



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



**Regional Consultation meeting
on SDG4-Education 2030
Europe and North America Region**

Paris, 24-25 October 2016

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Background

At the World Education Forum 2015 (WEF, May 2015)¹, 120 ministers and Government delegations from 160 countries and the education community adopted the [Incheon Declaration](#) and committed to a single, renewed education agenda that is holistic, ambitious and aspirational, leaving no-one behind. This new Education 2030 agenda is fully captured in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4), ***“Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all”***.

Following the adoption of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and its 17 SDGs which include SDG 4 on education at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in New York in September 2015, the [SDG4-Education 2030 Framework for Action was](#) adopted at a high-level meeting alongside the 38th session of the General Conference of UNESCO in November 2015. It serves as the overall guiding framework for the implementation of SDG4-Education 2030 and outlines how to translate into practice the commitment made in Incheon at global, regional and national level.

Based on these commitments, Member States have initiated the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including on SDG 4. Regional consultation meetings on the implementation of SDG4-Education 2030 have been held in the Asia and Pacific region, in the Arab States region, in the West- and Central African Region and are planned to take place in Latin America and East and Southern Africa at the end of 2016. 22 Member States, out of which nine from Group I and II countries have presented a national voluntary review of their activities towards the implementation of the SDGs at the High Level Political Forum at New York held from 11 – 20 July 2016.

Within the framework of the broader consultations on the SDGs, a Regional Consultation Meeting on SDG4-Education 2030 will be held for European and North American Member States (Group I and Group II countries) in Paris on 24 and 25 October 2016 to provide a platform for discussion on where countries stand after one year of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and facilitate further preparations for the implementation of SDG4-Education 2030 of Member States of the Europe and North America region.

The meeting will draw on the outcomes of the HLPF meeting, the 2016 SDG progress report, and the outcomes of the Regional Ministerial Conference on Education Post 2015 of the European and North American States held in February 2015 in Paris as spelt out in the [Paris Statement](#).

Objectives

- Share and discuss national education policy priorities in light of SDG4-Education 2030 and planned national strategies for their implementation;
- Discuss implications of the implementation of the SDG4-Education 2030 in particular as regards themes of particular relevance to the region such as: quality of education and learning outcomes, equity and inclusion; skills and competencies for life and work and adult literacy

¹ The World Education Forum was organized by UNESCO together with the co-convening agencies: UNICEF, the World Bank, UNFPA, UNDP, UN Women and UNHCR and hosted by the Republic of Korea in Incheon (19-22 May 2015).

and education; education for refugees and migrants; global citizenship education in terms of legislation, policies, finance, governance, teacher training, curriculum development, etc.;

- Discuss implications of the new education agenda on international cooperation and aid;
- Discuss the proposed global and thematic indicators for SDG 4 and corresponding data needs, and explore additional indicators for a more comprehensive and disaggregated analysis of equity and quality from a lifelong learning perspective;
- Discuss appropriate regional collaboration, coordination, partnership, monitoring and follow-up for SDG4-Education 2030, building on existing regional mechanisms, frameworks, processes and strategies, to support the implementation of Education 2030 at the national level.

Expected results

- Priorities for national education policies and strategies for implementation documented including possible benchmarks and milestones identified;
- Implications for implementation of areas and themes of SDG4 of particular relevance to the region discussed and recommendations for possible national and regional activities developed;
- Proposal and recommendations for regional collaboration, coordination and partnerships developed;
- Proposal and recommendations for regional review, reporting and follow-up mechanisms for SDG4-Education 2030 developed;
- Outcome Document developed and adopted.

Format and participation

This Meeting will bring together some 250 participants, including senior representatives from ministries of education and of development as well as of foreign affairs, as well as bi-lateral development agencies supporting global education development of UNESCO Member States from Group I and Group II countries; the convening agencies; OECD; GPE; regional organizations; the teaching profession; civil society organizations (CSOs); youth; the private sector; research institutes; foundations and experts.

Working languages are English, French and Russian.

Draft Agenda

Monday, 24 October 2016 Venue: UNESCO, Paris, Fontenoy Building, Room XI	
Time	Activity
08.30-09.00	Registration
09.00-09.15	Welcome and Opening Remarks Introduction to the meeting and presentation of the agenda <i>Mr Qian Tang</i> , Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO
Session I: Sharing progress on the preparation of implementing SDG4-Education 2030	
09.15- 09.45	Update on Global and Regional Developments <i>Mr Jordan Naidoo</i> , Director, Division for Education 2030 Support and Coordination, UNESCO Update on the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee <i>Mr Dankert Vedeler</i> , Assistant Director General, Ministry of Education and Research, Norway, Co-Chair of the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee
09.45 – 10.00	Presentation of latest trends in Education in OECD countries <i>Ms Gabriela Ramos</i> , OECD Chief of Staff, G20 Sherpa and Special Counsellor to the Secretary General
10.00– 10.30 Coffee break	
10.30-11.30	Presentations on preparation for national implementation from a selection of Member States (Group I countries) Moderator: <i>Mr Jordan Naidoo</i> , Director, Division for Education 2030 Support and Coordination, UNESCO Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Norway, Sweden and USA
11.30-12.30	Presentations on preparation for national implementation from a selection of Member States (Group II countries) Moderator: <i>Mr Sobhi Tawil</i> , Chief, Section of Partnerships, Cooperation and Research, UNESCO Armenia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine.
12.30 – 14.00 Lunch break	

Session II: Common areas of relevance to the countries of the region and implications of the implementation of SDG4-Education 2030 at the national level

Panel discussions

<p>14.00– 14.40</p>	<p>Quality of education and learning outcomes for all</p> <p>Moderator: <i>Mr Sobhi Tawil</i>, Chief, Section of Partnerships, Cooperation and Research, UNESCO</p> <p><u>Teachers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ms Cassandra Hallett DaSilva</i>, Secretary General, Canadian Teachers' Federation, Education International (EI) <p><u>Curriculum, pedagogical approaches, and the learning environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mr Aaron Benavot</i>, Director, Global Education Monitoring Report, UNESCO <p><u>Relevant and effective learning outcomes and their assessment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ms Silvia Montoya</i>, Director, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) • <i>Ms Yuri Belfali</i>, Head of the Early Childhood and Schools Division, OECD <p><u>Equity, inclusion and gender equality in education</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ms Deepa Grover</i>, Senior Adviser, Early Childhood Development, UNICEF
<p>14.40 – 15.20</p>	<p>Skills and Competencies for Life and Work in a Lifelong Learning Perspective</p> <p>Moderator: <i>Mr Borhene Chakroun</i>, Chief, Section of Youth, Literacy and Skills Development, UNESCO</p> <p><u>Skills for work and technical and vocational education and training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mr Paul Comyn</i>, Skills and Employability Specialist, ILO • <i>Ms Chiara Riondino</i>, Expert, Skills and Qualifications Strategies Unit, European Commission <p><u>Adult education and youth and adult literacy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ms Gina Ebner</i>, Secretary General, European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA) • <i>Mr Hassan Keynan</i>, Programme Specialist, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)
<p>15.20– 15.50</p>	<p>Education for Refugees and Migrants</p> <p>Moderator: <i>Mr Svein Osttveit</i>, Director, Education Sector's Executive Office, UNESCO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ms Moa Ageberg</i>, Desk officer, Secretariat for Policy Analysis and International Affairs, Ministry of Education and Research, Sweden • <i>Ms Vera Dilari</i>, Senior Officer, Directorate of European and International Affairs, Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, Greece • <i>Mr Matthew Johnson</i>, Director, Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation, Council of Europe • <i>Ms Marije Van Kempen</i>, Durable Solutions Officer, Rule of law, UNHCR

