



United Nations
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Sustainable
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Goals

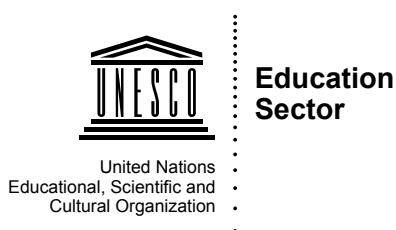


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Education
2030 

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 publication presents extracts from three previously published UNESCO titles and documents:
UNESCO. 2019. *Beyond commitments – How countries implement SDG 4*. Paris, UNESCO
UNESCO. 2019. *Meeting commitments: Are countries on track to achieve SDG 4?*. Paris, UNESCO
UNESCO. 2019. *Education transforms lives: Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality*. Paris, UNESCO

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FOREWORD

Four years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations High-Level Political Forum took stock of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). UNESCO, as the lead agency mandated to coordinate this global goal, led this review process, through analysis prepared by UNESCO's Institute for Statistics, the Global Education Monitoring Report and the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee.

Our contributions, summarized in this publication, alert that we are not on track to achieve the education goals and targets in the 2030 Agenda. The world faces an acute schooling and learning crisis that runs the risk of increasing inequality, poverty and holding back progress on all 17 Global Goals. Why? Because education has a catalytic impact across the development dashboard by empowering individuals with the knowledge, competences and skills to improve and transform their lives for the better. And in every society, education has the power to unite around a shared vision of the future, one anchored in human rights, social justice, solidarity and sustainability.

As we move into the last decade for achieving the SDGs, we need to change gears and methods to scale up our level of ambition. This calls for a paradigm shift to go beyond traditional approaches to education by integrating innovation across the board – from teaching and learning, to financing and partnership. The “beyond” directions outlined in this publication provide a frame for rethinking educational policy and practice in a much wider social perspective, to unlock transformation. While the chief responsibility for fulfilling the right to education lies with governments, only resolute global advocacy, alliances and cooperation can bring the level of support and knowledge required to leave no one behind. This is a matter of global responsibility, solidarity and collective action.

Beyond its commitment to strengthening coordination among all constituencies dedicated to the realization of SDG 4, UNESCO, as this publication highlights, is stepping up initiatives to fulfil the inclusion, equity and quality imperatives whatever the context may be, so that education truly transforms lives and builds more resilient, peaceful and sustainable societies.

Stefania Giannini
UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education

INTRODUCTION

Everyone has a right to education and needs an education – to live in dignity, understand the world and shape the future in a peaceful, informed and sustainable manner. This is more than ever imperative as societies become increasingly interconnected, technology-driven and endangered by climate change and the injustice of inequality.

Being equipped to live with these challenges implies that everyone has access to an education and benefits from what it gives to them – in terms of relevant knowledge, competences, skills and values. But in the age of frontier technologies impacting every aspect of our lives, accelerating globalization and the increasing mobility of people, education is not keeping up. Millions of children and youth are still not in school or they are in school and not learning. This is no less than a crisis – one that is entrenching social divides and impoverishing societies by keeping millions of children, youth and adults on the margins, without any perspective to improve their lives and contribute gainfully to society. It calls for a paradigm shift in approaches to education that also take into account the forces shaping, and sometimes dividing our societies.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide the most ambitious plan for people, planet and prosperity. Goal 4 aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” Other SDGs include education targets, namely those on health, gender, work, climate action and responsible consumption and production. But to be achieved, all the SDGs require education – education for life, for work and transformative engagement for a better world.

The global goal on education is ambitious and universal. It spans the entire education system, from early childhood to higher education, from literacy to technical and vocational education and training. It places emphasis on quality: both proficiency in core subjects and the acquisition of new competences and skills for personal fulfillment, empowerment and sustainable development. Finally, it takes

a lifelong approach because people need opportunities to acquire new skills throughout life and to access second chance opportunities to pursue their education.

The world is not on track to achieve this goal. Reaching it calls for political leadership, broad societal engagement, and a paradigm shift in the very practice of education, at all levels.

In December 2018, building on a series of regional consultations, the education community struck a common chord at the Global Education Meeting in Brussels, the first gathering of its kind since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. Ministers, representatives of government, multilateral organizations, civil society and other stakeholders agreed on a set of priorities for collective action. These include an overarching focus on the right to inclusive quality education; eradicating illiteracy; including migrants, displaced persons, refugees and stateless persons in education; quality gender-responsive education and training; strengthened education for global citizenship and sustainable development; more flexible and open learning systems providing a broader range of knowledge, skills and competences at all levels; qualified teachers and domestic and international resource mobilization.

This set the ground for the first review of SDG 4 by the July 2019 High level Political Forum, the UN apex platform for the follow-up and review of Agenda 2030. As the UN agency responsible for the coordination of SDG 4, mandated by the World Education Forum in Incheon (Republic of Korea, 2015), UNESCO provided an analysis of where the world stands on SDG 4, how countries have taken up the goal in their policies, and made recommendations to act better, differently and collaboratively.

This was done through three complementary contributions:

- UNESCO's submission, on behalf of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee's report, to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs
- "Meeting Commitments: Are countries on track to achieve SDG 4?", prepared by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and UNESCO's flagship Global Education Monitoring Report (GEM), which includes the first projections on the goal

- "Beyond Commitments: How Countries Implement SDG 4", prepared by the Global Education Monitoring Report, under the auspices of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee

As we enter the last SDG decade, this compendium provides an overview of the above publications with their key messages, and describes how UNESCO's actions are geared to track progress, accompany educational transformation, empower teachers and learners, and coordinate this universal agenda globally, regionally and nationally.

Our key recommendations:



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

I. SNAPSHOT OF PROGRESS: WHERE WE STAND

A third of the way to the 2030 deadline, the first ever projections show that the world is off track to meet its education commitments. SDG 4 calls for every child to complete 12 years of quality education. But on current trends, one in six children between the ages of 6 and 17 will still be out of school in 2030. Barely six in ten young people will be completing secondary education, a level indispensable for advancing in today's complex and fast-changing world. Disparities abound, with the richest five times as likely to complete secondary as the poorest. Low-income countries have seen aid stagnate for a decade.

This section provides a target by target assessment. Data availability, in terms of country coverage and time series, is a major constraint. Fewer than half of countries report data on flagship indicators, such as learning outcomes in primary and secondary education. For other indicators, such as public expenditure, the information is available only with a considerable time lag. For yet other indicators, such as trained teachers, comparability is weak. The methodologies and measurement tools for several of these indicators are still under development, with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics coordinating work in this field.

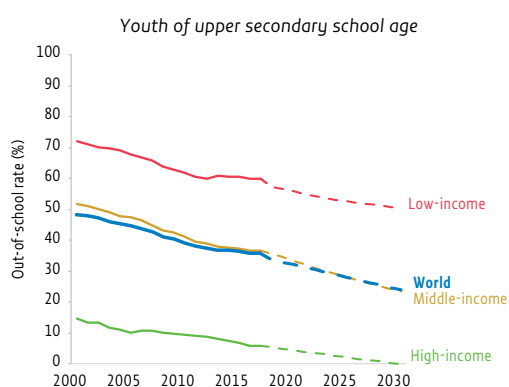
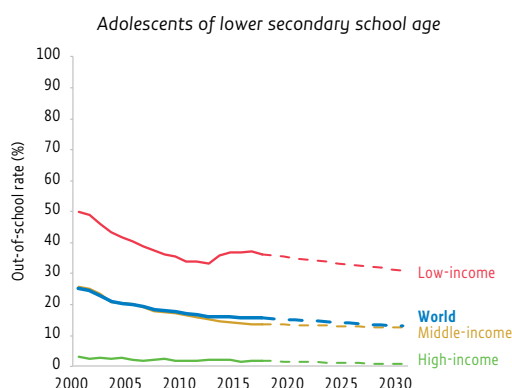
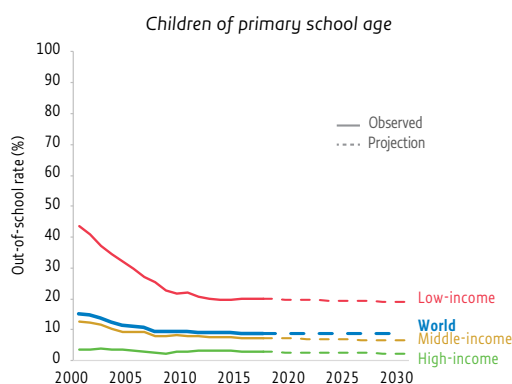


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Target 4.1: Universal primary and secondary education

More than 220 million children, adolescents and youth will still be out of school in 2030

Out of school rate, 2000–2017 and projections to 2030



Source: UIS database and projections.

