practice and learning			Lack of awareness of faculty and government officials at local levels regarding the rights and fairness approaches in comprehensive education	Work instability High turnover in the public sector	No official definition
	Paradigm shift of educators			Traditional school setting that prevents the child to be in the centre/an active player	Inter-sectoral coordination in the territory for the development of strategies	Lack of clear policy
	Teacher training not preparing for pre-service teachers for a WCD approach					

3.2 Evidence of effective WCD approaches

3.2.1 Expected impacts of embedding WCD approaches in education policies

To explore the extent in which sites are measuring the impact of WCD approaches in their education system, they were asked to indicate if they have a strategy for monitoring changes in a key issue relating to WCD. In this way, having a strategy in place is interpreted as the site expecting WCD approaches to have an impact on a specific area motivating WCD investment. For example, a site may highlight student academic outcomes as a key reason for introducing a WCD approach in their system and be using national examinations or participation in an international comparison study to measure improvements in students' academic outcomes. This site would then be considered as expecting an impact in the WCD area of academic knowledge.

Results from this study found that most sites were expecting that the introduction of a WCD approach would have a positive impact in their education systems, as indicated by attempts to measure progress in the following WCD areas:

1. **Academic knowledge** - increases in the rates of primary and secondary school completion and improved student academic outcomes
2. **Student engagement** - increased student participation and engagement with school, increased inclusion of previously excluded students, and reduced absentee and truancy rates
3. **Safe environments** - increased use of positive discipline practises in schools, improved safety, and reduced use of corporal punishment
4. **Adult support** - improved outcomes of professional development for school staff, improvements in the quality of teacher education programmes, and in teacher and school leadership
5. **Health** - improvements in student wellbeing
6. **Social and emotional learning** - increased student resilience
7. **Community** - increased parent engagement with schools

Other areas in which some sites expected a WCD approach to have a positive impact included costs of educating students, improvement in long-term life outcomes, rates of youth employment, and involvement in crime or violence.

3.2.2 Strategies for monitoring key drivers of WCD investments

While results show the majority of sites had a strategy in place for monitoring change (impact) across several key drivers for WCD investments, the assessment tools employed varied depending on the issues being monitored. For some areas, such as student completion rates (related to academic knowledge), monitoring progress is readily done through standardised measures such as national examinations, census or population data and school-determined measures. Other areas, such as reducing the use of corporal punishment (related to safe environments), are not as straight forward to monitor. Of the three sites that monitor corporal punishment in schools, one site mentioned developing additional protocols for dealing with violent situations or the introduction of legal rights as ways of addressing the issue, without identifying a means to monitor any changes these interventions may provoke. It could be argued that these sites are demonstrating a desire to measure the impacts of their investments in WCD by tracking improvements in the areas which they see as having the most significant impact on WCD outcomes, such as academic knowledge and safe environments.

It should also be noted that although some areas may lend themselves well to monitoring through centralised information systems (census or population data), a number of sites indicated that this can be a challenge, particularly for tracking information on those identified as belonging to an adversity group or those previously excluded from education. For example, Honduras, Mauritania and Ecuador noted the lack of census records or missing data for these populations of children and youth, which make monitoring and measurement inherently difficult.

The most common assessment tools used to track progress on WCD areas are standardised tests and census data. However, there are challenges relating to the integrity of available data, particularly for populations facing adversity.

The conceptual framework theme, life skills was not identified as a key motivation for investing in a WCD approach by any of the sites (and thus not covered by questions focusing on monitoring change). However, communication skills (a term in life skills) was frequently identified in the curriculum documentation of all eight policy document analysis sites, with a description of how these skills were expected to develop as students' progress through the stages of education. In this way, these sites have identified appropriate ways of monitoring change in outcomes in the area of life skills (communication), although the specific means of gathering the relevant information about the skill development were not specified.