15.50-16.15	<p>Global Citizenship Education: learning to live together, respect for cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and combatting violent extremism</p> <p>Moderator: <i>Mr Alexander Leicht</i>, Chief, Section of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship, UNESCO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mr Youri Devuyst</i>, Senior Expert, Europe 2020, Investment Plan, Education and Training 2020 Unit, European Commission • <i>Mr Ferit Hoxha</i>, Director General of Political and Strategic Issues, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Albania • <i>Ms Yuri Belfali</i>, Head of the Early Childhood and Schools Division, OECD
16.15 – 16.30 Coffee break	
16.30-18.00	<p>Parallel break-out sessions on implications of SDG4-Education 2030 thematic focus areas on national policies and plans</p>
	<p>Quality of education and learning outcomes for all (Room IX)</p> <p>Moderator: <i>Mr Sobhi Tawil</i>, Chief, Section of Partnerships, Cooperation and Research, UNESCO</p>
	<p>Skills and Competencies for Life and Work in a Lifelong Learning Perspective (Room XI)</p> <p>Moderator: <i>Mr Borhene Chakroun</i>, Chief, Section of Youth, Literacy and Skills Development, UNESCO</p>
	<p>Education for Refugees and Migrants (Room VIII)</p> <p>Moderator: <i>Mr Svein Osttveit</i>, Director, Education Sector’s Executive Office, UNESCO</p>
<p>Global Citizenship Education (GCED) (Room VI)</p> <p>Moderator: <i>Mr Alexander Leicht</i>, Chief, Section of Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship, UNESCO</p>	
18.30 – 20.30 Reception (Venue: Cafeteria, 7th Floor)	

Tuesday, 25 October 2016
Venue: UNESCO, Paris, Fontenoy Building, Room XI

Time	Activity
Session III: Implementation Modalities : implications for aid; monitoring and reporting; global and regional collaboration and partnerships	
	Topics
09.30 – 10.10	<p>Implications of the new education agenda from an aid perspective Moderator: <i>Mr Keith Lewin</i>, Professor of International Education, University of Sussex</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ms Alice Albright</i>, Chief Executive Officer, Global Partnership for Education (GPE) • <i>Ms Cecilia Piemonte</i>, Analyst, Development Co-operation Directorate, OECD • <i>Ms Frances Godfrey</i>, Education Policy Officer, United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID) • <i>Mr Hugh McLean</i>, Director, Partnerships, Open Society Foundation (OSF) (tbc)
10.10 – 10.35	<p>Global and thematic indicators for SDG4-Education 2030 and monitoring mechanisms Moderator: <i>Mr Jordan Naidoo</i>, Director, Division for Education 2030 Support and Coordination, UNESCO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ms Silvia Montoya</i>, Director, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) • <i>Mr Manos Antoninis</i>, Senior Policy analyst, Global Education Monitoring Report, UNESCO
10.35 – 11.00	<p>Governance, coordination and partnerships – Regional mechanisms and strategies and the global education agenda Moderator: <i>Mr David Atchoarena</i>, Director, Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, UNESCO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mr Youri Devuyt</i>, Senior Expert, Europe 2020, Investment Plan, Education and Training 2020 Unit, European Commission • <i>Mr Matthew Johnson</i>, Director, Directorate of Democratic Citizenship and Participation, Council of Europe
11.00 – 11.30 Coffee break	
Parallel break-out sessions on implementation modalities: implications for aid; monitoring and reporting; global and regional collaboration and partnerships	
11.30 – 12.30	<p>Implications of the new education agenda from an aid perspective (Room XI) Moderator: <i>Mr Keith Lewin</i>, Professor of International Education, University of Sussex</p> <p>Global and thematic indicators for SDG4-Education 2030 and monitoring mechanisms (Room IX) Moderator: <i>Mr Jordan Naidoo</i>, Director, Division for Education 2030 Support and Coordination, UNESCO</p>

	<p>Governance, coordination and partnerships - Regional mechanisms and strategies and the global education agenda (Room VIII)</p> <p>Moderator: <i>Mr David Atchoarena</i>, Director, Division for Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems, UNESCO</p>
12.30 – 14.00	Lunch break
<p>Session IV: Recommendations from Break-out Sessions; Discussion of the Outcome Document of the Meeting and Adoption</p>	
14.00 – 14.30	<p>Presentation of 2 -3 key recommendations from each break out session (24 and 25 October)</p> <p>Rapporteurs of the break-out sessions</p>
14.30 – 15.00	Discussion on key inputs to the outcome document
15.00 – 16.00	Coffee break
16.00 – 17.00	<p>Moderator: <i>Mr Qian Tang</i>, Assistant-Director-General for Education, UNESCO</p> <p>Presentation and discussion of the draft outcome document and adoption</p>
17.00	Closing

Overview of Global and Regional Follow-Up, Review and Reporting on the SDGs and Coordination of SDG4-Education 2030

SDG Follow-up and Review and Global Reporting

The UN Secretary-General's report [Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level](#) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Jan 2016)² made several proposals on how to follow-up and review the new agenda.

Review and follow-up of SDGs should be based on **regular, voluntary and inclusive country-led reviews of progress** at the national level feeding into reviews at the regional and global levels. **Regional reviews** are conducted to provide a critical overview of progress and major policy issues in each region. The regional forums on sustainable development have an important role and could help bring together existing review mechanisms. Regional review outcomes would need to be discussed in a part of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). The **HLPF** is the central body at the global level for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It will oversee a network of follow-up and review processes. The HLPF would meet (i) **every four years at the level of Heads of State and Government** under the auspices of the UN General Assembly and (ii) **every year under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)** to review progress, provide political leadership and strategic guidance and advice on the implementation of the goals. **There will be Thematic Reviews:** A cross-cutting theme will be selected for each HLPF. In addition, the HLPF will consider inputs from other intergovernmental bodies and forums, relevant UN entities, regional processes, major groups and other stakeholders. It will allow intergovernmental forums to contribute to the work of the HLPF on any theme and alert it about emerging issues or gaps. **Global SDG progress reporting:** The process of reporting will be similar to that of the MDGs, with two types of reports foreseen: (i) A UN Secretary-General report to the UNGA as specified in the 2030 Agenda, and (ii) A 'glossy' report intended for communication and advocacy purposes. In addition to the Sustainable Development Goals progress reports, the **Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR)** will be a tool to inform the high-level political forum and strengthen the science-policy interface. It will be supported through an independent group of scientists as well as a UN Task Team.