Globally, 262 million or 18% of all children, adolescents and youth aged 6 to 17 years were out of school in 2017¹. Based on current trends, this number will drop only slightly to 225 million by 2030. Among children of primary school age (typically 6–11 years), 64 million or 9% are out of school. The primary out-of-school rate fell from 15% to 9% between 2000 and 2008, but has not changed in subsequent years.

Since only the hardest-to-reach children remain out of school, progress has slowed down in middle-income countries. However, it seems surprising that progress in reducing the out-of-school rate in low-income countries stopped when the rate reached 20%. This interruption coincides with the sudden halt in the growth of aid to education to low-income countries after the onset of the financial crisis. Aid accounts for almost one-fifth of public spending in these countries. During the 2000s, aid to education doubled, but it has plateaued at about US\$2.5 billion since 2010.

In addition, 61 million or 16% of adolescents of lower secondary school age (12–14 years) are out of school. The out-of-school rate for this age group fell from 25% to 17% between 2000 and 2010, but has since remained stagnant. The out-of-school rate is 14% in middle-income countries. In low-income countries, the rate is 36%; between 2012 and 2015, the rate increased in this group, driven mainly by reverses in countries such as Ethiopia and the Syrian Arab Republic.

Finally, 138 million or 36% of youth of upper secondary school age (15–17 years) are out of school. After falling from 48% to 37% between 2000 and 2013, the decline in the out-of-school rate in this group has slowed down considerably. The upper secondary out-of-school rate is 60% in low-income countries, 37% in middle-income and 6% in high-income countries. Although countries have made a commitment in SDG 4 to achieve universal secondary completion, upper secondary education is not compulsory in 47% of countries.

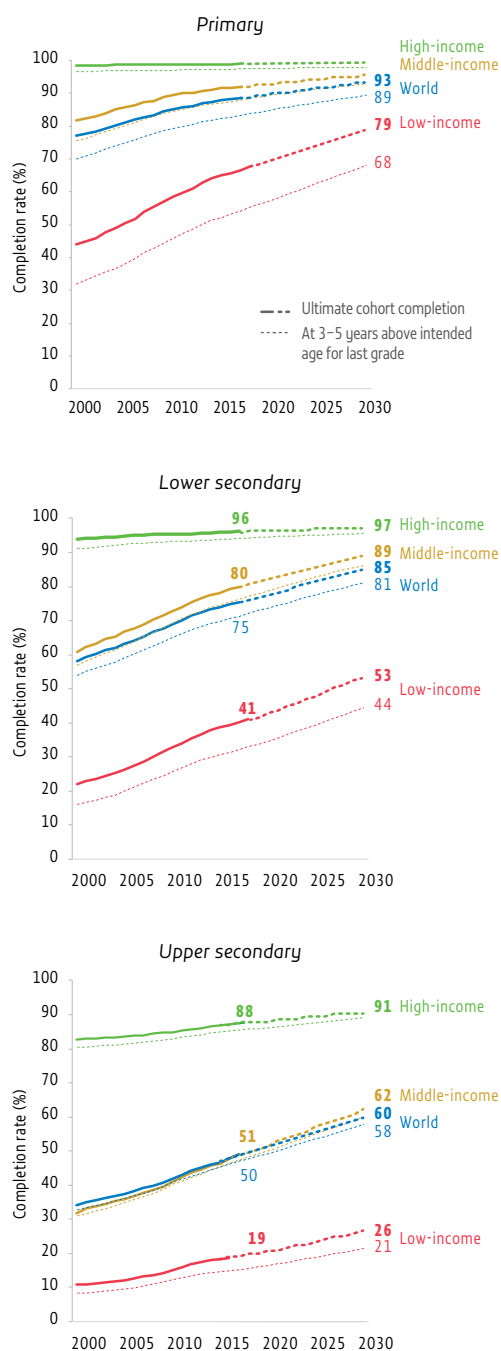
Only upper secondary out-of-school rates are projected to continue their downward trend until 2030, when one-quarter of all adolescents are still expected to be out of school. Primary and lower secondary out-of-school rates are projected to remain at nearly the same levels as today. The challenge of meeting this target is particularly great for countries in sub-Saharan Africa, where the school-age population is growing faster than elsewhere in the world. The share of the region in the global out-of-school population of primary school age grew from 41% in 2000 to 54% in 2017.

1. New estimates released by UIS on 12 September 2019 indicate that about 258 million children, adolescents and youth were out of school in 2018. While the number appears to have dropped from 262 million in 2017 (as reported in 2018), the fall is largely due to a methodological change in the way the indicators are calculated. Children of primary school age who are in pre-primary education, and were previously included in the total, are no longer counted as being out of school. For more details on this, visit www.uis.unesco.org.

Target 4.1: Primary and secondary education – Completion

Only six in ten young people will be finishing secondary school in 2030

Completion rate, 2000–2018 and projections to 2030



Source: GEM Report team estimates and projections.

Bringing children into school is not enough; SDG 4 also calls for all children to complete their schooling. Globally, across 124 countries with estimates, the primary school completion rate has reached 89% in 2018, up from 78% in 2000. Primary completion is already universal in high-income and most upper middle-income countries. Under current trends, it is expected to reach 93% globally by 2030. If the present expansion is accelerated, achieving universal primary completion by 2030 is still possible as a stretch goal.

Lower and upper secondary completion stand at 73% and 57%, respectively, in 2018. Large disparities exist among countries in the rate with which they expand upper secondary education relative to lower secondary education. Under current trends, lower secondary completion is expected to reach 82% and upper secondary school completion 67% by 2030.

The current pace, therefore, is insufficient to achieve target 4.1 without a transformational departure from past trajectories. While universal completion remains an aspirational target, countries' performance should be assessed against ambitious but achievable benchmarks at the regional level, with potential reference to the record of high-achieving countries.

The standard indicator for the completion rate measures school completion among students three to five years above the nominal age for the final grade. It is, accordingly, a measure of reasonably timely completion. In some countries, a considerable number of students complete school with even greater delay. In many low- and middle-income countries, late school entry, high repetition rates, dropout and later re-entry are common.

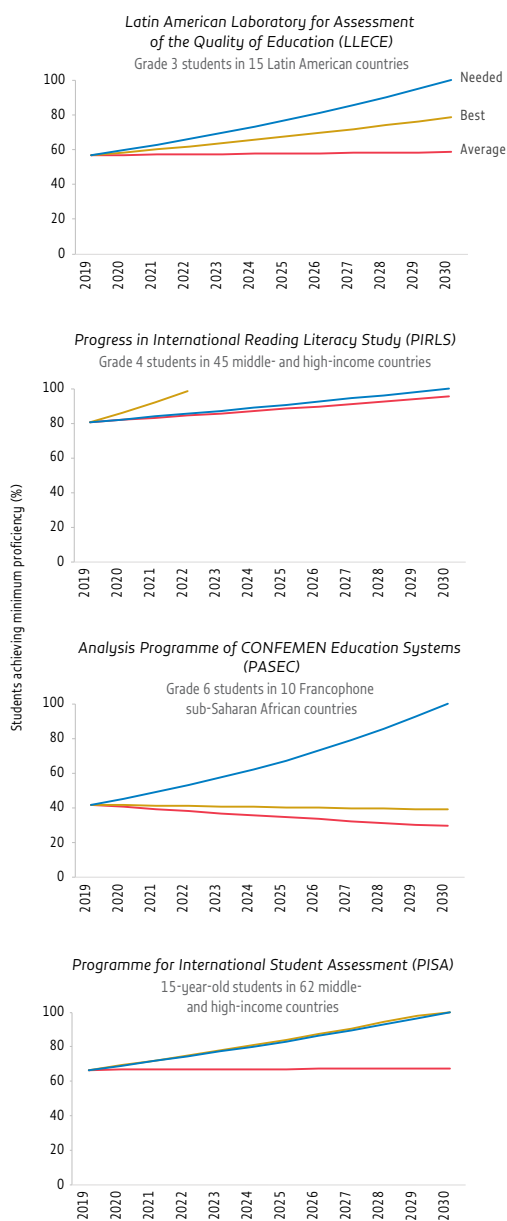
In these settings, the standard completion rate underestimates the proportion of children, adolescents and youth who eventually complete primary, lower or upper secondary school. In low-income countries, the gap between primary completion at 3 to 5 years above the final primary grade (typically ages 14 to 16) (66%) and ultimate primary completion 8 years above (77%) is estimated at 11 percentage points in 2018. This gap is expected to drop to 8 percentage points by 2030.

Applying this ultimate cohort completion rate, it is projected that, globally by 2030, the completion rate will be 96% in primary, 85% in lower secondary and 69% in upper secondary education.

Target 4.1: Primary and secondary education – Learning

The world will approach the learning target only if progress equals the rate of the best-performing countries

Percentage of students who reach minimum proficiency level in reading, current level and projections to 2030 by scenarios



Source: UIS estimates and projections.

