Education transforms lives

Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality
UNESCO Education Sector

Education is UNESCO’s top priority because it is a basic human right and the foundation on which to build peace and drive sustainable development. UNESCO is the United Nations’ specialized agency for education and the Education Sector provides global and regional leadership in education, strengthens national education systems and responds to contemporary global challenges through education with a special focus on gender equality and Africa.

The Global Education 2030 Agenda

UNESCO, as the United Nations’ specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.

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This brochure compiles the main elements of progress on Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) highlighted in the submission by UNESCO, on behalf of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, to the Office of the Under-Secretary-General, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) on the occasion of the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) 2019 - Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality.

The SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee
UNESCO convenes the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee. The Committee is the global multi-stakeholder consultation and coordination mechanism for education in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Its primary objective is to harmonize and strengthen support to countries and their partners for the realization of the global education goal and targets. Hosted by UNESCO, the Steering Committee is composed of 44 members representing a majority from countries, the World Education Forum 2015 convening agencies (UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women, ILO, and the World Bank), the Global Partnership for Education, the OECD, regional organizations, teacher organizations, civil society networks, foundations and youth organizations.
Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality

**What** is SDG 4 – Education 2030?

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**SDG 4**

Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”

**Education 2030**

Education 2030 is the entire global agenda including SDG 4 as well as other goals that reference education

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### SDG 4: TEN TARGETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Free quality primary and secondary education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Quality early childhood development, care and education for school readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Affordable and quality technical, vocational and higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Increase the number of people with the relevant skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Eliminate all discrimination in education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Universal literacy and numeracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Education for sustainable development and global citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.a</td>
<td>Inclusive and safe schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.b</td>
<td>Expand higher education scholarships for developing countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.c</td>
<td>Increase the supply of quality teachers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE FIVE OTHER SDGs WITH DIRECT REFERENCE TO EDUCATION

HEALTH

Target 3.7
Comprehensive sexuality education and care

GENDER

Target 5.6
Sexual and reproductive health care, information and education

WORK

Target 8.6
Promote youth employment, education and training

CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Target 12.8
Promote sustainable consumption and production patterns

CLIMATE ACTION

Target 13.3
Improve education and awareness on climate change mitigation
Who is responsible for SDG 4 - Education 2030?

Governments have a primary responsibility in ensuring the right to education

Governments need to ensure...

- **Legislation and policies** for equitable and inclusive education
- **Investment** in teachers and wider learning opportunities
- 1 year free and compulsory pre-primary education
- 12 years free, quality primary and secondary education of which 9 years are compulsory
- **15 - 20%** of public expenditure should go to education
- **4 - 6%** of GDP should go to education

Everyone has a stake in ensuring the right to inclusive quality education for all

Governments need to engage stakeholders at all stages from planning to monitoring progress, such as:

- **Civil society actors** must be engaged and involved at all stages
- **Teachers** should be consulted in the development, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of education
- **Youth** are both beneficiaries and agents of change
- **Private sector actors** provide technical expertise and resources

Source: 2017/8 Global Education Monitoring Report
How education equalizes, includes, and empowers

Education has the potential to be a great equalizer in society by transforming individuals’ lives and driving progress towards sustainable development.

Higher levels of education increase people’s chances of securing decent work.

Education is a key driver for sustainable development.

Eliminating discrimination in and through education policies, practices, and resource allocation reduces inequality within and between countries.

Education helps young people understand and adapt to climate change, and gain the attitudes and skills to seek solutions.

How is education being prioritized

Research from the Global Education Monitoring Report shows that governments are aligning their national targets with SDG 4 and striving to renew education systems.

56 out of 111 countries emphasize education in national development (2016 - 2018).

Governments see education contributing to human capital and social development.

Education is one of the most consistently discussed goals in countries’ Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) on SDG implementation.