Member States have adopted a **resolution on 'Follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level'** (A/70/L.60).³ It stipulates that for the purposes of the thematic reviews of progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the HLPF, the sequence of themes for each four-year cycle of the forum shall reflect the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the Sustainable Development Goals and the three dimensions of sustainable development, including cross-cutting issues as well as new and emerging issues, and will serve as the framework for reviewing all 17 Goals. **For the HLPF under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, the themes shall be: (a) For 2017: "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world"; (b) For 2018: "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies"; (c) For 2019: "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality"**. The HLPF under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, without prejudice to the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the Sustainable Development Goals, will discuss a set of Goals and their interlinkages,

² Available in the six UN languages.

³ Final resolution still to be published.

including, if appropriate, with other Goals, at each session representing the three dimensions of sustainable development, with a view to facilitating an in-depth review of progress made on all Goals over the course of a four-year cycle, with means of implementation, including with respect to Goal 17, reviewed annually. **The sets of goals to be reviewed are as follows: (a) In 2017: Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 9 and 14; (b) In 2018: Goals 6, 7, 11, 12 and 15; (c) In 2019: Goals 4, 8, 10, 13 and 16.** ECOSOC will ensure the alignment of its annual main themes with those of the HLPF in order to foster coherence.

The **2016 HLPF** focused on the theme ‘Ensuring that no one is left behind’. 22 states took part in the 2016 national reviews.⁴ The Ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2016 session of the Economic and Social Council and the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development emphasises commitment to ‘a world with universal literacy and with equitable and universal access to quality education at all levels’ (§6) and states that ‘Women and girls should enjoy equal access to quality education at all levels’ (§10). Several side-events on education were organized during the HLPF which included a high-level breakfast event entitled *SDG 4 – Education 2030: What policies and data to ensure that no one is left behind?* featuring the Director-General of UNESCO, the Prime Minister of Norway, the President of ECOSOC, the Director-General of ILO, the CEO of GPE, the Minister of Education of Bolivia, the PR of Tanzania, UIS and UNICE. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics and UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report & BE2 Education in Emergencies and Crises Working Group organized the side event: *Out-of-school, out of sight? How to reach millions of children and youth denied education opportunities, including in emergency and crises contexts.*

Global Coordination of SDG4-Education 2030

The global coordination mechanism of SDG4-Education 2030, working within the wider 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development architecture, is the totality of the relevant structures and processes, including the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, the Global Education Meetings (GEMs), high-level meetings, regional meetings and the Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education for All (CCNGO).

The SDG–Education 2030 Steering Committee, convened by UNESCO, constitutes the main global multi-stakeholder coordination mechanism of the new global education agenda. The primary objective of the Steering Committee is to support Member States and partners to achieve SDG 4 and the education-related targets in other goals of the overall 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As outlined in the SDG4-Education 2030 Framework for Action, the Steering Committee is composed of 34 members representing a majority from Member States, as well as co-convening agencies, OECD and GPE, regional organizations, teacher organizations and civil society networks. In principle, individuals participate in the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee on behalf of their regional groups. All members are designated by their respective constituencies, represent them and are accountable to them.

At its first meeting, the Steering Committee (Paris, 25-26 May 2016) agreed on its mandate and adopted its terms of reference, confirming the broad multi-stakeholder representation and electing the Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs. Following initial discussions on priority actions to support the effective

⁴ For the full list of countries, please see: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2016>

implementation of SDG4, the Secretariat is currently developing a draft roadmap to be further refined and adopted at the next meeting of the Steering Committee, before the end of 2016.

Furthermore, the Coordination Group for the CCNGO met on 23 and 24 May 2016 to revisit the role of the CCNGO in light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Financing

The Financing for Development Process: The Addis Ababa Action Agenda adopted at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Abba, 13-16 July 2015) provides a new global framework for financing sustainable development. It encourages countries to consider setting nationally appropriate spending targets for quality investments in essential public services for all, including education (§12). Countries agreed to scale up investments and international cooperation to allow all children to complete free, equitable, inclusive and quality early childhood, primary and secondary education (§78). Likewise, it was agreed to scale up investment in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education, and enhance technical, vocational and tertiary education and training, ensuring equal access for women and girls; as well as to enhance cooperation to strengthen tertiary education systems, and aim to increase access to online education (§119). The follow-up of the Financing for Development process is ensured through regular ECOSOC fora on Financing for Development. A UN Interagency Task Force on Financing for Development has also been set up.

The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity is a major new global initiative engaging world leaders, policy makers and researchers to develop a renewed and compelling investment case and financing pathway for achieving equal educational opportunity for children and young people. The Commission brings together the best research and policy analysis on the actions necessary to increase investment in concrete, relevant learning outcomes that have a positive impact on economic and social development. While the entire education system will be considered starting in the early years, the Commission will pay particular attention to the provision of basic education and its role in improving life chances and generating equal opportunities for young people to access further education, enter the workforce and engage in society. The Commission aims to secure increased, more effective investments and contribute to the mobilization of new partnerships to achieve these aims, particularly in middle-income and low-income countries. The Commission issued its report [The Learning Generation: Investing in education for a changing world](#) and submitted it to the UN Secretary-General on 18th September 2016.

In the report, the Commission makes recommendations on improving the performance of education systems; innovation; inclusion and increasing and diversifying finance, including increasing financing through multilaterals.

‘Education cannot wait’ fund: The 2015 Oslo Summit on Education for Development called for the creation of a joint global effort to mobilise collective action and significant funding for education in emergencies. In the lead-up to the first ever World Humanitarian Summit, repeated calls have been made for education and learning to be central to humanitarian action, and for guarantees that no child’s right to education be disrupted or interrupted by conflict or disaster. The Education Cannot Wait Fund, launched at the World Humanitarian Summit, was developed in response to these calls to better meet the educational needs of 75 millions of children and young people worst affected by crises and conflict around the world. It is the first global fund to prioritise education in humanitarian

action. By bringing together public and private partners, Education Cannot Wait will leverage additional finance and catalyse new approaches to funding and innovation to deliver education in emergencies and protracted crises.

Education at the 70th UNGA

Several side events on Education were organized during the 70th UN General Assembly (UNGA). The Global Education Report 2016 'Education for people and planet: Creating sustainable futures for all' and the report of the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity were launched, for example. During the General Assembly the first face to face meeting of the High Level Steering Group of the Education Cannot Wait Fund agreed an initial \$42 million investment from the fund. New pledges totaling USD 116.2 million were announced. During the UNGA, education in emergencies and education for refugees featured high on the agenda. President Barack Obama hosted a Leaders' Summit on the Global Refugee Crisis on the margins of UNGA, which also addressed education.

Introduction to the thematic discussion on Quality of Education and Learning Outcomes for All

Introduction

With the adoption of the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda, a universal commitment has been made to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all. In particular, three targets specify that all children, youth and adults must have access to quality education: in early childhood development, care and pre-primary education (Target 4.2); in primary and secondary education (Target 4.1); and in technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university (Target 4.3).

Other targets cover explicitly particular aspects of quality, notably those referring to: content of education (Target 4.7); learning environments (Target 4.a); and teachers (Target 4.c). The strive towards equity (Target 4.5) is also an essential aspect of quality education.