Apart from school entry and completion, target 4.1 also seeks to ensure that students achieve a basic standard of learning while they are in school. Progress has been made since 2015 on defining ways in which different national and cross-national assessments map onto each other, as well as in establishing a minimum level of proficiency at each of the three points of measurement (grade 2 or 3, end of primary, end of lower secondary) and for each of the two subjects measured in this target (reading and mathematics). Different routes are being followed to increase comparability, including students taking two different assessments and experts debating and assigning a level of difficulty to different assessment items. Ultimately, a bank of items from different assessments that could be used by different countries could help improve comparability without creating a new assessment, ensuring national ownership and probably lowering the cost.

In the meantime, the results of individual cross-national learning assessments demonstrate that a large proportion of students do not achieve minimum proficiency in reading. In addition, past rates of progress even suggest that learning outcomes may deteriorate in some cases.

The results of the Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education (LLECE) suggest that nearly 60% of grade 3 students reach minimum proficiency on average. If the average trend continues, the proportion of proficient students will stay the same, but at the rate of the best-performing country, the proportion could reach 80%.

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) assesses the reading skills of grade 4 students, mostly in high-income countries. In this assessment, 81% of students achieve at least minimum proficiency and the average rate of progress in participating countries needs to be only slightly higher to reach 100% by 2030.

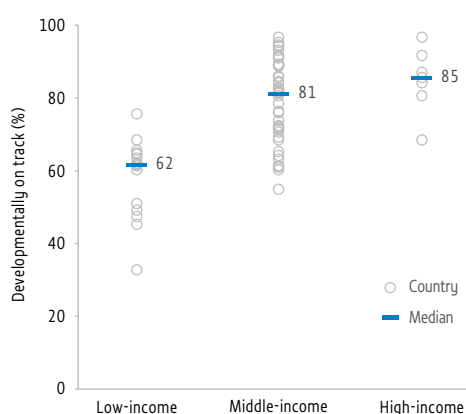
The results of the Programme d'Analyse des Systèmes Educatifs de la CONFEMEN (Analysis Programme of CONFEMEN Education Systems, PASEC) show that 40% of grade 6 students in assessed Francophone African countries achieve minimum proficiency, but the trend is negative, and if it continues, the proportion could drop by more than half.

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) targets 15-year-old students in middle- and high-income countries. On average, two-thirds of these students perform at the minimum level indicating proficiency in reading and mathematics. At the current rate of progress, this proportion will be the same in 2030. However, if all countries emulated the growth rate of the best-performing country, the 2030 target would be well within reach.

Target 4.2: Early childhood

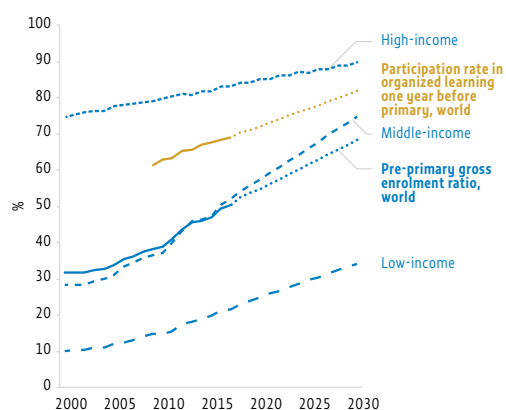
Access to early childhood education is expanding but low- and middle-income countries have to catch up

Percentage of children aged 36 to 59 months who are developmentally on track, 2009–2017



Source: UIS database based on the UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey.

Participation rate in organized learning one year before the official primary entry age and pre-primary gross enrolment ratio, 2000–2017



Source: UIS database.

The global indicator on early childhood aims to capture the proportion of children under 5 who are 'developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being'. This is a complex outcome, for which a methodology was only approved by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators in March 2019. Until the new methodology is widely adopted, the UNICEF Early Childhood Development Index (ECDI) is used to track the indicator. The ECDI is based on 10 questions covering 4 domains: physical, social-emotional, learning and literacy-numeracy.

The average share of 3- and 4-year-olds considered 'on track' (and, implicitly, 'ready for primary school') in the 66 countries with data since 2009 is 76%, but the share falls to 62% in low-income countries.

In most countries, the value for the ECDI physical domain is high. However, this measure underestimates the scale of the challenge, given that malnutrition, which may have serious effects on children's cognitive development, remains high at 35% in low-income countries and 32% in lower-middle-income countries.

By contrast, the value of the ECDI literacy-numeracy domain is low. This domain includes early skills, such as letter/sound identification and counting, which are fundamental to developing future literacy and numeracy skills. The average share of 3- to 4-year-olds with such skills was only 11% in low-income countries.

For such skills to develop, two factors are key, in addition to good health: stimulating home environments and access to early childhood care and education. Across 44 low- and middle-income countries only about 7.5% of children under 5 – and only 0.3% of those in the poorest 20% of households – live in homes with at least 10 books.

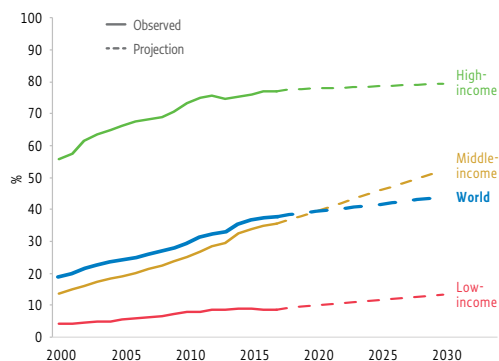
Access to quality early childhood care and education is crucial for cognitive and emotional development. The pre-primary gross enrolment ratio has increased from 32% in 2000 to 50% in 2017. Since 2000, the slowest growth has been in Central and Southern Asia and the fastest in Eastern and South-eastern Asia.

The share of children a year younger than official primary school entry age who are attending pre-primary education or any other form of organized learning is 69%. The share varies from 42% in low-income countries to 93% in high-income countries. Among geographic regions, the lowest participation rates are observed in sub-Saharan Africa (42%) and Western Asia (48%). It is projected that, globally, the rate will reach 82% in 2030.

Target 4.3: Technical, vocational, tertiary and adult education

Tertiary education systems will keep expanding over the next 10 years

Tertiary gross enrolment ratio, 2000–2017 and projections to 2030



Source: UIS database and projections.

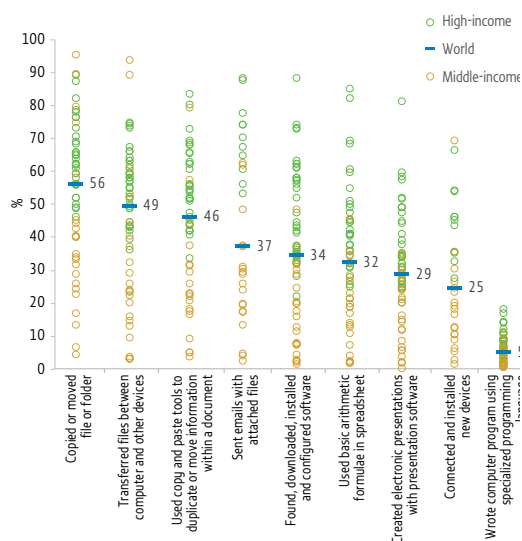
Globally, the gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education increased from 19% in 2000 to 38% in 2017, with the female enrolment ratio exceeding the male ratio by 4 percentage points. The tertiary gross enrolment ratio ranges from 9% in low-income countries to 77% in high-income countries, where, after rapid growth in the 2000s, it reached a plateau in the 2010s. Between now and 2030, the biggest increase in tertiary enrolment ratios is expected in middle-income countries, where it will reach 52%.

SDG 4 commits countries to providing lifelong learning opportunities for all. This commitment is monitored through the global indicator for target 4.3, which measures the participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, whether for work or non-work purposes. Published data are available mainly for Europe and North America, where the average participation rate was 46%, ranging from a low of 7% to a high of 69% in individual countries. Trend analysis was not possible due to limited coverage for this indicator but estimates for more countries are expected to be released by the UIS later in 2019 through the processing of labour force surveys.

Target 4.4: Skills for work

Many more are learning ICT skills in high-income than in middle-income countries

Youth and adults with ICT skills, 2017



Source: UIS database based on Eurostat and International Telecommunication Union data.

The global indicator for target 4.4, an indirect measure of use of information and communications technology (ICT) skills, may seem very limited for monitoring the target's broad scope about the skills that youth and adults need for the world of work. However, the indicator is innovative for an education monitoring framework for several reasons. First, it aims to capture skills beyond literacy and numeracy. Second, it tries to assess skills that are becoming almost universally important for the world of work – not many skills categories can claim to have such worldwide relevance. Third, it challenges governments to think about ways in which such skills can be acquired in and outside school.