Example of monitoring skills progression in the curriculum: Ethiopia

Ethiopia provides an example of monitoring skills development through the curriculum framework. Life skills was identified in the Curriculum Framework as the first of seven key competencies that students should develop, with a strong focus on communication. Familiarity with language is a core component of communication, and Ethiopian students receive instruction in three languages, being their mother tongue, Amharic and English. Formal instruction in mother tongue and English begins in Grade 1, with Amharic beginning in Grade 3.

Alongside these language skills, the Ethiopian curriculum includes references to how students use their communication skills in other subject areas. At the pre-primary level, communication skills feature in the key learning area of Relating with Others, as well as in Developing Literacy. Students must also demonstrate "assertiveness and interpersonal communication skills" in Health, with a focus to help in preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS. At the lower secondary level, aspects of communication feature in Civics and Ethics education. At this level, students receive instruction of most subjects in English, and so the importance of communications skills such as "subject survival skills, confidence and learning strategies" are emphasised. At the primary level, students are expected to be able to follow instructions and listen and respond to personal questions in English and Amharic.

3.2.3 Stakeholder engagement to strengthen WDC education outcomes

Whole Child Development approaches recognise the important role the broader community plays in a child's development. This is reflected in the WCD conceptual framework through themes such as health, adult support, safe environments, and community. This is supported by a review of social-emotional programming for pre-school and elementary schools by CASEL (2013), which found that the most effective programmes focused on both classroom-based and community-wide contexts to promote social and emotional learning.

Sites recognise the importance of community engagement as part of a WCD approach, as evidenced by a number of strategies used to facilitate greater participation of parents, teachers & schools.

Sites were asked to share the top three strategies they have used to increase involvement of key stakeholders (including schools, families, teachers, students or community leaders) to strengthen education for improved WCD outcomes. The findings show that all sites have engaged with stakeholders through at least one of the following three approaches:

- Stakeholder consultation and outreach including advocacy and broad consultations with families, the school community and teachers. This involves advocacy campaigns when a new policy is introduced, regular meetings with community leaders and school management committees, and parent consultations at the school level to share project impact and results.
- The use of policy tools to promote WCD including strategies to promote inclusive policies for children and youth in adversity, introduction of community-based structures and reviewing the education law.
- Teacher training and development including a greater emphasis on pre-service and in-service teacher training including changes to university entrance exams, reforming teacher training courses and upskilling of teachers through workshops and short-term training programmes.

Other strategies used by countries and cities included the introduction of new programmes and initiatives to support the integration of WCD in the classroom and the wider community. These programmes and initiatives include classroom-based activities focusing on individual learners (Moscow, Russia and Bogota, Colombia). Parent education and community programmes have also been introduced by sites to encourage greater participation of the community in children's development, such as support for parent education in early childhood care and development (Panama, Ecuador and Sintra, Portugal) and establishment of community participation structures (Nepal, The Gambia and Bogota, Colombia).

Example of engaging the community to improve WCD outcomes: Republic of Korea

The Republic of Korea provides a good example of strengthening school-community partnerships to improve WCD outcomes for children and youth. In particular, the Character Education programme was introduced to develop students' competencies in democratic citizenship and community, and relies on the cooperative support system between home, school and the community (Ministry of Education, n.d). Character Education is integrated throughout the curriculum, across all subject areas and involves classroom-based activities, extra-curricular activities, parent education sessions, and volunteering opportunities in the community. Importantly, the programme also recognises the essential role of teachers in developing children's character and includes programmes to support pre-service and in-service teacher training.

3.3 WCD approaches and children and youth in extreme adversity

This study recognises that conditions of adversity caused by factors such as poverty, conflict, displacement or social exclusion of various kinds, can have a profound impact on children's education and development. It sought to establish which populations are identified as those 'facing extreme adversity' by countries and cities, how national policies and plans on WCD include children and youth facing extreme adversity, and what strategies are in place to assess adversity amongst these groups.