Finally, there is a clear focus on the acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills and other learning outcomes in both the targets and the global indicators proposed for: primary and secondary education (Target 4.1), readiness for school (Target 4.2); skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship (Target 4.4), youth and adult literacy and numeracy (Target 4.6); and skills for sustainable development and global citizenship (Target 4.7).⁵

What are the components of quality education and how are they monitored?

Building on the 2005 *EFA Global Monitoring Report*, **Figure 1** provides a general **framework** for discussions on education quality that can apply across education levels: *learners* need to be ready to learn; *systems* need to be supportive; conditions in *school and classroom settings* need to be appropriate (for example, in terms of well prepared and motivated teachers, teaching and learning processes and material inputs available). These should lead to improved *outcomes* both for individuals and the society as a whole. It is important for quality not to be equated just with learning outcomes.

Moreover, these relationships need to be interpreted in light of the general economic, political and social *context*.⁶ Context is also important in the sense that views differ about the main determinants of quality education and the most effective policy levers. However, some consensus does emerge, as selected examples at different levels of education show.

In the case of **primary and secondary education**, studies of the impact of good teaching practices on learning outcomes in European and North American countries indicate that teachers who improved learning 'built relationships with their students ... helped students to have different and better strategies or processes to learn the subject ... and demonstrated a willingness to explain material and help students with their work'.⁷ Teachers who set high expectations for students, do not discriminate

⁵ Consult the [SDG4-Education 2030 Framework for Action](#) for the full list of associated targets and indicators.

⁶ UNESCO (2016) *Global Education Monitoring Report: Education for People and Planet. Creating Sustainable Futures for All*. Paris, UNESCO.

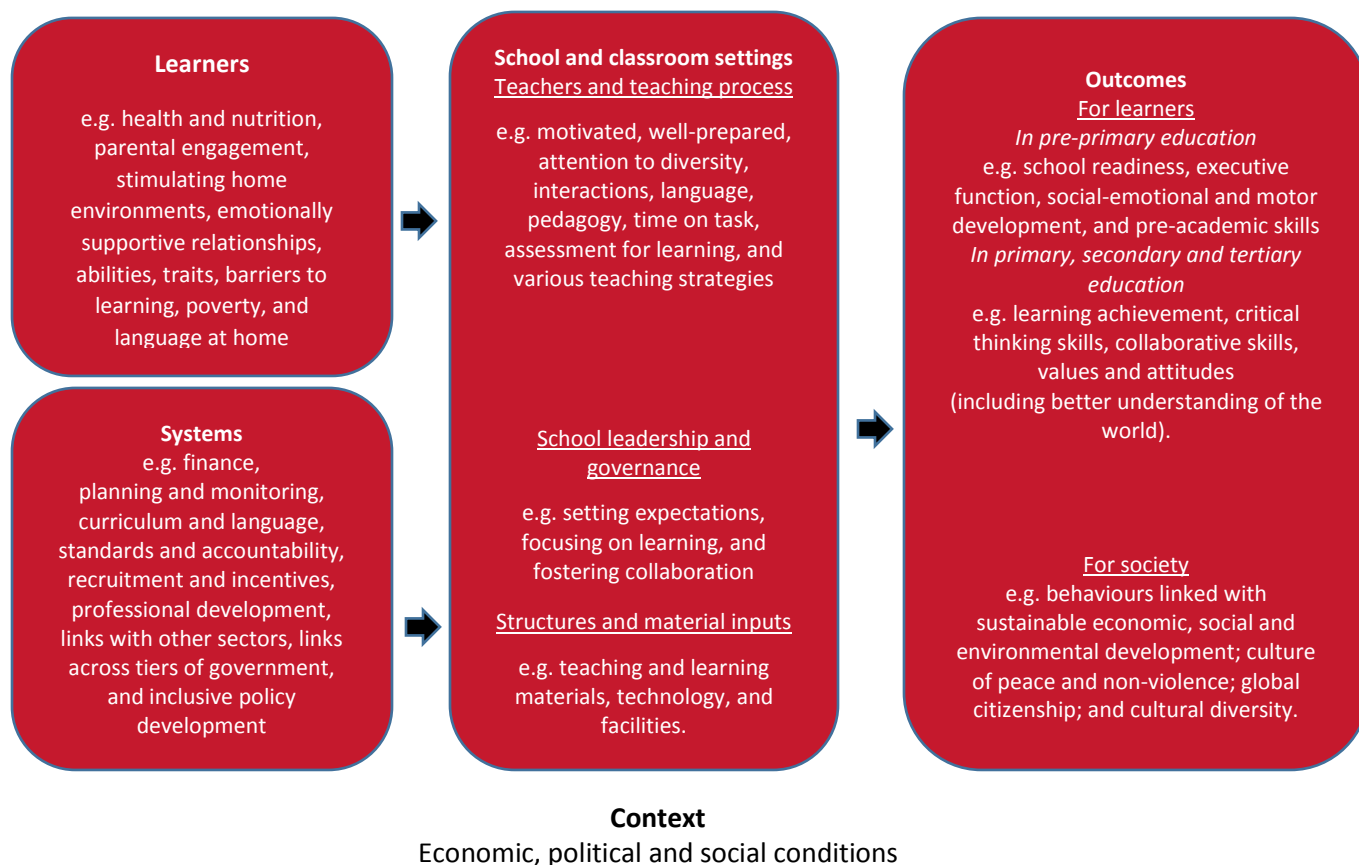
⁷ Hattie, J. (2009) *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*. Abingdon, UK, Routledge

among them, ask them to learn from one another and provide feedback are associated with improved learning.

In the case of **early childhood education**, the International Step by Step Association (ISSA), a non-government network of professionals especially active in Europe and Central Asia, has identified principles that underpin teaching practices of high quality. They cover seven domains: interactions; family and community; inclusion, diversity, and values of democracy; assessment and planning; teaching strategies; learning environment; and professional development.⁸ Perhaps the most critical element of process quality is the interaction between teachers and children, its nature and depth, and the extent to which interactions enable children to be autonomous and stimulated.

In the case of **adult education**, several quality frameworks have been proposed by international organizations.⁹ These cover aspects such as: the extent to which guidance and counselling are provided; equity considerations; flexibility of provision; recognition, validation and accreditation of learning; quality assurance and qualification frameworks; monitoring and evaluation; adult educators; financial provisions; and coordination between different agencies and providers.

Figure 1. A framework for discussing issues of education quality



⁸ ISSA. 2010. *Competent Educators of the 21st Century: Principles of Quality Pedagogy*. Riga, International Step by Step Association.

⁹ Borkowsky, A. (2013) *Monitoring Adult Learning Policies: A Theoretical Framework and Indicators*, OECD Education Working Paper 88; World Bank (2013) *What matters for workforce development: a framework and tool for analysis*, SABER Working Paper 6; European Commission / ICF (2015) *An in-depth analysis of adult learning policies and their effectiveness in Europe*.