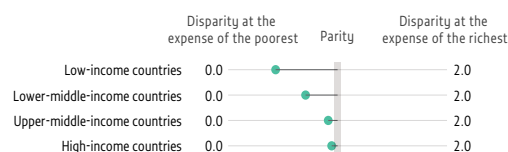
The global indicator draws on individuals reporting in household surveys whether they have carried out nine selected computer-related activities in the previous three months. The latest data from the International Telecommunication Union show that copying or moving a file or folder is the only skill that more than one in three respondents had in typical middle-income countries, while two in three respondents in high-income countries had this skill. The average share of the adult population with programming skills is 7% in high-income countries and 3% in middle-income countries. Ultimately, the aspiration is to move towards a direct measure of these skills. The UIS Digital Literacy Global Framework based on the European Digital Competence Framework for Citizens, should provide a solid basis for future direct measurement.

Target 4.5: Equity

In low-income countries, the richest are nine times as likely as the poorest to complete upper secondary

Adjusted parity index Primary completion rate by wealth

Primary completion rate by wealth



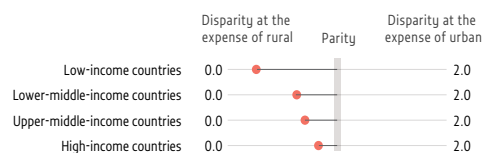
Lower secondary completion rate by wealth



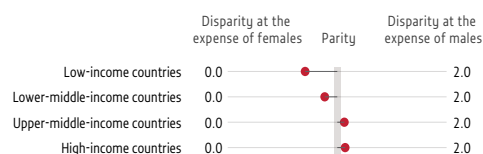
Upper secondary completion rate by wealth



Upper secondary completion rate by location



Upper secondary completion rate by sex



Source: World Inequality Database on Education.

'Leaving no one behind' is one of the principles of Agenda 2030, and one of the main contributions of the SDG 4 monitoring framework to this aim is that the disaggregation of education indicators by individual characteristics has been mainstreamed. The richness of the evidence on the parity index, the global indicator for target 4.5, is presented concisely in the World Inequality Database on Education, which is managed jointly by the Global Education Monitoring Report and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

In low-income countries, for every 100 in the richest quintile, 44 children in the poorest quintile complete primary school, 23 adolescents complete lower secondary school, and just 11 youth complete upper secondary school. Absolute disparities are very high: while only 4% of the poorest youth complete upper secondary school in low-income countries, 36% of the richest do. In lower-middle-income countries, the gap is even wider: while only 14% of the poorest youth complete upper secondary school, 72% of the richest do. Relative disparities tend to decline as countries become richer and completion rates increase. For instance, for every 100 of the richest young people who complete upper secondary school, 11 complete upper secondary school in low-income, 19 in lower middle-income, 64 in upper middle-income and 85 in high-income countries.

Disparities by wealth appear to be the largest form of disparity, although it is important to note that the comparison concerns the bottom 20% and top 20% and does not consider the middle 60%. Other comparisons – by sex and location – split the population in two groups. In terms of location, 26 young people living in rural areas complete upper secondary school for every 100 young people living in urban areas who do so. In terms of sex, 70 young women in low-income and 88 in lower-middle-income countries complete upper secondary school for every 100 young men who do so. Gender disparities reverse in richer countries: 106 young women in upper middle- and 107 in high-income countries complete upper secondary school for every 100 young men.

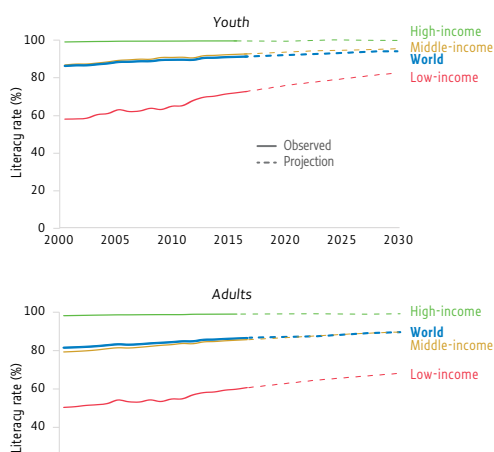
Disparities by sex, location and wealth, and their intersections, are among the few characteristics that can be aggregated across countries in the sense that the respective categories carry a similar meaning and data are relatively easy to obtain. In the coming years, as a result of mobilization and inter-agency coordination, it is expected that more information will be available on education indicators by disability.

Other individual characteristics are important, but analyses are more relevant at national than cross-national level. Large disparities can be observed in different countries by geographic region, ethnicity, language, and migrant background.

Target 4.6: Adult literacy and numeracy

Literacy rates are growing steadily across the globe but 750 million adults still cannot read

Youth and adult literacy rate, 2000–2016 and projections to 2030



Source: UIS database and projections.

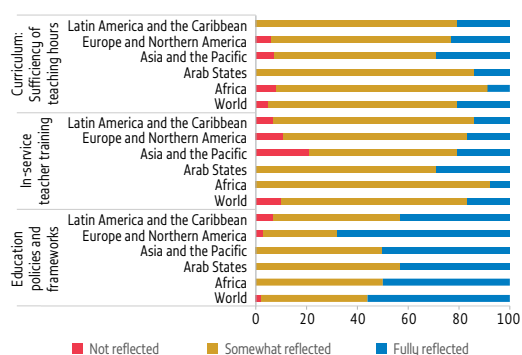
The global indicator for target 4.6, which refers to a 'level of proficiency' in functional literacy and numeracy skills, aims to shift attention away from the conventional dichotomy of literacy/illiteracy. A rigid distinction between adults who do and do not possess basic reading and writing skills is less informative than the range of adults' proficiency levels in various contexts. For the time being, however, the needed measurement tools are not available beyond high-income countries, so reporting for most countries is limited to youth and adult literacy based on traditional literacy rates.

According to the most recent estimates, the global youth literacy rate is 91%, meaning 102 million youth lack basic literacy skills. In low-income countries, one in three young people still cannot read. The adult literacy rate is 86%, which means 750 million adults lack basic literacy skills. There are 92 literate women for every 100 literate men globally, and in low-income countries, as few as 77 literate women for every 100 literate men. The literacy rate is expected to continue to grow steadily in countries in all income groups. At the global level, the youth literacy rate is expected to reach 94% by 2030 and the adult literacy rate 90%. In low-income countries, less than 70% of adults and slightly more than 80% of youth aged 15 to 24 years are projected to have basic literacy skills by 2030.

Target 4.7: Sustainable development and global citizenship

Limited data indicate large gaps in mainstreaming education for sustainable development

Countries reflecting principles of the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation in their education policy, teacher education and curricula, 2013–2016



Source: UNESCO.

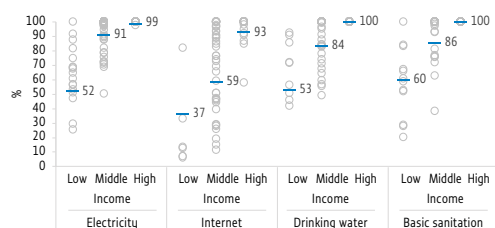
Monitoring progress on target 4.7, with its unique focus on the content of education, remains challenging. A methodology has not yet been adopted for the global indicator, which aims to capture country efforts to mainstream global citizenship education and education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, at all levels in their education policies, curricula, teacher education and student assessment. However, reporting on the implementation of the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms indicates the state of national education systems.

In the sixth consultation carried out in 2016, 83 countries reported on the extent to which their education systems reflect the Recommendation's guiding principles and associated topics. In nearly 60% of reporting countries, the Recommendation has been 'fully reflected' in national education policies. Implementation, however, is not keeping pace, and is weakest for in-service teacher education, which 'fully reflects' the Recommendation in only 17% of responding countries. The most rapid progress was observed for student assessment, with more than four in five countries reporting inclusion of the Guiding Principles in the sixth consultation, up from just under half in the fifth consultation. While reported inclusion of the principles in some form is practically universal, only 21% of countries reported that the teaching hours dedicated to them were 'fully sufficient'.

Target 4.a: Education facilities and learning environments

Four in ten upper secondary schools in low-income countries have no sanitation

Resources in upper secondary school facilities by country income group, 2017



Source: UIS database.

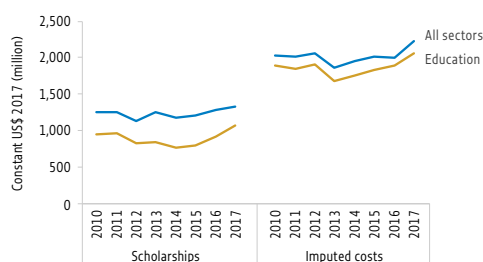
The global indicator for target 4.a reports information on infrastructure in schools. In low-income countries, only 32% of primary, 43% of lower secondary and 52% of upper secondary schools have access to electricity. This affects access to the internet, which is just 37% in upper secondary schools in low-income countries, as compared to 59% in those in middle-income countries and 93% in those in high-income countries.

Access to basic water, sanitation and hygiene is also far from universal. Among upper secondary schools, only 53% in low-income countries and 84% in middle-income countries have access to basic drinking water. Access to water and sanitation is universal in high-income countries.