The groups of children and youth identified by sites as facing extreme adversity can be broadly categorised based on the following factors:

- **Social and emotional factors** - children affected by mental/emotional/physical/sexual abuse, trauma, bullying, suicide.
- **Cultural factors** - children belonging to specific cultural/ethnic groups
- **Geographical factors -** children living in rural areas, children affected by conflict and war, refugees, displaced children, community violence.
- **Poverty factors -** children experiencing poverty and economic hardship, out-of-school children, child labour.
- **Gender related factors –** girls' education and gender identity; and
- **Special needs** - children with special needs or a mental/physical disability.

Figure 2 Adversity factors identified and prioritised by sites.
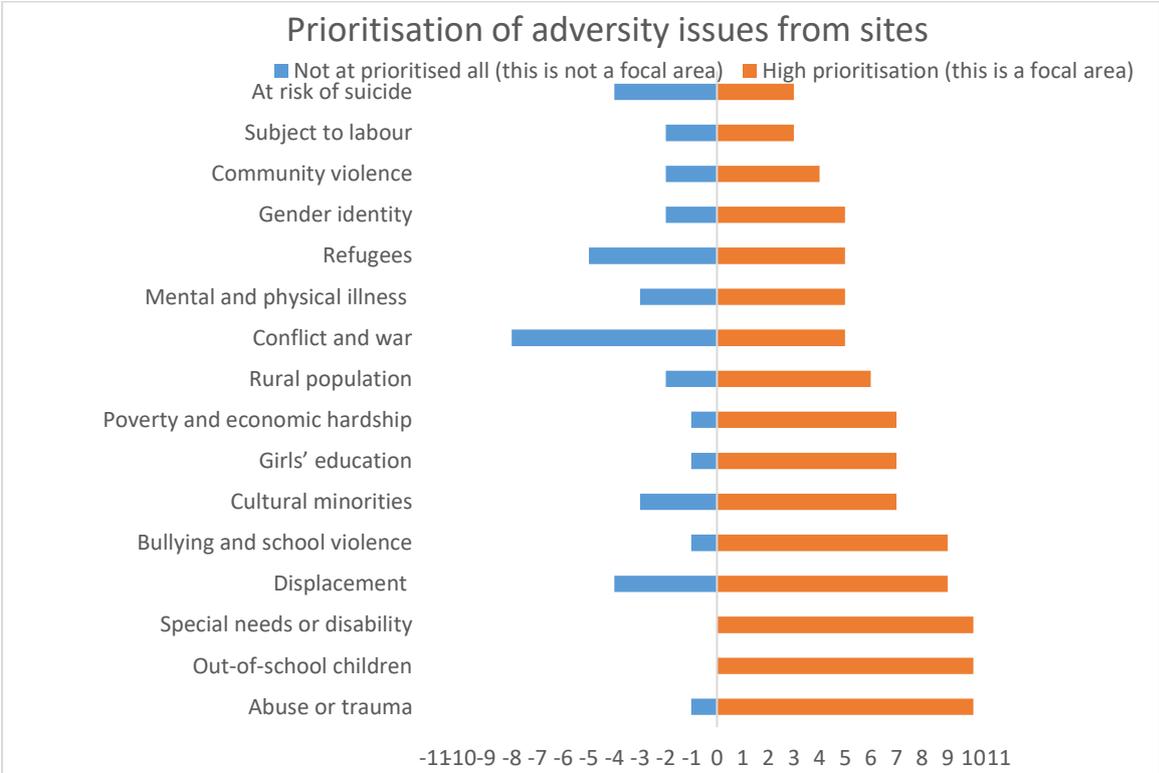
The findings show that three groups were identified as high priority by most sites when considering what is defined as adversity: children with special needs; out-of-school children; and children and youth experiencing abuse or trauma.

The three groups of children and youth facing extreme adversity that received the most attention were not specific to any particular country context, indicating that they were commonly recognised as a high priority across a variety of different settings, regardless of the country's socio-economic status. For example, out-of-school children were as much a concern in high-income countries (such as Finland) as they were in low-income countries (such as Ethiopia). Similarly, displaced children were equally identified as a high priority in Canada as they were in Senegal.