Across education levels, the target for qualified **teachers** brings attention to evidence from the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), which shows that continuous and effective professional learning and development, peer networks, and autonomy work together to make student learning happen.¹⁰ However, teachers often lack the support they need to do this in a balanced fashion.

Despite the fact that education quality has so many dimensions, **monitoring frameworks** tend to focus on selected outcomes thanks to a proliferation of learning assessments that are often comparable across countries. Efforts are made to expand the range of education outcomes that are monitored, including practices that promote sustainability at the local, national and global level; skills for competently navigating a technology-intensive world; and political and civic engagement and intercultural dialogue. The currently proposed framework for monitoring SDG 4 introduces indicators on some of these broader learning outcomes, which have not been monitored before on a global scale. In addition, it includes a relatively limited number of indicators related to other aspects of quality, such as on equity, infrastructure and teachers.

The 2016 Education at a Glance report of the OECD confirms that SDG 4 is a universal goal that resonates across all countries, poor and rich alike. For that reason, consensus is needed on how progress should be measured, while ensuring that there are regional monitoring frameworks that are more relevant for the needs of the countries concerned.¹¹

Current status of European and North American countries

Member States of the European and North American region are generally known to provide high levels of quality education if viewed according to input factors such as amount spent on education, number of qualified teachers, availability of textbooks and teaching-learning material, or physical infrastructure, etc. At the same time, current and emerging trends indicate that the demand for qualified teachers is likely to increase in Europe and North America due to the aging teacher population¹² and high attrition rates, exemplified by large numbers of teachers in some of these countries leaving the profession within the first five years. Moreover, to the extent that quality focuses on educational outcomes, then quality of education remains a critical issue in nearly every high-income country. For example, results in TIMSS (2011) and PISA (OECD 2013) indicate that there is considerable room for improvement, especially among students from low-income households or minority groups.¹³

¹⁰ OECD (2013) TALIS 2013 Results: An International Perspective on Teaching and Learning. Paris, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

¹¹ The details by target and country are provided in the report *Education at a Glance*. UIS has conducted a similar exercise for the other regions of the world, and the results are presented in their report *Laying the Foundation to Measure SDG4*

¹² OECD data (Education at Glance 2016) shows that 31% of primary school teachers were at least 50 years old in 2014, 34% at lower secondary level and 38% at upper secondary level.

¹³ OECD (2010), 'PISA 2009 at a Glance', Paris: OECD Publishing, pp. 48-49. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/46660259.pdf>; IEA (2011) TIMSS & PIRLS, TIMSS 2011 International Results in Mathematics. International Study Center, Lynch Schools of Education, Boston College. available at: http://timssandpirls.bc.edu/timss2011/downloads/T11_IR_M_Chapter2.pdf

Indeed, the need to improve the quality of education has been expressed by European and North American Member States in the Education for All 2015 Regional Review of Europe and North America¹⁴, which also identified national priorities for 2030. The review shows that improving equity and quality of compulsory education is the first priority of all countries of Western Europe and North America as well as of Central and Eastern Europe. Moreover, the *Paris Statement*, which is the outcome document of the Regional Ministerial Conference on Education Post-2015 for European and North American States in February 2015, highlights quality education and improved learning outcomes as priorities for the region.¹⁵

With these points in mind, what are priority policy areas for improving the quality of education and learning in Western European and North American countries? Responses to this question would need to take into account that:

- the new agenda is based on the concept of lifelong learning, which is in line with the existing education agenda in much of the region;
- international migration, the refugee crisis, and globalization, continue to pile major challenges on education systems;
- the continuing push toward, as well as resistance to, accountability in education change expectations for all stakeholders

Guiding questions:

- How is information on learning outcomes from various national and international learning assessments being used to improve the quality of education?
- What are the prospects for assessing critical learning domains, such as communication, problem solving, teamwork, creativity, entrepreneurship, critical thinking, learning to live together, and respect for cultural diversity?
- Given our extensive research-based knowledge on what works, do education and professional development programmes in Europe and North America equip teachers with the skills they need to meet the diverse needs of learners, including those of migrants, refugees and learners with disabilities and special needs? What measures can governments in Europe and North America take to better support and empower teachers to improve professional practice, teacher motivation and retention?
- How well placed – and how well aligned – are curricula, textbook, teacher education and assessment policies to the challenges of the sustainable development agenda? How can countries learn from each other about what works?

¹⁴https://www.unesco.de/fileadmin/medien/Dokumente/Bildung/2015_UNESCO_EFA_2015_Regional_Review_Europe_and_North_America.pdf

¹⁵ See: http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/ED_new/Paris-Statement.pdf

Introduction to the thematic discussion on Equity, inclusion and gender equality

Context

The new vision of the global education agenda as set forth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development assigns a critical importance to equity, inclusion and gender equality. The Education 2030 Framework for Action, committed to by the international community in November 2015 to accompany the agenda, recognizes that equity, inclusion and gender equality are inextricably linked to the right to education for all and urges all governments and development partners to address all forms of inequality and disparity, exclusion and marginalization as well as interrelated and intersectional challenges faced by people irrespective of their “sex, age, race, colour, ethnicity, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property of birth, as well as persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples, and children and youth, especially those in vulnerable situations or other status” in having access to and participation in inclusive, equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities (Article 5, Education 2030 Framework for Action).

In this way, the discussion on these issues for the realization of the new education agenda has been reflected both as an overarching issue that cuts across all SDG4 targets and as an explicit policy domain as specified in target 4.5 which aims to eliminate gender disparities and ensure more equitable access to all levels of education and vocational training for vulnerable populations. They are not simply about ensuring equal access to and completion of education cycles or “providing equal distribution of educational resources to all pupils and students”¹⁶, but also ensuring that the content and support in the learning processes can be adapted to learners’ needs¹⁷, giving them the opportunity to achieve their full learning and development potential through a humanistic approach that also addresses the need for respecting diversity, international solidarity and shared responsibility for a sustainable future.¹⁸

Key issues

Despite converging trends towards high rates of participation in pre-primary, upper secondary and higher education in Europe and North America as compared to other regions of the world during the 2000-2015 period, inequality and exclusion remain key challenges for countries of this region. These issues are interrelated but also resulted from the distinctive development trends and characteristics of this region.

Widening inequality, with an increased concentration of income and wealth in the hands of the richest. Inequality in Europe and North America in the 21st century may be as strong as it was at the beginning of the 20th century, shortly before the First World War¹⁹. The rise in income inequality is reducing the ability of students from vulnerable families to participate and learn in primary and

¹⁶ Opheim, V. (2004) Equity in Education, Country Analytical Report Norway, Oslo: NIFU STEP pp.13-14

¹⁷ As stipulated in UNESCO’s Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education “inclusion is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children youth and adults through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing and eliminating exclusion within and from education” (UNESCO 2009)

¹⁸ UNESCO (2015). Rethinking Education – Towards a global common good?, p.14

¹⁹ Thomas Piketty, *Le Capital au XXIe siècle*, Paris: Seuil, 2013.

secondary education, and the ability of their families to support their learning. It also affects higher education where many students and families risk becoming unaffordable for tuition as illustrated by the student loan crisis in the United States and controversies about the student loans system introduced in the United Kingdom.