Target 4.b: Scholarships

The volume of aid for scholarships has not increased

Official development assistance disbursements on scholarship and imputed student costs, education sector and all sectors, 2010–2017



Source: GEM Report team estimates based on the OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

According to UIS data, about 2.3% of tertiary education students are internationally mobile, which corresponds to 5.1 million students, although levels of mobility vary from 7.2% in developed countries to 0.8% in developing countries. There is no systematic evidence on the number of scholarships, although the Institute of International Education and the Global Education Monitoring Report have estimated that only 1% of developing country students were receiving public scholarships from developed countries in 2015.

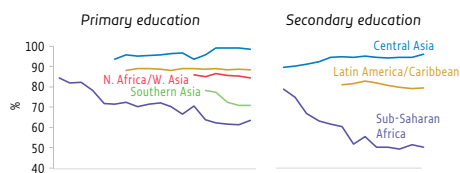
In the absence of data on the number of scholarships, the global indicator focuses on the volume of aid to education allocated for scholarships. This volume has remained constant at about US\$1.3 billion. In addition, another US\$2 billion is estimated to cover developing country students' costs in developed countries. However, the indicator is unsatisfactory since many developed countries do not include scholarships in their aid programmes.

Target 4.c: Teachers

The proportion of trained teachers is falling in sub-Saharan Africa

Percentage of trained teachers by region, 2000–2017

Primary education Secondary education



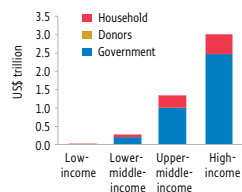
Source: GEM Report team estimates based on the OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS).

Target 4.c aims at an increased supply of qualified teachers by 2030, and the global indicator is the proportion of teachers with the minimum organized teacher training required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country. Regionally representative figures for this indicator are available for few regions, but those that exist show wide variation in the composition of the teacher workforce. Among regions with data, Central Asia has the highest proportion of trained teachers. In sub-Saharan Africa, only 64% of primary and 50% of secondary school teachers have the minimum required training, and this proportion has been declining since 2000, as a result of schools hiring contract teachers without qualifications to cover gaps at lower cost.

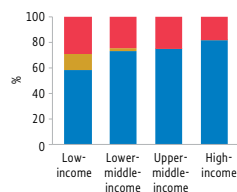
Finance

One-quarter of all countries spend less than 4% of GDP and less than 15% of their budget on education

Total spending on education, by country income group and financing source

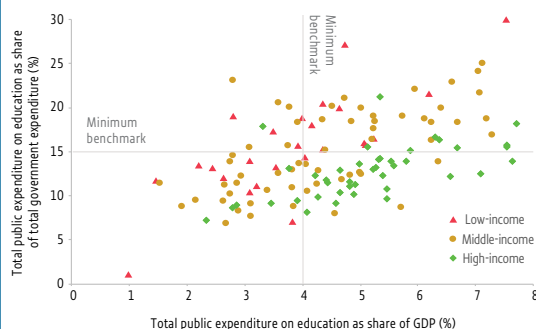


Distribution of total spending on education, by country income group and financing source



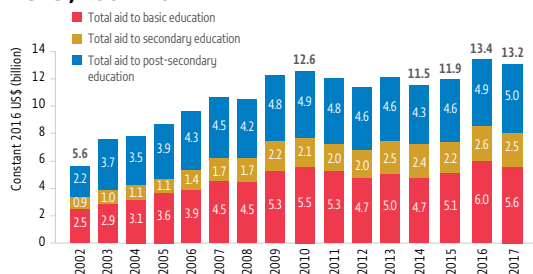
Source: GEM Report team analysis based on UIS (government and household) and OECD CRS (donor) databases.

Public education expenditure as a share of GDP and of total public expenditure, countries below both benchmarks, 2017 or most recent year



Source: UIS database.

Total aid to education disbursements, by education level, 2002–2017



Source: GEM Report team analysis based on OECD CRS.

Annual spending on education is estimated at US\$4.7 trillion worldwide. Of that, US\$3 trillion (65% of the total) is spent in high-income countries and US\$22 billion (0.5% of the total) in low-income countries, even though the two groups have roughly equal school-age populations. Governments account for 79% of total spending and households for 20%. Donors account for 12% of total education expenditure in low-income countries and 2% in lower-middle-income countries.

The Education 2030 Framework for Action endorses two key benchmarks for **public** financing of education:

- Allocating at least 4% to 6% of GDP, and/or
- Allocating at least 15% to 20% of public expenditure.

The average of public education expenditure was 4.4% of GDP in 2017, with regional averages ranging from 3.4% in Eastern and South-eastern Asia to 5.1% in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The global average share of total public expenditure dedicated to education was 14.1%, ranging from 11.6% in Europe and Northern America to 18% in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Overall, poorer countries, which have relatively larger school-age populations and education challenges, spend a larger share of their budget on education but struggle to mobilize sufficient domestic resources. In total, 43 out of 148 countries from different income groups or regions did not meet either benchmark.

The GEM Report has estimated that there is an annual funding gap of at least US\$39 billion per year between 2015 and 2030 in low- and lower-middle-income countries. To make up the shortfall, **aid** to education would need to increase sixfold from its 2010 levels. Instead, it has remained stagnant since 2010, reaching US\$13.2 billion in 2017. Of that, only US\$5.4 billion is allocated to primary and secondary education in low- and lower-middle-income countries. The share of education in total official development assistance, excluding debt relief, has largely declined in the 2010s, from 10% in 2010 to 7% in 2017, indicating that education has declined as a priority among donors.

Households constitute a significant yet underappreciated source of education spending. Even where primary and secondary education is free of charge, families still incur education-related costs. The average share of households in total education expenditure in 28 high-income countries is 14%, but this share exceeds 50% in a few middle-income countries where data are available.

Monitoring progress in SDG 4 remains challenging

This overview of progress towards the SDG 4 targets suggests some overarching conclusions. First, the world is far **off track** on achieving international commitments to education. For several years now, no progress has been made on access into primary and secondary education. Only one in two young people complete secondary school. Of those who are in school, fewer than one in two reach a minimum level of proficiency in reading and mathematics by the end of primary; in sub-Saharan Africa, only one in ten do so, even as the percentage of trained teachers is trending downwards. Disparities abound, with the rich five times as likely to complete secondary school as the poorest. Low-income countries, which have some of the most acute deficiencies in infrastructure and which need external assistance, have seen aid stagnate for a decade.

Second, many targets are universal; for instance, countries are called upon to ensure that 'all girls and boys complete' secondary education. But it is not realistic to expect all countries to achieve the same targets, given their very different starting positions. Country-specific target levels need to be set, because otherwise it is difficult to determine whether countries are on track. While it is not easy to set targets for individual countries at a global level, there are more opportunities for countries to agree **benchmarks** at the sub-regional or regional level. Europe, through the European Union institutions, has followed a

consensus process to agree such benchmarks for 2020 and now for 2030. Other regions should follow suit.

Third, SDG 4 has presented a unique opportunity to expand the scope of education monitoring, since SDG 4 places a distinct emphasis on outcomes, disaggregation by individual demographic and socio-economic characteristics, and the content of education. However, the **methodologies and measurement tools** for several of these indicators are still under development. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics has established new coordination mechanisms – notably, the Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG 4 - Education 2030 and its working group on learning outcome indicators, the Global Alliance to Monitor Learning – in order to develop consensus and joint action between countries and agencies on these issues. Country participation in these mechanisms needs to be strengthened.

Fourth, **data availability** – in terms of both country coverage and time series – is a major constraint. The lack of effective international cooperation is a key factor that has held back progress. Fewer than half of countries report data on flagship indicators, such as learning outcomes in primary and secondary education. For other indicators, such as public expenditure, the information is available only with a considerable time lag. For yet other indicators, such as trained teachers, comparability is weak.

II. COUNTRY PERSPECTIVES ON SDG 4



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The trends documented in the previous section are a warning to governments and the global community. Across the board, there is a dual imperative: to make inclusion the focus of every policy, and to solve the learning crisis that is leaving too many youth without the confidence and capacities to break cycles of exclusion. There is no single answer. It is not realistic to expect all countries to achieve the same targets, given their very different starting positions, hence the pertinence of setting sub-regional or regional benchmarks.

While it may not be captured in the global trends described above, positive change is happening at national level, reflecting commitment and efforts to take ownership of SDG 4.

Under the auspices of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, the Global Education Monitoring Report administered a short questionnaire to all countries, mainly as part of the regional SDG 4 consultation process. An adjusted questionnaire was also

administered to members of the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities. Countries and cities were asked to share their views of what is unique about SDG 4, report whether the SDG 4 agenda has influenced their education policy planning and implementation, and highlight the policies that best, in their view, best exemplify their commitment to SDG 4.