Children with special needs and out-of-school children were the only two categories that did not receive a zero-priority rating, meaning that these two groups were prioritised in the national education strategies or plans of all sites. The data also indicated that children experiencing conflict and war were not recognised as a priority for nearly half of all sites surveyed. This is consistent with a study conducted by UNESCO (2010) on the identification of marginalisation in 44 national education plans. It found that conflict-affected groups, including refugees, were rarely included as a specific focus group in educational plans. In addition, survey responses in this study revealed that the priority placed on refugees could vary widely depending on the context they are in, based on the even spread of priorities placed by sites for this group.

There were no observable regional variations in the prioritisation of adversely affected groups. However, high-income, Western countries in our sample tended to place a higher priority on youth suicide, while girls' education and rural populations were more likely to be rated as a high priority by low to upper-middle income countries. The focus on youth suicide is understandable for those countries facing high suicide rates. According to the latest data from the OECD (2017), Canada and Finland showed some of the highest rates of youth suicide among OECD countries, with a ranking of fifth and ninth, respectively.

In the case of girls' education, the link between socio-economic status and gender parity in education is not so clear-cut. The survey results showed that of the countries that had a gender parity index (GPI)[3] of less than one favouring boys at the primary level, only three countries rated girls' education as a high priority (UIS, 2019). In contrast, the policy document analysis found that countries which did not appear to be experiencing gender disparity in their education system have made girls' education a central focus in their education policies.

3.3.1 WCD targeted programmes for children and youth in extreme adversity

Two thirds (12 of 19) of the sites in this study indicated that children and youth in extreme adversity were a central focus in either their official policies or strategies on WCD; national education strategies, plans or policies, or curriculum frameworks. This is supported by results from the policy document analysis which showed that groups facing adversity are often included in national education policies as priorities of the government, with clear strategies and set targets to track progress in these areas. While most sites have identified specific interventions to support marginalised groups in their national plans, some sites have established separate policies targeting children and youth in extreme adversity.

A key challenge identified by sites is the deficiencies in the teacher education system to address the needs of children and youth in adversity.

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[3] Gender Parity Index is the ratio of female to male, which measures progress towards education participation where a value less than 1 indicates a disparity in favour of boys and a value greater than 1 indicates a disparity in favour of girls.

In some countries, the government has established institutional structures to support the implementation of these policies, such as special directorates and implementation units within the Ministry of Education. These structures provide oversight and greater coordination across government organisations and key stakeholders to improve the outcomes for children facing extreme adversity.

Targeting girls' education in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The DRC's policy response to promote the inclusion of women and girls provides an example of how countries and cities are addressing specific groups facing extreme adversity in their education systems. The government in DRC has adopted a number of international and national legal instruments to protect the rights of women and girls, including the development of the *National Strategy for Girls' Education.* Its aim is to provide "quality, equitable schooling to guarantee the development of human capital, the development of girls and boys alike, so that they will be able to meet the challenges of national development, the promotion of peace and active democratic citizenship" (Consortium International de Developpment en Education, 2015, p. 27). To achieve this, the strategy proposes the targeting of provinces where girls' access and retention rates are the lowest. It also recognises the important role the broader community plays in promoting the inclusion of girls in education through female role models, the provision of safe places for girls and removing social and cultural barriers that lead to early marriage or pregnancy. Specific programmes include grants to subsidise school fees for girls, safe schools that include latrines, non-formal education pathways for girls who have dropped out of school and a gender inclusive curriculum. By adopting a number of targeted interventions, the government of DRC is demonstrating a concerted effort to promote greater access and outcomes for girls in the education system.

While most sites have demonstrated a high level of commitment to including children and youth in extreme adversity in their national policies and plans, one key challenge many sites noted is there is little focus on teacher education and training to support these children and youth in adverse situations. However a few sites indicated (Ethiopia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Panama, Portugal, and Bogota, Colombia) that quality standards for teachers and school leaders, pre-service teacher curricular and in-service professional learning, were central to their policy documents targeting children and youth in adversity.