Unequal and stagnated learning outcomes. The greater availability of data on learning outcomes and on youth and adult skills has revealed a number of gaps primarily related to insufficient educational outcomes in Europe and North America. Several countries have seen learning outcomes become more unequal and stagnated, or even decline (as illustrated, for instance, by 2012 PISA scores in mathematics). Young men represent a majority of young people who leave school early with low skills and/or no qualifications, yet young women still face gender-related barriers translating their educational achievement into professional success. Access to adult education remains limited overall, and very unequally distributed both between and within countries, bypassing the most disadvantaged.²⁰ In addition, other assessments suggest larger performance gaps linked to socio-economic status and ethnic background exist in Europe and in North America than in developing countries.²¹

Exclusion and marginalization associated with changing societal contexts. Early school leavers with low or no qualifications and the large share of adults who have low literacy and numeracy skills are the main reasons for these groups being excluded from society and from the labour market. Increases in unemployment, poverty and immigration caused by the financial, economic and social crisis that started in 2008 have compounded these challenges. Due to immigration, many children and youth risk being excluded because their home language differs from the medium of instruction in the host countries. Moreover, their learning needs, their relationship with teachers, and their prospects for learning and future employment in the new environment are often different from that offered by the host countries, thus making themselves vulnerable. In many countries, education policy making has been further constrained by fiscal austerity. The impact of family background on educational achievement remains strong, and the impact of achievement on labour market outcomes tends to increase in a context of rising income inequality coupled with declining demand for low-skilled workers. This puts pressure on schools as institutions which shape lifelong destinies²² and also promote respect for diversity, empathy, living together and inclusive treatment for all without distinction. The capacity of public institutions to provide quality education and training to all citizens over the next decade may be at stake.

Implications for national education policies and programmes

The new global education agenda (SDG 4 – Education 2030) includes a renewed focus on inclusion, equity and gender equality, which presents a number of implications for national education policies and programmes as follows:

²⁰ UNESCO (2015). Europe and North America - Education for All 2015 Regional Review

²¹ Ma X (2008), cited in EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009, Paris: UNESCO, p.113

²² François Dubet, Marie Duru-Bellat et Antoine Vêrétout, Les Sociétés et leur École : emprise du diplôme et cohésion sociale, Paris: Seuil, 2010.

Inclusive policy dialogue and formulation: A focus on equity implies inclusive policy dialogue that allows for diverse constituencies to have greater voice in decision-making processes and ensure the legitimacy of national education policy choices.

Targeted strategies: Ensuring equity, inclusion and gender equality will require well-designed strategies for targeting the groups that are most underserved, vulnerable and disadvantaged in terms of access to and participation in quality learning opportunities.

Monitoring: Monitoring progress towards SDG4–Education 2030 commitments from an equity lens will require having access to more reliable, timely and disaggregated data. It will also require strengthened capacity to analyse data on participation and learning outcomes at all levels.

Guiding questions for the discussion:

- What are the specific challenges the new global education agenda presents to the region in terms of equity, inclusion and gender equality?
- What are the priority areas for policy to address in this regard?
- How can progress in improving equity, inclusion and gender equality be monitored and assessed?

Introduction to the thematic discussion on Skills and Competencies for Life and Work in a Lifelong Learning Perspective

Introduction

Many of the challenges currently faced by the international community, such as high youth unemployment rates, the shift to green and digitised economies and societies and the emergence of new occupations and skills and the rapid transformation of existing ones, the explosion in knowledge and technology, the introduction of new ways of organising the workplace call for appropriate changes in the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system.

In this context, TVET is expected to address multiple demands of an economic, social and environmental nature by helping youth and adults develop the skills they need for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship, promoting equitable, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, and supporting transitions to sustainable and climate resilient societies.

SDG4-Education 2030 accordingly devotes considerable attention to technical and vocational skills development, specifically regarding equal access to affordable quality TVET; acquisition of technical and vocational skills for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship; elimination of gender disparity and ensuring access for the vulnerable, as expressed in targets 4.3, 4.4 and 4.6²³

Youth skills development and transitions to the world of work

The labour market position of young people in European and North American countries has been particularly impacted by the changes and shifts outlined above. Youth unemployment rates are persistently high (e.g. ca. 19% on average in the European Union), job seekers and job-holders are experiencing prolonged periods of insecurity, and wage levels in the youth labour market are deteriorating. In the European Union and the United States an average of 14% of 15-29-year-olds are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs). For the young people who experience such fragile labour markets, there are likely to be negative effects on their subsequent careers, which may exacerbate, in the long-term, problems of social integration and social cohesion.

The overall unemployment rate in the EU-28 reached 9.4 % in 2015, decrease of 0.8 percentage points compared with 2014. In the United States the unemployment rate fell for the fifth year in a row, from 6.2 % in 2014 to 5.3 % in 2015²⁴. Despite high unemployment and weak prospects for economic growth in some countries, labour market bottlenecks are already visible for some occupations. In many countries unemployment, in particular of youth, coexists with unfilled vacancies (e.g. according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were around 5.9 million job opening in the

²³ Target 4.3: By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.

Target 4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

Target 4.5: By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.

²⁴ See: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics

United States in July 2016 while hiring reached only 5.2 million)²⁵, suggesting that firms may be having difficulty in finding qualified employees and indicating structural imbalances between skills supply and demand.

These realities challenge decision makers to reconsider existing education and training systems. There is an acute need to identify policy options that effectively enlarge the relevant skill sets of youth, improve learning pathways for successful education to work transitions, and enhance adult up-skilling and reskilling. Reducing the disjuncture between the qualifications and credentials supplied by education and training systems and the required skills and competencies in the current labour market is particularly important. Finding ways to invest in youth and adult skill acquisition during times of tight budgets is not easy. Nevertheless, many European and North American countries have decided to place labour market relevant education at the centre of their policy strategies for economic recovery and sustainability. In particular, programmes in TVET at all levels have become a key aspect of Europe's response to the economic and youth unemployment crisis. For instance, the European Commission has recently adopted a new Skills Agenda for Europe to make sure that people develop the skills necessary for the jobs of today and tomorrow. The Agenda makes a number of concrete recommendations for action, including 'making Vocational Education and Training a first choice by enhancing opportunities for VET learners to undertake a work based learning experience and promoting greater visibility of good labour market outcomes of VET'²⁶. In the United States, last July, President Obama proposed the American Graduation Initiative to invest in community colleges. The Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act includes \$2 billion over four years for community college and career training. These resources will help community colleges and other institutions develop, improve, and provide education and training, suitable for workers who are eligible for trade adjustment assistance. The Obama administration's agenda is to build highly skilled workforce that is crucial for success in the 21st century²⁷.

