



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Sustainable
Development
Goals

UNESCO

and Education

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UNESCO's role in education



Education is a fundamental human right and a public good and, as such, has been at the core of UNESCO's work since its inception.

Education is also the path to sustainability – to poverty alleviation, better health, environmental protection and gender equality.

As the only United Nations agency with a mandate to cover all aspects of education, UNESCO was entrusted in 2015 to lead the coordination and monitoring of Sustainable Development Goal 4, as part of the new Global Education 2030 Agenda.

Goal 4 aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all,” and renewed UNESCO's and Member States' commitment to a vision of education that is holistic, inspirational and which leaves no one behind.

This commitment is reflected in the size and scope of the Education Sector, the largest in UNESCO, with staff working at its Paris Headquarters and spread across a global network of field offices and specialized institutes and centres. With its close links with education ministries and other partners, UNESCO is strongly placed to press for action and change.

UNESCO's Education Sector supports Member States in developing education systems that foster high-quality and inclusive lifelong learning for all, empowering learners to be creative and responsible global citizens while leading the debate to help shape the future international education agenda.

There is no stronger, no more lasting, investment a country can make than educating its citizens. The Education Sector exists to further this collective vision worldwide by transforming lives one by one.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Qian Tang'.

Qian Tang, Ph.D.

Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO

UNESCO and the

Education 2030 Agenda

For UNESCO, education is a priority because it is a human right and a force for development progress. Education saves lives, delivers hope, builds dignity, prevents extremism, brings about social inclusion and fosters social mobility.

The international community has entrusted UNESCO to lead the coordination and monitoring of the Education 2030 Agenda. UNESCO is the only UN agency to cover all aspects of education and has a worldwide network of specialized institutes and offices.

The Organization was instrumental in mobilizing for the *Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action*, which is the roadmap for Sustainable Development Goal 4, aiming to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. Education is also key to achieving all the 17 sustainable development goals.

While the main responsibility for implementing the Education 2030 Agenda lies with governments, UNESCO provides support through coordinated policy advice, technical assistance, capacity development and monitoring of progress at global, regional and national levels.

Global education challenges

69m

new teachers are needed worldwide to reach the 2030 education goals

758m

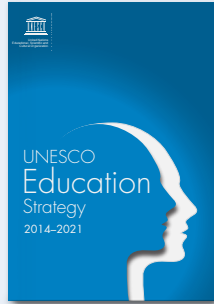
adults (15% of adults) lack any literacy skills; two-thirds of whom are women

US\$39bn

is needed in aid, a six-fold increase, to fill the annual education finance gap

UNESCO's Education Strategy 2014–2021

This publication highlights the Organization's continuous efforts on literacy, teachers and vocational skills development, and outlines how UNESCO will lead and advocate for strengthened action towards empowering learners to be creative and responsible citizens.



Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action

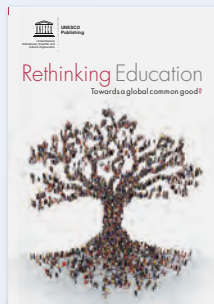
The Incheon Declaration articulates the collective vision and commitment of the international community on global education. The 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4.



UNESCO's Rethinking Education

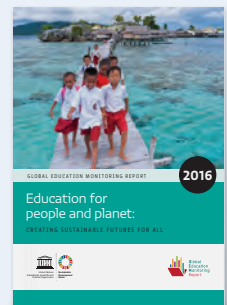
The vision and challenges of the new Education 2030 Agenda are captured in the UNESCO flagship publication *Rethinking Education*.

This publication revisits the purpose of education and the organization of learning in a changing global context.



The Global Education Monitoring Report

Published by UNESCO, the *Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report* is an editorially independent, authoritative and evidence-based annual report, which monitors progress towards the education targets in the Sustainable Development Goals framework. It draws on the latest available data and extensive research from leading experts around the world.



263m

children and youth
are out of school

14%

of youth – and just 1% of
the poorest girls – complete
secondary education in
low-income countries

35%

of out-of-school children live
in conflict-affected areas

UNESCO's support to countries

UNESCO assists Member States in developing high-quality and inclusive education systems through building capacity to design and implement education policy.

Coordinating at all levels

The work towards Sustainable Development Goal 4 takes place at global, regional and national levels.