An analysis of the questionnaire submitted by 72 governments shows that most countries refer to SDG 4 as a framework in which they place education planning. The development of early childhood education and technical and vocational education are central to policy-makers' concerns. There is a clear focus on monitoring learning achievement and using the information to deliver change. A range of curricula and pedagogical reforms signal understanding of the need to develop skills that are relevant for sustainable development, albeit pursued more intensively in richer countries. Adult education initiatives are spreading but seem focused on employment related lifelong learning opportunities. While multisectoral policies involving health, nutrition or employment recognize the need not to work in isolation, governments still do not fully utilize the potential of cross-sectoral partnerships.

The GEM Report also analyzed Voluntary National Reviews (VNR), the main input of governments to the High level Political Forum. Most countries use the VNR exercise to assess how their national development strategies map onto the SDGs. Education is typically linked to the human capital and social pillars of development strategies. Coverage of education in the VNRs strongly highlights education's role in leaving no one behind and in achieving the other SDGs. Countries identified gender, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, language, and migration and displacement status as characteristics for which groups should not be left behind or discriminated against.

A framework of six essential transformations provides a lens for countries to look at whether their education policies integrate the scope of SDG 4, and the international community to steer their support around these directions.

Questionnaire findings are integrated into each, accompanied by a set of three recommendations.

1. BEYOND AVERAGES INTO EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Questionnaire findings

1. Inclusive education should encompass all learners. Yet over a third of countries mentioning policies on inclusion referred to a single group only, mostly learners with disabilities or special education needs.
2. Education and social assistance policies need to be designed jointly to promote equity, as is the case with school vouchers for indigenous students in Bolivia (Plurinational State of) or the abolition of tuition fees for the poorest in Viet Nam.
3. Ministries of education must monitor disparity to elaborate inclusion policies. South Africa screens students to identify the nature and level of support they need, and Thailand maintains an individual database for the Equitable Education Fund.

Key recommendations

- Adopt a definition of inclusive education that encompasses all learners.
- Design education and social assistance policies jointly to promote equity.
- Ensure that education ministries monitor disparity to help elaborate inclusion policies.

2. BEYOND ACCESS INTO QUALITY AND LEARNING

Questionnaire findings

1. Countries including the Philippines and Spain are increasingly developing national assessment systems that provide robust diagnoses of trends over time and are not just a mechanism to manage transition from one level to the next.
2. Selective participation in cross-national assessments, as in Bhutan and Pakistan, is a valuable complementary tool to develop capacity and benchmark a national system.
3. Information from national monitoring frameworks should be used to inform curriculum, textbook and teacher development and drive policy evaluation, as in the Bahamas, China, Czechia and Panama.

Key recommendations

- Countries need to develop a national assessment system that provides a robust diagnosis of trends over time and not just a mechanism to manage transition from one level to the next.
- Selective participation in cross-national assessments is a valuable complementary tool to develop capacity and benchmark a national system.
- Information from national monitoring frameworks should be used to inform curricular, textbook and teacher development and drive policy evaluation.

3. BEYOND BASICS INTO CONTENT FIT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Questionnaire findings

1. Curricula are being updated to promote sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and cultural diversity.
2. Curriculum development needs to be participatory to encourage national ownership, from the central to the school level. In Germany, multiple stakeholders took part in a new national action plan for sustainable development, and Mexico ran a national consultation for its new curriculum.
3. Curricula, teacher preparation and assessment need to be aligned, as in Portugal, whose new citizenship curriculum is being monitored to assesses how schools respond to additional autonomy, and the Republic of Korea, where curriculum changes are combined with teacher education.

Key recommendations

- All countries need to respond to the commitments undertaken as part of SDG 4 to promote sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and cultural diversity through their curricula.
- Curricular development needs to be participatory for national ownership, from the central to the school level.
- Curriculum, teacher preparation, professional development and assessment need to be aligned.

4. BEYOND SCHOOLING INTO LIFELONG LEARNING

Questionnaire findings

1. All countries need to define their response to their commitment under SDG 4 to provide 'lifelong learning opportunities for all'. At present, poorer countries, such as Afghanistan and Burkina Faso, focus on adult literacy and richer countries on training for work or non-work purposes.
2. A continuum of approaches is needed to link formal and non-formal education opportunities, as in Armenia's national register of training opportunities, Estonia's lifelong learning strategy, Japan's community learning centres and the sustainable development plan of Montréal, Canada.
3. Governments need to address the challenge that the more educated are more likely to receive further education opportunities.

Key recommendations

- All countries need to define their response to the commitment they made under SDG 4 to provide lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- A continuum of approaches is needed to link formal and non-formal education opportunities.
- Countries need to address the challenge that the more educated are more likely to receive further education opportunities.

5. BEYOND EDUCATION INTO CROSS-SECTORAL COLLABORATION

Questionnaire findings

1. Ministries of education need to engage in stronger partnerships with other sectors that extend beyond planning to implementation to achieve SDG 4. Countries referred to multisectoral partnerships mostly regarding links between education and the labour market, as in Honduras, Palestine and Saudi Arabia, and to a lesser extent inclusive education, as in Ecuador and Iceland, or early childhood care, as in Colombia and Lebanon.
2. Partnerships should not be limited to other ministries but also include other government tiers, non-government organizations and the private sector, as in Albania's national action plan for sexual minorities and Kenya's school feeding programme.
3. Education ministries should actively remove administrative hurdles that stand in the way of multisectoral partnerships. In Norway, four ministries joined forces to coordinate their work supporting vulnerable children and youth.

Key recommendations

- Ministries of education need to engage in stronger partnerships with other sectors, extending beyond planning to implementation.
- Partnerships should not be limited to other ministries but extend to other government tiers, NGOs and the private sector.
- Education ministries should not only react but also seek to become partners in other sectors' initiatives, removing administrative hurdles.

6. BEYOND COUNTRIES INTO REGIONAL AND GLOBAL COLLABORATION

Questionnaire findings

1. Regional organizations need to have clear education agendas, align them to SDG 4, monitor commitments and develop environments conducive to policy dialogue. Such efforts by the European Union and the Council of Europe inspire similar moves in other regions.
2. Governments should seek opportunities for peer learning. The Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment helps share costs in the collection of data on learning outcomes and in their analysis and use across participating countries.
3. Peer networks for education are global public goods whose coordination and communication functions need to be properly funded. For instance, the Technical Cooperation Group that develops the SDG 4 monitoring framework requires more resources to strengthen country participation.

Key recommendations

- Regional and international organizations need clear education agendas aligned with SDG 4 and to develop conducive environments for education policy dialogue.
- Governments should utilize opportunities for peer learning and informal comparisons.
- Peer learning networks for education are a global public good, and their coordination and communication costs need to be funded accordingly.

This framework can serve as a starting point for national, regional and global conversations about whether the education policy focus is moving in the right direction. It could usher in peer learning opportunities on how policies that follow these principles can be contextualized, how financial resources can be mobilized and how collaborative arrangements can be developed.

III. UNESCO: PARTNERING FOR A NEW EDUCATION PACT

Ten years separate us from the target date for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Unless education is prioritized none of the goals will be reached. More than ever we need partnerships to innovate, transform and fulfill the right to education. This is everyone's responsibility. Governments play the lead role in providing education as a public good, in line with human rights treaties and the obligation to respect, protect and fulfil the right to education. But unlocking education's power for all is a shared responsibility: civil society, teachers and educators, the private sector, families youth and children all have a role to play in realizing the right to education.

We will only make education a reality for all through a surge in global responsibility, solidarity and collective action, especially in countries with the lowest indicators, and those in conflict, where some of the largest education gaps are found. We must never fail to put faces behind the numbers – of girls being married off at a young age; of refugees uprooted and without access to learning opportunities; of youth without skills nor jobs. Acting together is the only way to deliver on our education commitments and strengthen the foundations of peace and sustainable development.

Beyond Countries: *Coordinating the Global Agenda*

UNESCO, as the specialized UN Agency for education, is mandated to lead and coordination the SDG 4-Education 2030 agenda. UNESCO convenes the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee,

the only global multi-stakeholder consultation and coordination mechanism for education. Its primary objective is to harmonize and strengthen support to countries and their partners to achieve the global education goal and targets. The Committee counts 44 members representing a majority from countries, 7 UN agencies, the World Bank, the Global Partnership for Education, the OECD, regional organizations, teacher organizations, civil society networks, foundations and youth organizations. The Steering Committee represents the voice of the global education community – it made a joint submission to the 2019 High-level Political Forum; produced policy papers on skills and financing that informed the G20 meeting in Argentina (2018) and encourages peer learning. This Committee is mirrored by regional coordination mechanisms, established and led by UNESCO regional offices. Building on

regional roadmaps and support strategies, these mechanisms are instrumental in strengthening implementation of SDG 4, generating common understanding of challenges, sharing best practices and sustaining political commitment.