Adult up-skilling and reskilling in fast changing labour markets

Not only do TVET policies speak to the challenges of youth employability and unemployment, but they also address the consequences of ageing labour forces in the region and rapidly changing skill needs. Well-designed TVET systems can enable adult workers to keep their skills up-to-date, improve their productivity, and thereby contribute to extended careers of productive employment. They may also represent an important facet in the broader strategy to develop a greener and more sustainable economy. In this context, the most pressing policy challenge in the region is to support workers, especially low-skilled workers. For instance, in EU-28, unemployment levels of people with low educational attainment were at 17.4 %, compared with 5.6 % for people aged 15 to 74 with a tertiary education and around one in five adults have low literacy and numeracy skills, and nearly one in three have very low or no ICT skills²⁸. In fact, adults with the greatest education and training needs have the least opportunity to benefit from lifelong learning which makes widening access to lifelong learning opportunities a key policy priority.

²⁵ See: <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/jolts.pdf>

²⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1223&langId=en>

²⁷ See: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/higher-education/building-american-skills-through-community-colleges>

²⁸ See: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/179EN.pdf

Key components of TVET and skills development strategies

In sum, the fundamental challenge for policy-makers in the region is to develop an over-arching lifelong learning policy framework, which improves the linkages between education and training and employment and widen access to learning opportunities. More effective policy interventions in this area are thought to better serve the needs of citizens, enterprises, and society by easing access to the labour market and providing opportunities to update individuals' skills and competences. Success will depend on both the political will of the Member States and the capacity of the private sector to create learning opportunities for young people and adults.

Combining short- and long-term considerations is a way of developing TVET systems' agility and relevant policy responses in the face of changing and sometimes unanticipated future developments. Addressing immediate youth unemployment challenges goes hand-in-hand with the need for attractive and flexible education and training pathways that recognise and validate non-formal and informal learning and that offer opportunities for all, and allow combining different types and levels of education and training throughout life.

Guiding questions for the discussion:

- What are the implications of targets 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 for European and North American countries?
- What concrete actions can be taken to achieve these targets? Which policy area is most important (e.g. legislation, policies and plans, governance, financing, qualifications and curriculum; teacher training; recognition of prior learning; assessment and quality assurance; and monitoring frameworks)?
- What policy measures can be taken to improve youth employability?
- What policy measures can be taken to address the issues facing the most disadvantaged groups, such as people with disabilities, NEETs, low-skilled adults, rural communities or the long-term unemployed?
- What type of programmes exist for adults who do not have the skills or qualifications that match labour market and societal requirements? What do countries do to encourage adults to return to education and training?

Introduction to the thematic discussion on Adult Literacy, Skills and Lifelong Learning

Introduction

Socio-demographic changes and economic transformations have consistently driven policy debates on the new skills needed in society. Globalization, rapid technological change, highly mobile populations and, more recently, the financial and migration crises, have spurred governments to address the learning needs with regard to basic and complex skills among their youth and adult populations. One increasingly recognized concern is low levels of youth and adult literacy skills.

In Europe, close to 70 million Europeans lack basic reading and writing skills. Even more cannot use numbers or digital tools properly in everyday life. Without these skills they are at high risk of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion (European Commission, 2016)²⁹. Foundational skills include the literacy and numeracy skills necessary for decent work. They are also needed to obtain further education and training as well as for participation in communities and societies. People who cannot read, write or do basic arithmetic have fewer opportunities for gainful employment, entrepreneurial activity or civic participation. The Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education consequently defines three key areas of learning and skills, i.e. literacy and basic skills, continuing training and professional development, and active citizenship, through what is variously known as community, popular or liberal education (UNESCO, 2016:7³⁰). Foundational skills obtained at secondary school level are essential for career advancement, active citizenship and safe choices about personal health (UNESCO, 2015:112³¹). However, on average around one quarter of Europeans in the 25-64 age group do not have an upper secondary education qualification. In some countries the share is over 40% and up to 57%. Moreover, education outcomes are not evenly distributed across population sub-groups: non-EU ('third-country') nationals residing in the EU are more likely than EU nationals to have low levels of basic skills (European Commission, 2016³²).

Youth and adult literacy and foundational skills in Europe and North America and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 aims at “inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all”. While the lifelong learning perspective of SDG4-Education 2030 suggests a holistic and sector-wide approach to education, youth and adult literacy and learning is explicitly addressed in targets 4.3, 4.4, 4.6 and 4.7.: a) Target 4.3 includes the need to provide learning opportunities for youth and adults; b) Target 4.4 emphasizes skills acquisition beyond work-specific skills; c) Target 4.6 focuses on the acquisition of adequate levels of proficiency in literacy and numeracy skills; and d) Target 4.7 addresses skills required in a range of areas such as education for sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, peace and global citizenship (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2016:134).

²⁹ European Commission (2016), *A Skills Guarantee* ' <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1224>

³⁰ UNESCO (2016) Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education, Paris: UNESCO

³¹ UNESCO (2015) Education for All Global Monitoring Report. *Education for All 2000-2015: Achievement and Challenges*. Paris: UNESCO

³² European Commission (2016) *Proposal for a Council Recommendation on establishing a Skills Guarantee*. Strasbourg, COM (2016) 382/2 <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1224&newsId=2556&furtherNews=yes>

As literacy and basic skills will play a direct or indirect role in achieving many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Global Alliance for Literacy within the framework of lifelong learning (GAL), led by UNESCO, will encourage policy coherence and take action to promote the mobilization of resources, the availability of high-quality and timely data through improved assessment and monitoring, the effective utilization of information and communications technology, and the creation of multi-stakeholder partnerships at regional and national levels. The aim of GAL is to improve literacy for sustainable development through concrete action and tangible outcomes.

Youth and adult literacy and foundation skills in Europe and North America

Countries in Europe and North America have reached the universal spread of schooling long ago and with this high levels of illiteracy are consigned to the distant past. Yet direct assessments indicate that as many as one in five adults in the high income countries, equivalent to around 160 million adults, have poor literacy skills. This means, they are unable to use reading, writing and calculation effectively in their everyday lives.³³ While national literacy assessments are not comparable from country to country, they confirm that poor literacy skills are a wider problem than is often recognized. In Germany, for example, a 2010 assessment found that 14.5% of the population aged 18-64, or about 7.5 million persons, were functionally illiterate³⁴. Similar surveys in France (2004/05)³⁵ and Scotland (2009)³⁶ estimated that 9% of the French population aged 18 to 65 and 8% of the Scottish population aged 16 to 65 were at the lowest literacy levels. Poor literacy skills are more likely to be found among the disadvantaged populations. Surveys in Canada and in the United States show particularly low literacy skills among indigenous populations, while in Europe Roma are affected by poor literacy skills.³⁷

International surveys of adult literacy skills provide cross-country comparable data. In 2013, the OECD released the first results of the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC) collected in 2011 and 2012 from 166,000 adults aged 16-65 in 24 countries, including 16 of Europe and North America. The survey focused on measuring literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills as relevant to working in 'technology-rich environments'. The survey found that one in six adults have poor literacy skills, and one in five have poor numeracy skills.³⁸

The report further showed that inequalities are much larger within countries than between them. Consequently, governments should not only be concerned with the average score of their country, but also ensure that skills gaps are reduced. Categories significantly more likely to have low skills include adults with educational attainment below upper secondary level, adults whose parents had low educational attainment, workers in elementary occupations, immigrants with a foreign-language background, as well as older adults. The educational attainment gap is extreme in France and in the United States, where adults with less than upper secondary education score just slightly above Level 1 on average, while those with tertiary education score in the top of the range of Level 3.