Source: Beyond Commitments: How countries are implementing SDG 4 (GEMR, 2019)
Leaving no child behind

Despite some progress, the world is not on track to achieve the SDG 4 goal and its targets

**Millions of children, young people, and adults left behind**

**Early childhood education is not universal**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Participation Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Africa and Western Asia</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern and South-eastern Asia</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe and Northern America</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics database, September 2018

**262 Million**

6 to 17 year olds were still out of school in 2017

While out-of-school numbers continue to decrease, the trend is slowing down

- **9%** Primary
  - Since 2008
- **16%** Lower secondary
  - Since 2012
- **36%** Upper secondary
  - Since 2015

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics database, September 2018
In the face of a global learning crisis, simply focusing on access is not sufficient. **Schooling ≠ Learning!**

Ministries of education can no longer consider numbers of children in school as the sole objective.

**GLOBAL LEARNING CRISIS**

More than half (58%) of children and adolescents are not learning worldwide or attaining minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics.

Children and adolescents are not learning

617 million

of which 2/3 or 411 million are in school.

Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality

Leaving no youth behind

Youth are still excluded from opportunities to learn the necessary skills for work and life

**Large differences between regions in higher education participation**

Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education

- Sub-Saharan Africa: 9%
- Northern Africa and Western Asia: 44%
- Central and Southern Asia: 25%
- Eastern and South-eastern Asia: 46%
- Oceania: 79%
- Latin America and the Caribbean: 51%
- Europe and Northern America: 77%
- World: 38%

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics database, September 2018

**Technical and vocational education and training is not widespread globally**

Proportion of 15 - 24 year-olds enrolled in vocational education

- Sub-Saharan Africa: 1%
- Northern Africa and Western Asia: 8%
- Central and Southern Asia: 1%
- Eastern and South-eastern Asia: 2%
- Oceania: 13%
- Latin America and the Caribbean: 6%
- Europe and Northern America: 10%
- World: 4%

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics database, September 2018
Adult education and access to lifelong learning opportunities will become ever more important as technologies change and skill demands shift.

**Illiterate adults globally**

- **750 Million**
- **2/3** of whom are women remained illiterate in 2016

**Southern Asia** is home to approximately **50%** of the global illiterate population.

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics database, September 2018
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Countries with the greatest needs should be given a larger share of aid

However, aid is not going to those most in need

65%

of global education spending goes to high income countries

Funding gap US $39 billion
in low and lower middle-income countries

Households in low income countries bear the largest financial burden, accounting for approximately 30% of the education expenditure share

Distribution of total household spending on education by country income group

- Low income: 29%
- Lower middle income: 24%
- Upper middle income: 25%
- High income: 18%

Source: 2019 Global Education Monitoring Report

Leaving **no country** behind
WE CALL ON GOVERNMENTS TO

Strengthen collective action on SDG 4 within the 2030 Agenda, recognizing the role of education to transform lives, maintain peace, and protect the planet.

Allocate sufficient resources to youth and adult literacy programmes targeted to people most in need.

Increase cooperation across sectors, and between humanitarian and development actors and ensure that at least 4% of humanitarian aid is allocated to education.

Include migrants, displaced persons, and refugees in national education systems and facilitate the recognition of their skills and qualifications.

Empower all girls and women through gender-responsive education sector planning.

Strengthen education for global citizenship and sustainable development to promote values of respect and competences for shaping more peaceful and sustainable societies.

Design curricula, learning materials, teacher education, and assessment systems that promote a wider vision of learning - beyond basic skills.

Ensure that all teachers are adequately prepared and supported to deliver quality education for all, including through higher education and research.

Mobilize resources to meet the twin benchmarks for financing education, prioritizing resources towards those most in need: 4 - 6% of GDP and 15 - 20% of public expenditure to education.
Education transforms lives
Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality

“Education is a human right, a public good, and a public responsibility. It is the most powerful force in our hands to ensure significant improvements in health, stimulate economic growth, achieve gender equality, unlock the innovation we need to build more resilient and sustainable societies. This is why we urgently need strengthened collective action for education.”

Audrey Azoulay
Director-General, UNESCO

Stay in touch

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