At the global level, UNESCO:

- Advocates to sustain political momentum
- Ensures all partners cooperate effectively and develop a shared vision
- Brings together partners and countries to share best practices
- Promotes South-South and North-South-South cooperation
- Monitors progress towards the Education 2030 targets

UNESCO also convenes the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, a global and inclusive high-level multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism. It supports countries and partners to achieve SDG4 and education-related targets of the Global 2030 Agenda through strategic guidance, monitoring, partnerships, advocacy and the harmonization of partner activities.

At the regional and sub-regional levels, UNESCO's field offices are instrumental in managing mechanisms for coordination and partnerships in order to harmonize efforts and maintain two-way communication between global and national levels.

At the national level, UNESCO works to connect global, regional and national efforts and contributes to the dialogue, linking public authorities, civil society, business and education, training and labour market stakeholders. UNESCO also mobilizes donors to support national educational priorities.

Monitoring progress

Data is crucial for countries to monitor progress and develop evidence-based policies.

Global monitoring of progress of the Education 2030 Agenda is carried out through the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report.

UIS provides one of the most comprehensive data sets on education in the world. It leads work on developing indicators and data sets for each of the targets included in Sustainable Development Goal 4.

The GEM Report, published annually by UNESCO, is a comprehensive, analytical and authoritative reference for the global review of education. The Report's mandate is to monitor progress relating to education in the Sustainable Development Goals.

Providing policy advice

UNESCO offers a wide range of expertise to support countries with their education systems with special attention given to gender-related issues. Support includes:

- Reviewing legal frameworks to enforce the right to quality and inclusive education
- Providing technical assistance to design education sector plans
- Developing and disseminating guidelines and toolkits on themes such as technical and vocational education and training, information and communication technology, teacher training and global citizenship education
- Advising on the design of curricula and other teaching materials

UNESCO's key roles

- **Laboratory of ideas:** Anticipating and responding to emerging trends and needs in education, and developing education policies based on research and country priorities.
- **Standard-setter:** Developing standards, norms and guidelines in key education areas, and monitoring the implementation and dissemination of successful educational policies and practices.
- **Clearinghouse:** Promoting the development, implementation and dissemination of successful educational policies and practices.
- **Capacity-builder:** Providing technical cooperation to develop the capacity of Member States to achieve their national education goals.
- **Catalyst for international cooperation:** Initiating and promoting dialogue and exchange among education leaders and stakeholders.

Developing capacities

UNESCO builds capacities in countries, with a focus on institutions, in key areas such as educational planning, youth and adult literacy, skills development, higher education, curriculum development, teachers and data collection and analysis.

UNESCO also builds the capacity of national experts such as education planners and managers which helps countries prepare and implement effective education plans and better manage education resources.

Priority countries

While UNESCO supports a number of countries through a variety of interventions, priority is given to countries most in need with a special focus on Africa.

Least developed countries

Since 2003, UNESCO's Capacity Development for Education (CapED) programme has offered increased support to least developed countries to boost education quality and learning opportunities.

Currently 28 countries, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa, benefit from the programme, which aims to increase the number of youth and adults who achieve literacy and numeracy; who gain relevant skills for employment, to increase the supply of teachers; and support education sector planning and management.

Countries in crisis

Conflicts, natural disasters and pandemics can leave entire generations displaced, traumatized and without access to education, and ill-equipped to contribute to the social and economic recovery of their country or region. Large numbers of forcibly displaced populations can put huge pressure on education systems.

UNESCO lends its expertise in planning for disaster risk reduction and in strengthening social cohesion to face post-conflict and post-disaster challenges.

An increasingly interconnected world brings new challenges for education. UNESCO provides thought leadership on how to prevent violent extremism and on other health, security and environmental challenges posed by globalization. It works to harness technology in the service of education and expand access to marginalized groups.

Global Citizenship Education

UNESCO seeks to empower citizens to actively resolve global challenges and contribute to a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure world.

In particular, UNESCO provides a platform for policy dialogue among education stakeholders (policy-makers, educators, learners, etc.) on how to integrate global citizenship and human rights education in education systems, as well as how to engage in critical reflection about the Holocaust and other genocides to prevent future atrocities. UNESCO also develops technical guidance and tools, and builds capacity in Global Citizenship Education with a focus on the prevention of violent extremism.