The findings show that deficiencies in the teacher education system was highlighted as one of the three main challenges faced by sites in embedding a WCD approach. It raises some concerns about the general lack of support for teachers and their ability to implement a WCD approach in the classroom, particularly to address the needs of children and youth in adversity.

There is evidence from the document analysis that shows some governments are making a genuine attempt to improve teacher training and employment conditions to cater for students who are commonly excluded from the education system. Strategies supporting teachers working with children in extreme adversity include improved pre-service teacher education for working with special needs children, teacher training in mother tongue instruction for indigenous communities, financial incentives for teachers working in rural and remote areas, and the hiring of female teachers to increase education access for girls.

In identifying the particular challenges of developing an inclusive education system for children and youth in extreme adversity, the survey results identified three common themes across all sites:

- **Resource constraints**: These include budgetary constraints, limited capacity at the institutional level for effective coordination, limited capacity of professionals working in this area including teachers (particularly in special needs education), lack of institutional infrastructure to monitor progress and lack of classroom infrastructure to support children with special needs.
- **Contextual factors**: For example, poverty, conflict, population diversity (migrant children) and other conditions that make it difficult to design and implement quality education programmes to address the needs of all children. The lack of participation from parents and the school community was also noted as a key challenge in creating an inclusive education for children and youth in adversity.
- **Lack of high-level support**: Particularly stemming from a lack of national level policies, or difficulties in interpreting policies and legal frameworks. Three sites noted a lack of high-level commitment to inclusive programming for children and youth in adversity due to poor perceptions, or competing strategic priorities, often related to the broader goals of achieving education access and quality.

Sites also identified challenges in developing and implementing new, population specific programmes such as adult education, life skills training, vocational education, and programmes for gifted children.

While many sites indicated that youth and children in extreme adversity were captured within their national education policies, the lack of specific policies and monitoring information targeting these populations were also highlighted as a constraint by some sites. This suggests that general statements included in national policies may not be concrete enough to provide practitioners with the mandate to implement strategies or programmes for intervention. However, the document analysis did not find any clear evidence that targeted policies (such as those focusing on indigenous populations, girls' education and HIV/AIDs prevention) have a greater impact in bringing positive outcomes for certain populations of children and youth in extreme adversity.

Another institutional barrier noted by the sites is the lack of appropriate resources (finance, capacity and infrastructure) for implementing policies and programmes to support children and youth in adversity. Evidence from the document analysis showed that where this is the case, governments have tended to partner with external funders to address the resource gap in providing services to specific populations of children and youth in adversity. In other countries, donors themselves have filled the gap where government services are limited or do not reach the most disadvantaged.

These findings suggest the challenges countries and cities are facing are high-level institutional barriers, as well as contextual difficulties, in integrating WCD approaches for children and youth in adversity. Contextual factors relating to adversity are inherently complex with multiple dimensions, which makes it difficult to design and implement programmes for a diverse population of at-risk children.

3.3.2 Measuring changes in outcomes for children and youth in adversity

Overall, the majority of countries and cities have an existing monitoring system to capture information on children and youth in extreme adversity. The majority of the sites in the survey (17 of 21 sites) indicated that they were currently monitoring outcomes for children and youth in extreme adversity, by relying on a mix of demographic surveys and classroom-based assessments.

Countries and cities rely on census data or classroom-based assessments to monitor children and youth in adversity.

However, there were four sites which indicated they had no foreseeable plans for monitoring outcomes of children and youth in extreme adversity. Ten sites indicated they used standardised measures or instruments and seven sites collect census or population data for these groups. Six sites used school-determined measures and seven used census or population data. Four sites used additional measures to assess populations facing adversity, including programme-based performance tracking, administrative records and adjusted standardised tests for people with disability. There were five sites who identified other measurement tools that they used to monitor children and youth in extreme adversity. These included: research involving focus groups and interviews; using administrative records; and tracking and follow-up using early childhood information and centres.