Cooperation with multilateral partners is being reinforced through a Joint Action Platform, established by UNESCO in July 2019 following a meeting of principals. Under the banner of “jointly accelerating progress for SDG 4”, the aim is to maintain a strategic dialogue and align work around a set of priorities to accelerate progress and improve efficiency and accountability. These priorities include attention to the hardest to reach, focus on improving learning outcomes, scaled up youth skills development, increased investment in global public goods, harmonized collection and use of data and evidence, and joint advocacy.

In addition, cooperation with key civil society actors and nine of the largest education systems in the world is maintained and coordinated through the Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030 (CCNGO) and the E-9 partnership.



Beyond Averages: *Improving Data*

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The 2030 Agenda placed countries and institutions before a host of monitoring challenges. SDG 4 targets include several concepts that have never been measured at the global level. In addition, some SDG 4 indicators are measured in only a few countries. Methodologies and measurement tools have to be developed. In many low-and-middle income countries, inadequate financing remains a significant hurdle. While the global and regional numbers show the urgent need for action, policy-makers in many countries are working in the dark. Many national statistical offices still struggle to report data on the basics—from the number of girls who never set foot in a classroom to the number of schools with clean drinking water. Using

the most conservative calculations, the UIS has estimated that better education data would generate a 10% gain in education efficiency.

The Technical Cooperation Group on SDG 4-Education 2030 Indicators, co-convened by UIS and UNESCO, is the key mechanism for developing the SDG 4 monitoring indicators. The Global Alliance to Monitoring Learning (GAML), convened by UIS, focuses on developing methodologies for indicators related to learning outcomes. UIS is also working with OECD to harmonize indicator calculation methods and data sources for SDG 4 indicators to ensure that the same data are published by both organizations. Through the UNESCO Capacity Development for Education Programme (CapED), the UIS is building statistical capacities in a group of low-income countries and strengthening data quality assessments in 10 Pacific Island countries.

UIS leadership and ‘brokerage’ role was recognized by the 50th Session of the UN Statistical Commission (5-8th March 2019), the highest body of the global statistical system. The Commission commended the UIS on the actions taken to improve data availability and develop methodologies, guidelines and other supporting tools to produce indicators for the follow-up and review of SDG 4. It supported the extension of the UIS mandate to serve as a broker between countries and development partners to improve the production and use of high quality data at all levels. In response, the UIS is working with partners to build a Global Data Coalition to improve the coordination, production and use of SDG 4 data and thereby support the wider efforts of the international community to achieve the 2030 targets.

Beyond Access: *Transforming Education*

Every country, to different degrees, confronts challenges of equity, inclusion and quality.

Every country faces the challenge of gearing education to a rapidly changing global landscape and to empower learners, whatever their circumstances and age, to determine their future, and act for a better and more sustainable world.

Through a number of new initiatives, UNESCO is acting to make education work for people, planet and shared prosperity. Inclusion stands at the heart of each one – to ensure that education widens opportunity, promotes non-violence and acts as a force for equality and development across the 2030 Agenda.



For Gender Equality

“Her Education, Our Future”

Launched at the G7 France-UNESCO International Conference in July 2019, Her Education Our Future aims to fast-track progress on girls’ and women’s education through three axes:

- 1. better data to inform action:** because we need a much finer and broader picture of the gender biases and inequalities that still permeate education systems and are holding girls back. Every year UNESCO’s Global Education Monitoring Report will publish a special edition focusing on gender in education, tracking trends, strategies and innovations.
- 2. better legal, policy and planning frameworks to advance rights:** because these are the scaffolding to ensure the right to education and prohibit discriminatory practices and dismantle barriers to education, including child marriage, child labour and domestic work and early and unintended pregnancy. UNESCO has launched an interactive tool mapping the status of national constitutions, legislation and regulations and will support countries to tackle gender-related barriers through legal and policy reform
- 3. better teaching and learning practices to empower:** because education must challenge and change unequal power relations, confront stereotypes about gender, fight gender-based violence and enhance girls’ participation in science, math, technology and mathematics (STEM). UNESCO will empower teachers to be gender responsive through training and guidance, develop tools to remove gender biases from learning materials, and support national partners to increase female talents and promote rights and equality of opportunity.

These thematic priorities are the thrust of UNESCO’s strategy for gender equality in and through education for 2019-2025, ‘From access to empowerment’. This Strategy has two objectives: to strengthen education systems to be gender-transformative and promote gender equality; and to empower girls and women through education for a better future.

For Reducing Inequalities

People on the Move: Recognizing their Qualifications



Getty/FatCamera

Increasing numbers of people are on the move, across borders, voluntarily or forcibly, in search of opportunities that range from better employment to safe haven from persecution and conflict. The recognition of prior qualifications and skills that migrants bring with them is vital for integration, for improving economic productivity and social cohesion. This recognition is particularly challenging when learning has occurred outside formal education pathways, or when people have been chased away from their homes without carrying proof of their degrees and qualifications.

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration devotes Objective 18 to the issue of investing in skills development, and facilitating recognition of skills, qualifications and competences. Currently less than one quarter of immigrants globally are covered by an international recognition agreement.

UNESCO has led negotiations for a **Global Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications**, set for adoption in November 2019. This will be a milestone in global academic cooperation that aims to facilitate international student mobility, with specific provisions on the recognition of refugees' qualifications. Today only 1% of refugees have access to higher education.

Taking to global scale an initiative launched by the Council of Europe in 2015, UNESCO is leading a project to establish a **Qualification Passport of Refugees and Vulnerable Migrants**. The aim is to facilitate access to employment and further studies through a specially developed assessment scheme, to be piloted in a select group of countries starting in 2020.

By Making Ai Work for Inclusion and Quality Learning

Artificial intelligence (AI), big data and machine learning are impacting education, but are education policy-makers in the driver's seat? What is the impact on learning, on curriculum and on the teaching profession? How can AI be leveraged to achieve SDG 4? In the majority of countries, public policies on AI are still in their infancy. In many developing countries, lack of connectivity and lack of data to power AI remain entrenched obstacles.

UNESCO is providing a platform for countries, international organizations, civil society and the AI industry to understand the latest trends, anticipate skill needs in the AI era and design policies that make AI work for inclusion and quality in education. In 2019, UNESCO published the **Beijing Consensus on Artificial Intelligence and Education**, the first ever document to offer guidance and recommendations on how best to harness AI technologies for achieving the Education 2030 Agenda.

In 2020, UNESCO will publish guidelines to facilitate the effective and equitable use of AI in education, encompassing policies; new models for delivering education; teacher training, skills acquisition and data protection.

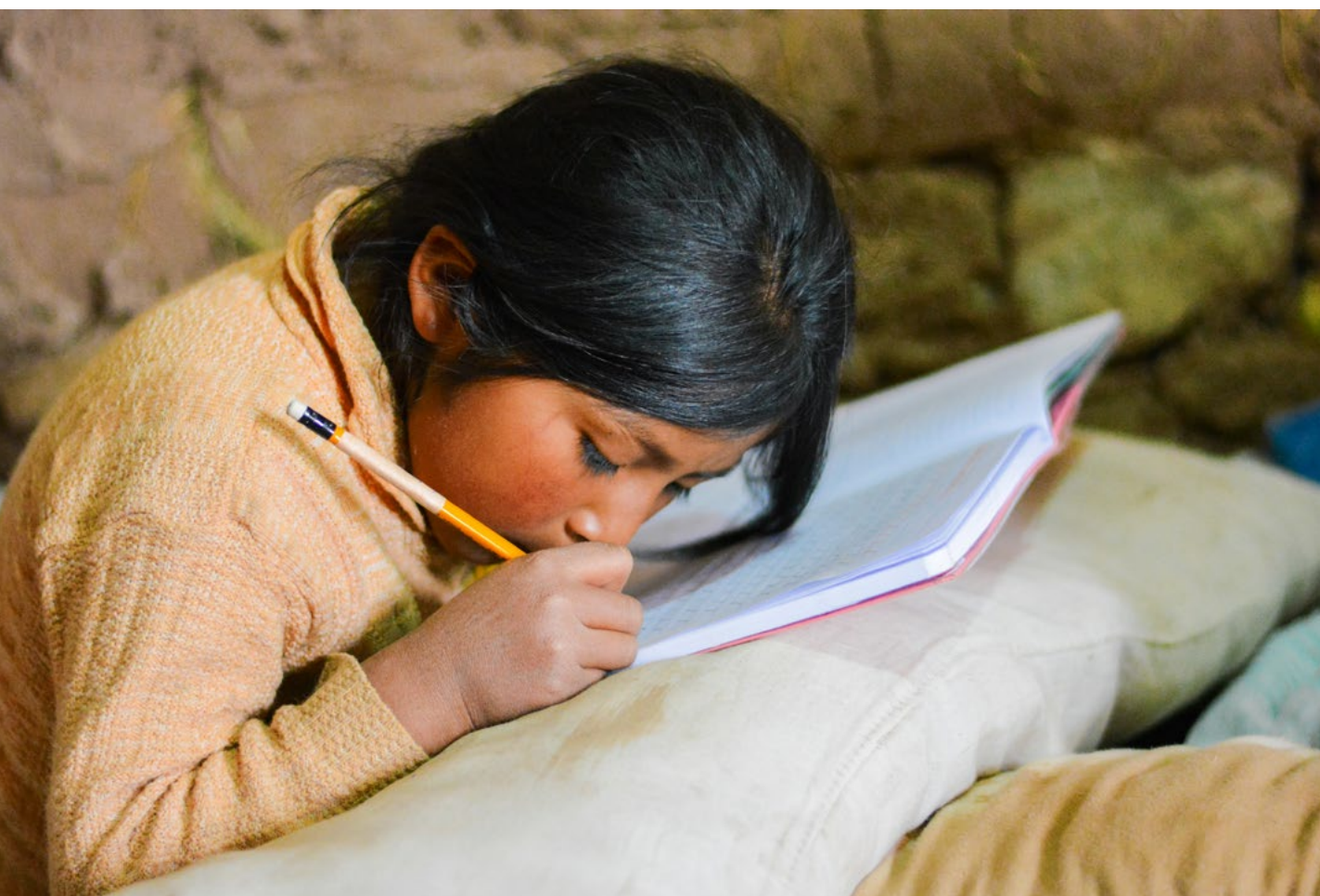


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Beyond Schooling: A New Strategy for Literacy

