TRANSFORMING EDUCATION CAN TRANSFORM SOCIETY

On Tuesday 24 January 2023, we celebrated the International Day of Education. Below, I share some vital reflections that I hope can inspire fresh thinking on the role of education and how to best guarantee its access in the new era of technology and in the post COVID-19 pandemic times.

"Education is a human right with immense power to transform society”
- Kofi Annan

Kofi Annan understood the transformational role education can play on Africa's development agenda. I also consider education a vital part of society’s journey of shaping and producing leaders. A society’s leaders can be as good as its education system. But what’s at hand now?

The 36 month-long Covid-19 pandemic disruptions resulted in undeniable learning losses around the world, the developing societies taking the lion's share of the losses.

In Uganda for example, schools remained closed for two consecutive calendar years - one can only imagine the impact on learners and learning facility operators alike.

Although the pandemic related challenges, it’s true that these challenges also opened doors for opportunities, innovations and new ways of working and delivering in the education sector. A large part of this transformation relates to digital migration in the education services sector - from physically delivered to technology mediated, internet facilitated means to learning. As a blessing, one can conclude that the COVID-19 has transformed how education as a pre-eminent public service is being delivered today around the world. However, this goes without mentioning though, the persistent digital divide across sections of the population that continue to hamper rural and poor populations from accessing equal quality education.

Going ahead, for policy makers, development partners, private sector and other actors, building forward stronger means investing further into and ensuring access for all to adaptive technologies and other pandemic related learning losses faster and smarter - enough to regain on employment and income losses.

Ivan Atuyambe
Director, YouLead Program
Head of Leadership and Governance Academy
Training Centre for Development Cooperation