From the policy document analysis, there are no clear examples to show how sites are using data for decision-making or programme interventions. Interestingly, where national education policies and plans include targets for measuring outcomes relating to certain groups of children and youth in extreme adversity these are more general in nature. Often, national plans propose a series of strategies focused on specific adversity groups without any

Resource and capacity constraints are key limiting factors in implementing assessment systems.

targets. Further research would be required to examine what data is being collected and how they are being used as policy tools to create a positive impact for children and youth in extreme adversity at the school and classroom levels.

These three challenges are described as:
- **Resource constraints** relating to technical capacity of policy makers and practitioners to understand and translate results into practice. This is due to the complexities of measuring and reporting on populations facing adversity. Sites also noted the lack of a culture of evidence-based practice at the institutional level, resulting in a lack of strong policies and budget support for monitoring and evaluation. Additionally, there is limited institutional coordination for information gathering and dissemination across government departments and with stakeholder groups.
- **Limitations in the monitoring and evaluation system** to capture appropriate data on children and youth facing adversity. In particular, difficulties were identified relating to the validity of existing data on these populations (e.g. lack of census data, duplication across various systems, and overlap of adversity groups such as migrant populations and out-of-school children). In addition, sites noted the limitations in the design and implementation of assessment tools, including issues with adapting measures already in use in the general student population for use with children and youth in adversity.
- **Contextual factors** were also cited as a key challenge including socio-cultural sensitivities around adversity and the labelling of these children. For example, many parents do not want to disclose information on poverty or domestic violence. Similarly, geographical or

economic barriers may make it difficult to capture information about certain at-risk groups (such as out-of-school children, refugees and displaced populations) if they do not attend school or participate in formal surveys. Other challenges relating to context include a lack of community awareness and participation.

3.3.3 Challenges faced in measuring outcomes

The challenges in measuring and monitoring the outcomes of children and youth in adversity vary across different sites, at different levels of implementation. While some sites noted difficulties in data collection, others indicated limited capacity in analysing and disseminating results. Of the sites which responded to this question, half identified resources (including financial, infrastructure and human capacity) as a key constraint to measuring outcomes for children and youth facing extreme adversity, indicating that it is the most common issue faced by sites.

These findings suggest that appropriate resourcing to support implementation of a robust monitoring and evaluation system would provide governments with the necessary data to make relevant policy decisions and programme interventions to ensure the equitable inclusion of children and youth facing extreme adversity in national education systems.

4. Conclusion and policy interventions

The findings from this study demonstrate that countries and cities are making a concerted effort to include a WCD approach in their education systems. This is evident in the adoption of WCD in national education policies, sector plans, curriculum documents, and to some extent in assessment frameworks, across a wide range of sites. It shows there is growing recognition by governments of the value of WCD, which are being translated into high-level commitments in aspirational statements and goals, and institutional frameworks.

While many sites have adopted a WCD approach in their policies, how it is defined and reflected at different levels of the education system differs. The formal definition of WCD provided by sites, and aspirational goals as expressed in their national policies, were most commonly related to concepts such as life skills, social and emotional learning and community. Yet, the overwhelming motivation for adopting a WCD approach was related to the area of academic knowledge. This is understandable, as academic knowledge was rated as one of the key drivers for measuring successful WCD investment, in which sites were able to draw on existing standardised measures or demographic tools to easily track progress. Other WCD areas such as safe environment and adult support would be more difficult to measure. The lack of connection between what is defined as WCD at the policy formulation level and how it is being translated into policy planning and student assessment, is an issue that requires further research.