Eradicating illiteracy through formal and non-formal education is a key message of the Brussels Declaration (2018) taken forward to the 2019 High-level Political Forum. An estimated 750 million people worldwide cannot read and write at a basic level of proficiency. This carries tremendous individual and societal costs, exacerbating poverty, unemployment and exclusion. Literacy needs more political commitment, more financial resources and stronger partnerships.

UNESCO's new **Strategy on Literacy for Youth and Adults** will support Member States in their efforts to address these challenges. It will pay special attention to countries with adult literacy rates under 50% and the E-9 countries, where the largest numbers of non-literates live. It will place central focus on women and girls, out-of-school youth, and migrants and refugees; leverage digital technologies to improve access, contents and training, and expand flexible and open literacy programmes. The Strategy will also reinforce national and internal capacities in measuring literacy skills and monitoring the progress for achieving the SDG 4 related target – 4.6.



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Beyond silos: *Education for Health & Well-Being*



Adam Jan Figei/Shutterstock.com

Recognizing that healthy learners learn better, and that better educated learners are healthier, UNESCO is working to break down the silos between the education and health sectors to achieve better outcomes for young people. UNESCO's Strategy on Education for Health and Well-Being recognizes the mutually reinforcing linkages of SDGs 3 (Health), 4 (Education) and 5 (Gender Equality), UNESCO works with national counterparts to scale-up access to quality health education, including comprehensive sexuality education, and to scale-up access to safe, inclusive learning environments. A key initiative is the "Our Rights, Our Lives, Our Future" programme which will benefit 31 sub-Saharan Africa countries, aiming to reach 20 million children learners in 64,000 primary and secondary schools by 2022. Connecting gender, health and education, the Initiative equips young people with the skills to protect themselves from HIV, gender-based violence and child marriage, to prevent early and unintended pregnancy, and to develop attitudes, values and skills for respectful relationships. The programme accelerates efforts across the region to provide young people with comprehensive sexuality education that promotes gender equality and human rights.

Beyond Basics: *Contents for 21st century Mindsets*

SDG 4 has a transformative ambition: it includes a specific target (4.7) about gearing education towards “sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and the appreciation of cultural diversity.”

This goes to the heart of UNESCO’s foundational mandate to construct the defences of peace in the minds of people. It is about nurturing the values and competences needed to promote sustainable development, to foster respect for diversity, solidarity and a sense of shared humanity. Hate speech amplified by social media, fake news, distorted interpretations of religion, contemporary anti-Semitism and rising intolerance all call for educational responses – to build resilience and give learners the resources and skills to analyze and counter discrimination and rejection of the other.

Teachers need to be empowered to help students become critical thinkers, collaborate around joint projects and actions that promote a culture of peace and sustainability.

For Responsible Production & Consumption, for Climate Action:

Education for Sustainable Development 2030

After leading the first United Nations Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), UNESCO has mobilized partners worldwide to gear learning around responsible actions for people, planet and prosperity. This is not a matter of ‘adding-on’ to curricula, but new approaches that touch upon values, attitudes and behaviours - ones that empower people to change the way they think and act. It involves awareness-raising, project-based learning, more participatory teaching practices and new learning contents. ESD mobilizes youth and



encourages them to create and apply sustainable solutions in their schools and communities. Through a 3-year Global Action Programme involving 97 key partners in 147 countries, over 26 million learners, 3 million youth leaders and 48,000 teacher training institutions have been reached. A UN General Assembly resolution (72/222) further affirmed that ESD is a key enabler of all the Sustainable Development Goals.

Building on this momentum, UNESCO is preparing a new programme for the next decade – **ESD for 2030** – to be formally launched in Berlin, Germany on 2 June 2020. It will scale-up transformations – in learning and training environments, in policy, in mobilizing youth, building the capacities of educator, and accelerating sustainable solutions at local level. Through ESD, understanding of the stakes of sustainable development will be enhanced, contributing to progress towards the global goals.

For Peace, Justice and Fair Institutions: Global Citizenship

Our world faces global threats and challenges. It requires the capacity to engage as citizens through more global mindsets. UNESCO is at the forefront of UN efforts to build a 'culture of prevention' underpinned by respect for human rights, taking forward the growing momentum around global citizenship education. Through policy guidance, pedagogical toolkits, teacher training and global advocacy and dialogue, UNESCO's global citizenship programme is strengthening the resilience of young people to extremist ideologies, hate speech and prejudice, helping them to assume active roles in building more peaceful and tolerant societies.



Our strategy is geared to prevent violent extremism, to address contemporary anti-Semitism, to raise awareness of the processes that can lead to atrocity crimes through education on the Holocaust and genocide, and to promote the rule of law through education, equipping youth to become active champions of justice and non-violence. These programmes make a direct contribution to SDG 16 on peace, justice and fair institutions.

Building on recognition of its work to support UNESCO will play a lead role in the UN Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech launched in June 2019. As affirmed by Secretary-General António Guterres at the launch, the Strategy “promotes education as a preventive tool that can raise awareness and bring about a shared sense of common purpose to address the seeds of hatred.”

Beyond 2030: Thinking the Future of Education

While the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is leading to shifts in national and global agendas, there is a need to look beyond this horizon at the futures of education in a world of increasing uncertainty and complexity.



This is the ambition of the Futures of Education project, launched in 2019 to mobilize collective intelligence, generate debate and reimagine how education can contribute to the common good of humanity. Casting the net wide to stimulate reflection and gather perspectives from

across society, the project will result in a global report, to be released in 2021. It builds on UNESCO's humanistic approach to learning, and the foundation laid by previous global UNESCO reports: *Rethinking Education* 2015; *Learning: the Treasure within*, 1996; and *Learning to Be*, 1972. An International Commission of eminent leaders from the worlds of politics, academia, the arts, science and business will lead the work, informed by broad consultations around the world with policy-makers, government, civil society, youth, educators and other actors.

This Report will be guided by the notion of "Learning to Become" – one that emphasizes potentials, rejects determinism and expresses an openness to new realities and possibilities.

Conclusion: *A New Pact for Education*

The 2019 High-level Political Forum was placed under the banner of "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality." In his remarks to the Ministerial Segment, the UN Secretary-General called for massive investment in quality education, rooted in learning how to learn across the span of a lifetime.

The implementation of SDG 4 calls for transformations in the scope and practice of education, not only to leave no one behind, but to help fulfil the promise of sustainable development and transform how societies function.

Increased efforts are needed to reduce inequalities in education systems, strengthen linkages with other development sectors and rally society around education as the most influential driving force to transform lives, strengthen peace and protect the planet.

At a time when trust in political institutions, including multilateral ones, is put to the test, we need to speak and act with one voice to make a new pact for education – one that puts education at the top of political and development agendas, as the most viable foundation for a fair, inclusive and sustainable globalization.



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#CommitToEducation

On the eve of the last decade to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations High-level Political Forum took stock of the global goal on education – SDG 4. This goal has catalytic impact across the Agenda for peace, planet and prosperity because education is a transformational force for individuals and societies and plays a crucial role in addressing the global challenges of our times.

The message is clear: the world is not on track to achieve the education goal and targets, jeopardizing the realization of the 2030 Agenda. We are facing a dual access and learning crisis that is widening inequalities, increasing vulnerability and depriving young generations from building a better future.

Distilling UNESCO's contributions to the High-level Political Forum under the auspices of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, this publication captures how far the world stands from achieving its education targets, provides insights into how countries are integrating SDG 4 into their policies and calls for stepped up political commitment, innovation and action to change the course. It highlights strategies UNESCO is taking to fulfil the right to education, strengthen inclusion, equity and quality, and reinforce global cooperation.

