

# 10 Questions to Emiliana Vegas

## 1. Why have you decided to join the Jacobs Foundation Board?

*Jacobs Foundation is unique in its focus on bringing research to practice, both at the local level as well as by generating research that will inform education globally. I have devoted my career to generating evidence and translating it for decision making, so I thought this was a great opportunity to have even greater impact.*

## 2. How would you describe your work as a Jacobs Foundation Board Member to a schoolchild?

*Not all children in the world can go to a great school and learn; in some cases, their countries are too poor to be able to build schools and pay teachers. The Jacobs Foundation is working to change this, especially for some of the poorest children in the world.*

## 3. Which combination of skills, competencies, and experience do you bring to the Jacobs Foundation Board?

*I bring a combination of research and policy experience from having worked for over 20 years in multilateral institutions, where I led research, as well as lending and technical assistance programs to help improve education systems in low- and middle-income countries.*

## 4. Why is variability in learning- the Jacobs Foundation's theme of the Strategy2030 - relevant today?

*Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a growing body of evidence around learning inequality. The pandemic-related school closures have only increased this inequality, both across and within countries. Understanding how to address learning variability in classrooms and school systems is ever more critical if we are to ensure that all children learn the skills they need to thrive in our rapidly changing world.*

## 5. What are the biggest challenges and opportunities in the Jacobs Foundation's direction of travel?

*The biggest challenges are how to best leverage the resources and capacities of the Foundation to have the greatest impact. Conversely, the biggest opportunities are in partnering with decisionmakers and other donors to drive change in a collaborative and coordinated manner.*

**6. What are your key priorities as a Board Member and as part of a Board Working Group?**

*I look forward to helping to strengthen the Foundation's impact in the countries of focus (through the Learning Societies working group), and especially to bring to this group my experience from working from both The World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank to strengthen education systems in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. I also hope to contribute to help inform the Foundation's investments in research to improve learning among disadvantaged populations.*

**7. Please complete the sentence: Learning is....**  
*the key to unlock life.*

**8. What does learning mean to you personally?**

*As I have become older, I have grown to appreciate learning as a way to stay young and alive!*

**9. Who has inspired you throughout your career?**

*Richard Murnane, a world-renowned education economist who is also an incredible human being. He was my graduate school advisor and over the years has become a close friend and colleague.*

**10. Which book/s have you read you could recommend and for what reason?**

*Educated, A Memoir, by Tara Westover, for its powerful personal story of a quest for the right to learn.*

*Misbehaving, by Richard Thaler, to understand how psychology and economics together can be effective in changing human behavior.*

*The End of Average, by Todd Rose, a great manifesto in support of learning variability, with a touching personal story by the author.*

*The Source of Self-Regard, by Toni Morrison, a collection of her essays, speeches and meditations on a variety of topics. Her writing is just so splendid.*