Children and youth in extreme adversity are recognised by all sites in this study as a priority group deserving of special attention in the education system. They are either identified in national education policies or specific policies targeting certain at-risk populations. However, characteristics of disadvantage differ across the sites, which reflects the diversity of groups of children and youth facing extreme adversity. The three most common groups of children identified

as a high-priority were children with special needs or a disability, out-of-school children, and children and youth experiencing abuse or trauma. Yet, they were not specific to any particular country context in terms of income level, human development status, insecurity or educational standards. There some are examples of genuine attempts by governments to include children and youth in extreme adversity within a WCD approach. At the policy level, this includes evidence of enabling legal and policy frameworks supporting the inclusion of groups in extreme adversity in the education system, resourcing through targeted government and external financing, and the establishment of institutional structures to support better policy coordination and programme implementation. At the planning level there are clear strategies being adopted by governments to support marginalised children in the classroom, such as the introduction of mother-tongue instruction, specialised teacher training, and parent education programmes.

Effective strategies used by sites in this study provide important examples of how WCD approaches can be integrated within the curriculum, including explicit instruction in WCD skills, knowledge and attitudes, as well as providing students with the opportunity to practice and reinforce these skills within and outside the classroom context. Based on the findings from this study, six key policy intervention areas are highlighted:

1. **Develop a clear definition of WCD, underpinned by a theoretical basis and** contextual relevance, to facilitate better policy integration of WCD approaches throughout the education system. This would promote better alignment between the policy planning processes and implementation of WCD at the classroom level. A WCD definition is needed to determine and inform appropriate measures and to monitor progress.

2. **Strong policy enabling frameworks** to support the integration of a WCD approach across different levels of the education system. This includes appropriate resourcing and the establishment of institutional structures to ensure WCD objectives are integrated with other national education goals such as access, quality and equity. For children facing extreme adversity, this is particularly important for identifying adversity issues and to develop strategies to support their integration in the education system.

3. **Integration of WCD approaches in the curriculum** to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes of students through academic instruction. This is both within subject-based curriculum (e.g. mathematics, languages, sciences) and specialised curricular content areas (e.g. civic education). The learning objectives should be clearly identified with sequencing and assessment at each competency level. In addition, students should be provided with opportunities to practice skills through classroom-based and extra-curricular activities.

4. **Prioritise investment in teacher training and teaching pedagogy**. It is recognised that teachers and school leaders play a key role in student learning and development. Therefore, it is important that they are supported with relevant pre-service and in-service professional learning to ensure the effective integration of a WCD approach. There is a need to reform teacher education systems to ensure a focus on pedagogical approaches that promote a WCD approach, particularly to address the needs of children and youth in adversity.

5. **Strengthen engagement with parents and the community** to promote positive influences for children and youth in the family and the community. Programmes such as parent education,

support services for families and volunteering in the community helps develop partnerships that can reinforce knowledge, skills and attitudes mastered in the classroom.

6. **Develop robust monitoring and evaluation systems** to monitor outcomes of WCD approaches to determine the effectiveness of programmes and interventions, and plan for improvements. This could include reviewing current assessment systems for monitoring WCD programmes and identify new ways of assessing WCD outcomes.

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Appendix 1: Map of policy survey questions against research questions

Research Question 1			
To what extent is Whole Child Development integrated in education policies relating to strategy, planning and practice?			
Sub-questions			
How do the sites define Whole Child Development?	How is Whole Child Development identified in education policies such as curriculum, pedagogy and assessments?	What are the key drivers that have motivated the sites to invest in Whole Child Development approaches and initiatives?	What are the key reasons that have motivated the sites to invest in Whole Child Development approaches and initiatives?
Survey items			
[PSQ 1 – WCD1] Does your country or city have a formal definition of what a Whole Child Development (including social and emotional learning, 21st century skills and transversal competencies) approach is?	[PSQ 2 - WCD 2] To what extent are each of the following Whole Child Development areas (including social and emotional learning, 21st century skills and transversal competencies) included in your country's or city's education strategies and education policies, including curriculum, pedagogy and assessment documents?	[PSQ 5a – WCD5a] List the top three challenges your country or city faces in embedding a Whole Child Development approach (or equivalent) within your education system.	[PSQ 6 – WCD6] Below is a list of reasons policymakers might invest in Whole Child Development approaches and initiatives. Select which of the following reasons influenced your country's or city's decision to prioritise or invest in Whole Child Development approaches or initiatives.
[PSQ 1a - WCD1a] Please provide your country's or city's formal definition of Whole Child Development (including social and emotional learning, 21st century skills and transversal competencies) in the space below.	[PSQ 3 – WCD3] Rank the following Whole Child Development areas from the highest priority to lowest based on their representation in your country's or city's education strategies and policies, including curriculum, pedagogy	[PSQ 26. – WCD26] Policymakers might face a range of challenges in introducing and promoting a Whole Child Development approach in their education policies. Indicate how great a challenge each of the following areas have	