Education for Sustainable Development

Education for Sustainable Development enables learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society for present and future generations.

UNESCO develops teaching and learning materials on issues such as climate change, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction and sustainable consumption and production. The materials aim to equip learners with skills for 'green jobs' and motivate citizens to adopt more sustainable lifestyles.

Women's and girls' education

Since its origins, UNESCO has advocated for expanded opportunities for women's and girls' education. The Education 2030 Agenda adds new impetus to ensure that both get equal opportunities, in formal and non-formal education.

UNESCO supports countries in addressing gender-based violence in the classroom and other barriers to education including unsuitable facilities and teaching materials to larger structural, economic and cultural obstacles.

Digital learning

Information and communication technology is changing the way we live, communicate and learn. It can be harnessed to expand access to education, including to people with disabilities and learners in places with limited infrastructure through, for example, mobile phones.

ICT can also be used to address systemic challenges by providing on-going professional training to teachers and supporting education management. UNESCO provides policy advice, particularly in emerging fields such as mobile learning and ensuring the availability of multilingual and multi-media resources.

Education in emergencies and crises

A significant proportion of out-of-school children and adolescents live in conflict-affected countries or areas affected by natural disaster, and numbers are growing. UNESCO advocates for education in these contexts through advice to governments on emergency preparedness and recovery and the development of international standards and legal mechanisms.

UNESCO plays an active role in promoting education as part of emergency responses and for long-term recovery with protection of schools and universities from attack during armed conflict a major concern. It advocates planning for disaster risk reduction and building social cohesion to face post-conflict and post-disaster challenges.

Rewarding innovative projects

UNESCO's education prizes reward outstanding and innovative projects driving the effort to achieve quality education for all while shining a global light on critical themes.

- UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education
- UNESCO Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development
- UNESCO Hamdan Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Prize for Outstanding Practice and Performance in Enhancing the Effectiveness of Teachers
- UNESCO King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the use of ICTs in Education
- UNESCO Literacy Prizes – the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize and the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy

UNESCO's programmes in education help improve lives across the globe.



Stories of hope from a refugee camp in Jordan

A UNESCO education project is giving new hope to Syrian refugee children. The project brings not only education but also psychosocial support to around 200 out-of-school children in Jordan's Zaatari camp. Ayad, 11, witnessed unspeakable violence in Syria but is now recovering. "I want to be a teacher, just like my teacher Mr Mahmoud," he says. "He made me feel loved and even respected. I want other children to have what I was given."

South Sudan cattle herders go to school to become community trainers

A joint UNESCO-FAO project in South Sudan is turning cattle herders into community trainers. The project targets children, youth and adults who suffer from conflict and the lack of education opportunities. Michael is one of them. "I can remember everything I learned including the signs and symptoms of a sick animal," he says. Michael, who will become a camp teacher, feels his highest achievement was to learn how to develop business ideas. He is already involved in home-schooling his brothers and some neighbours with the skills he acquired.



Migrant orphans learn with mobile devices in Thailand

A UNESCO-supported orphanage on the Thai-Myanmar border has given stability to refugee and migrant children along with enhanced learning through mobile devices. The orphanage, 'The Heavenly Home', started after its founder Lily was asked to take in a six-month old abandoned baby. Today the baby is a happy, healthy 11-year-old boy called Sam, one of 73 children who live there fulltime. The orphanage provides children with tablets that contain a UNESCO-designed app featuring over 1,000 learning resources in Thai, Myanmar as well as ethnic languages, and satellite TV with educational programmes and free internet.



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Indigenous adolescents assert their rights in Guatemala

Guatemalan teenager Keyli Paulina Chic, 14, is pursuing her dream to study as part of a UNESCO-Guatemalan governmental project to give indigenous young people a second chance at education. Keyli lives in the Choacorrall community in the western highlands of Guatemala where poverty and marginalization force children out of school and into the fields to work. She is taking part in the Saqilaj B'e programme: A Clear Path to Assert the Rights of Indigenous Adolescent Girls in Guatemala which offers literacy and numeracy tuition adapted for those in work and followed through mobile learning devices.

A unique network across the world

UNESCO's Education Sector works through its extensive global network under the authority of the Assistant Director-General for Education, Mr Qian Tang.

