



Childhood Education
International™

Bright Futures for Every Child, Every Nation

1875 Connecticut Ave., NW, 10th Floor
Washington DC 20009
202-372-9986; 800-423-3563

September 1, 2020

Greetings Colleagues,

As the leader of an organization with over *125 years of history*, I can comfortably say that all of the following are true:

Change is difficult.
Change is uncertain.
Change is SCARY.

Change can sometimes feel as if it goes against your every instinct. Yet despite our resistance to it, change is inevitable. As an old African proverb teaches us, “When the music changes, the dance must also change.” Change gives us the opportunity to reach, to grow, and to learn a new dance, perhaps one that is even better than the last. Therefore, change should be embraced.

Over the past eight months, school leaders and systems around the world have been trying to figure out how to get 1.6 billion students back in school. However, even before the pandemic, over 250 million children were out of school¹ and 387 million primary-age children who *were* in school were likely lacking basic reading skills. COVID-19 didn’t create all education-related challenges, but it can make them worse if we don’t adapt appropriately.

Change isn’t only necessary to address the immediate impacts of the pandemic. It is *critical* to reach new heights for the hundreds of millions of learners who have never had an equal opportunity for an education. Although none of us would wish for a pandemic, it has raised an important question: Is the design and delivery of education today teaching and reaching children in the most effective ways? This question is an opportunity to reset and rethink education.

This is, of course, much more difficult than it sounds. Furthermore, the reality is every child in every classroom in every school in every community around the world is unique. There are no sweeping solutions to the challenges we are all facing. However, being prepared to embrace the impending changes, and subsequently optimize them for long-term change, is key to coming out of this crisis better than before.

For this precise reason, we at CE International have developed the “Education Leaders Embracing Change Guide.” **The guide is structured to allow school leaders to reflect on the challenges facing their learning centers and equip them with the tools and the knowledge needed to be successful in creating sustainable change.**

¹ <https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/keeping-worlds-children-learning-through-covid-19#:~:text=The%20numbers%20are%20unprecedented%2C%20the,billion%20children%20and%20young%20people.>

² <http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/out-school-children-and-youth>

³ <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs46-more-than-half-children-not-learning-en-2017.pdf>

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, countless organizations and individuals have worked tirelessly to assist educators in safely returning to school, providing resources, webinars, and advice. Yet this deluge of information can sometimes feel impenetrable and irrelevant to your specific case. This guide is meant to equip you with the skills needed to navigate upcoming changes in the best way possible for YOU.

Professor William Frederick Book once said, “Learn to adjust yourself to the conditions you have to endure but make a point of trying to alter or correct conditions so that they are most favorable to you.” If we, as educators, can accept that change is inevitable and is happening all around us, then we may be able to find ways to think anew about how to best educate our children.

It is our hope that this guide aids in altering conditions so that going through necessary changes is not only endurable, but favorable.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane Whitehead". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Diane Whitehead
Chief Executive Officer
Childhood Education International