	and assessment documents.	been for your country or city.	
	[PSQ 5 – WCD5] To what extent do each of the following education policy and strategy documents for your country or city include (references or identifies) Whole Child Development approaches?	[PSQ 31 - CYA4] List the top three challenges your country or city face in measuring and monitoring the outcomes for children and youth in adversity.	
		[PSQ 32 - CYA5] List the top three challenges your country or city face in developing an inclusive education system for children and youth experiencing adversity.	

Research Question 2

To what extent is Whole Child Development integrated in education policies relating to strategy, planning and practice?

Sub-questions

What impacts are expected by the sites by embedding Whole Child Development approaches in their education policies?	How do the sites monitor and measure aspects of Whole Child Development?	How do the sites engage with stakeholders (parents, youth, teachers, community, etc.) to actively strengthen education and accountability for improved results?

Survey items

[PSQ 7. – WCD7] Is your country or city currently using any measures to monitor a decrease in *key reason in PSQ 6*?	[PSQ 27. – WCD27] List three strategies your country or city has implemented to increase involvement of key stakeholders (including schools, families, teachers, students or community leaders) to strengthen education for improved Whole Child Development outcomes.
[PSQ 7a. - WCD7a] Which of the following measures does your country or city use to monitor change in *key reason in PSQ 6*??	

[PSQ 7b. WCD7b] List the other measure/s that your country or city is using to monitor change in *key reason in PSQ 6*.	
[PSQ 7c – WCD7c] Does your country or city plan to use measures to monitor if there has been a decrease in *key reason in PSQ 6*?	
[PSQ 7d. - WCD7d] Which of the following measures is your country or city planning to use to monitor change in *key reason in PSQ 6*?	
[PSQ 7e. – WCD7e] List the other measure/s that your country or city is planning to use to monitor change in *key reason in PSQ 6*.	

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Research Question 3

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Is there evidence of Whole Child Development approaches being inclusive of children and youth in extreme adversity in their education policies?

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Sub-questions

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To what extent have the sites embedded Whole Child Development in targeted programmes and interventions for children and youth in extreme adversity?	Have the sites identified appropriate ways to assess children and youth facing extreme adversity?

Survey items

[PSQ 28- CYA1] Thinking of children and youth who are experiencing significant adversity; which of the following does your country or city identify as an adversity factor and how is it prioritised in policy?	[PSQ 30. – CYA3] Is your country or city currently using any measures to monitor changes in outcomes for children and youth in adversity?
[PSQ 29 – CYA2] To what extent do each of the following education policy and strategy documents for your country or city include (references or identifies) approaches, strategies or programmes specifically targeting children and youth in adversity?	[PSQ 30a- CYA3a] Which of the following measures does your country or city use to monitor changes in outcomes for children and youth in adversity?
	[PSQ 30b - CYA3b.] List the other measure/s that your country or city is using to monitor changes in outcomes for children and youth in adversity.
	[PSQ 30c - CYA3c] Does your country or city plan to use measures to monitor changes in outcomes for children and youth in adversity?
	[PSQ 30d. – CYA3d] Which of the following measures is your country or city planning to monitor changes in outcomes for children and youth in adversity?
	[PSQ 30e. – CYA3e] List the other measure/s that your country or city is planning to monitor changes in outcomes for children and youth in adversity.
	[PSQ 31 - CYA4] List the top three challenges your country or city face in measuring and monitoring the outcomes for children and youth in adversity.