Headquarters

The Education Sector is the largest in UNESCO with some 400 staff. Around 120 staff work at the **Paris headquarters**. The Sector is composed of the Executive Office, three Divisions (Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems; Inclusion, Peace and Sustainable Development; Education 2030 Support and Coordination), and the Global Education Monitoring Report.

Field offices

Through its 53 field offices, UNESCO develops strategies, programmes and activities in consultation with national authorities and other partners. Regional bureaux for education are found in Bangkok, Beirut and Santiago, while Africa counts five regional multisectoral offices in Abuja, Dakar, Harare, Nairobi and Yaoundé.

Sub-Saharan Africa:

Abidjan, Abuja, Accra, Addis Ababa, Bamako, Brazzaville, Dakar, Dar es-Salaam, Harare, Juba, Kinshasa, Libreville, Maputo, Nairobi, Windhoek, Yaoundé

Arab States:

Amman, Beirut, Cairo, Doha, Iraq, Khartoum, Rabat, Ramallah, Tashkent, Tehran

Asia and the Pacific:

Apia, Almaty, Beijing, Bangkok, Dhaka, Ha Noi, Islamabad, Jakarta, Kabul, Kathmandu, New Delhi, Phnom Penh

Europe and North America:

Brussels, Geneva, New York, Venice

Latin America and the Caribbean:

Brasilia, Guatemala, Havana, Kingston, Lima, Montevideo, Mexico, Port-au-Prince, Quito, San José, Santiago de Chile

Global networks

UNESCO also has a unique range of networks with education institutions at different levels around the world.



Founded in 1953, the **UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet)** is a global network of 10,000 educational institutions in 181 countries, working in support of international understanding, peace, intercultural dialogue, sustainable development and quality education in practice.



Launched in 1992, the **UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs Programme** promotes international inter-university cooperation and networking to enhance institutional capacities through knowledge sharing and collaborative work. This network has over 700 higher education and research institutions in 128 countries.



Started in 1993, the **UNEVOC Network** is an exclusive global platform for Technical and Vocational Education and Training. It consists of 290 UNEVOC Centres, based in 167 UNESCO Member States.

Specialized institutes and centres

Through a network of specialized institutes and centres in education, UNESCO delivers frontline support services to educational planners:



The International Bureau of Education (Geneva, Switzerland) works to enhance curriculum development and education content.



The International Institute for Education Planning (Paris, France with branches in Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Dakar, Senegal) helps countries design, plan and manage their education systems.



The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (Hamburg, Germany) promotes lifelong learning policy and practice, with a focus on adult education literacy and non-formal education.



The Institute for Information Technologies in Education (Moscow, Russian Federation) assists countries in the use of information and communication technologies in education.

IESALC

The International Institute for Higher Education in Latin American and the Caribbean (Caracas, Venezuela) promotes the development of higher education in the region.



The International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia) helps strengthen Africa's educational institutions with a focus on teachers.



The Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (New Delhi, India) specializes in research, knowledge-sharing and policy formulation for peace, sustainability and global citizenship.

UNEVOC

The International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training

(Bonn, Germany) assists Member States to develop policies and practices concerning education for the world of work and skills development for employability and citizenship.

Development partners

UNESCO works with partners at all levels of coordination including UNICEF, the World Bank, the UN Development Programme, the UN High Commission for Refugees, the UN Population Fund, UN Women, the International Labour Organization, the Global Partnership for Education, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and Education International.

UNESCO maintains continuous dialogue and cooperation with civil society, largely through the Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education, which includes close to 300 national, regional and international member organizations.

Funding partners also include bilateral donors as well as the private sector and foundations such as CJ Corp., Dubai Cares, Hainan Cihang Foundation, Procter & Gamble and The David and Lucile Packard Foundation.



Stay in touch

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United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
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Education
Sector

UNESCO and Education

This brochure details the work of UNESCO's Education Sector in putting into practice its core belief that education is a human right and a powerful tool in creating sustainable development. It reveals the scope and breadth of its work as the only United Nations agency with a mandate to cover all aspects of education.

UNESCO leads the coordination and monitoring of the Global Education 2030 Agenda which aims to *“ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”*.

The Education Sector provides global and regional leadership in developing sustainable quality education systems that respond to contemporary global challenges with a special focus on gender equality and Africa.