³³ UNESCO (2010), Education for All Global Monitoring Report. *Reaching the Marginalized*. Paris: UNESCO

³⁴ Grotlüschen, A. and Riekman, W. (2011) leo. – Level One Study: Literacy of Adults at the Lower Rungs of the Ladder. Hamburg, Germany. Universität Hamburg. (Press brochure)

³⁵ ANLCI (2008) Illiteracy. The Statistics – Analysis by the National Agency to Fight Illiteracy of the IVQ Survey Conducted in 2004-2005 by INSEE. Lyon, ANLCI

³⁶ St Clair, R. et al (2010) Scottish Survey of Adult Literacies 2009: Report of Findings. Edinburgh, UK, Scottish Government Social Research

³⁷ UNESCO (2012), Education for All Global Monitoring Report. *Youth and Skills: Putting Education to Work*. Paris: UNESCO

³⁸ OECD (2013), *OECD Skills Outlook 2013: First Results from the Survey of Adult Skills*, Paris: OECD Publishing.

Adults with poor skills face multiple sources of disadvantage. They are more likely to be out of the labour force, or to be unemployed; those employed receive lower wages. They also find it more difficult to participate in society, e.g. they are more likely to have lower levels of trust in others, to believe that they have little impact on the political process and not to participate in associative or volunteer activities. Finally, they are more likely to be in poor health.

The PIAAC report also shows a clear relationship between the extent of participation in organized adult learning activities and average proficiency in key information-processing skills. Those adults who engage more often in literacy- and numeracy-related activities and use ICTs more have greater proficiency in literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills. The results from the second round of the PIAAC survey (2012 -2016) covering 33 countries (out of which 7 are not from the Europe and North America Region) show similar trends: in almost all countries, a sizable proportion of adults (18.5% on average) has poor reading skills and poor numeracy skills (22.7% on average), and around one in four adults has no or only limited experience with computers (OECD, 2016)³⁹. The 3rd Global Report on Adult Learning and Education⁴⁰, recently published by UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, which is monitoring the progress in member states, a majority of the respondents from the North America and Europe Region (86%) indicated that literacy and basic skills are a top priority for Adult Learning and Education Programmes. Further, the Report shows that in North America and Europe, the participation rate in adult learning was reported to have increased since 2009 in 65% of the responding countries while in 30% it stayed the same (total of responses from that region to this question: 20)⁴¹. 58% of the (19) responding countries from the region reported significant innovations to increase access and participation in adult learning and education programmes since 2009. Those population groups that are most disadvantaged and with the lowest levels of skills, are particularly difficult to reach with literacy and skills programmes. It is therefore important to study carefully the factors that inhibit or prevent their participation and develop target-specific strategies as well as examples of innovative practice to distil the factors that boost participation particularly of vulnerable population groups.

Strategies to raise youth and adult literacy and foundational skills levels at regional level

In 2011, the Council of the European Union passed a resolution on a renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning, which aimed to raise adult literacy and numeracy levels and to broaden learning provision for Europeans with low basic and foundational skills. In light of the Report of the EU High-Level Group of Experts on Literacy⁴² which pointed out that the majority of 73 million adults (people aged between 25 and 64 years) with literacy problems have received at least compulsory schooling but emerged without sufficient competences in reading and writing, the Council resolved to develop ways of improving literacy programmes and to take measures to keep the literacy issue in the public eye. In June 2016, the European Commission launched a new Skills Agenda for Europe including a 'Skills Guarantee' to help adults acquire a minimum level of literacy, numeracy and digital skills and progress towards an upper secondary qualification⁴³. While the 'Skills Guarantee' targets individuals

³⁹ OECD (2016) *Skills Matter. Further Results from the Survey of Adult Skills*. OECD Publishing, Paris.

⁴⁰ UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (2016) *3rd Global Report on Adult Learning and Education. The Impact of Adult Learning and Education on Health and Well-Being; Employment and the Labour Market; and Social, Civic and Community Life*. UIL, Hamburg.

⁴¹ 5% did not know and in none of the 20 responding countries participation has decreased.

⁴² European Commission (2012), *ibid*.

⁴³ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1224>

above 25 years without upper secondary education, the 'Youth Guarantee' targets all young people under 25 years without employment including those with a need to strengthen basic skills⁴⁴.

Civil society organizations, such as the European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA), have proposed to increase investment in adult education as a strategy to tackle current challenges Europe is facing such as unemployment, growing xenophobia, migration, influx of refugees, demographic change, growing digitalisation, climate change, among others. In their 'Manifesto for Adult Learning in the 21st Century', EAEA makes a case for adult education as a "key tool" for achieving the Agenda 2030 and for the need to reduce the high number of people with low basic skills (EAEA, 2015⁴⁵). The Lifelong Learning Platform, in turn, has presented a position paper with proposals on how to integrate refugees and migrants through education (Lifelong Learning Platform, 2016⁴⁶). The Paper promotes a holistic inclusion strategy including lifelong learning opportunities.

Towards adult literacy and learning in a lifelong learning perspective

Lifelong learning is becoming increasingly important as a key organising principle for all forms of education and learning in a rapidly changing world. While learning is an absolute necessity for everyone, it is particularly important for disadvantaged individuals and groups who have been excluded from or have failed to acquire basic competencies through formal schooling. Learning spaces and environments, such as learning families, community learning centres, learning cities and regions, as well as public spaces such as parks, museums, must be made widely available as important settings for youths and adult learning including opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills.

The vision of lifelong learning supports the idea of building bridges between different components, actors, institutions, processes, life spheres and life phases to develop holistically designed learning systems.

There is a broad consensus that literacy and numeracy are crucial components of a set of essential, foundational or general skills and competencies for the 21st century. Literacy and numeracy, alongside with other basic or foundational skills, are situated at the heart of basic education. There is a global commitment to universalize quality basic education for all (primary and secondary education), which in the context of Europe and North America involves providing learning opportunities for all those millions of youth and adults who have not yet developed the competency levels that are expected at the successful completion of formal basic education.

Operationalizing the concept of lifelong learning does not fall exclusively within the remit of ministries of education. It requires an inter-sectorial approach traversing education, science, technology, family, employment, industrial and economic development, migration and integration, citizenship, social welfare and public finance. In fact, all sectors of society can make important contributions and should work collaboratively to create learning opportunities in all settings for people of all ages. This will support the ultimate goal to build coherent lifelong learning systems and learning societies.

⁴⁴ <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079>

⁴⁵ European Association for the Education of Adults (2015) *Manifesto for Adult Learning in the 21st Century*. Brussels.

⁴⁶ Lifelong Learning Platform (2016) *Integrating Refugees and Migrants through Education. Building Bridges in Divided Societies*. LLLPlatform Position Paper, September 2016.

Guiding questions for the discussion:

- What examples do we have of effective policy measures that can respond to the diversity of basic learning needs of youth and adults within the region?
- How can learning opportunities be made more accessible, flexible and relevant to meet the diversity of learning needs of the most marginalised groups within the region?
- What measures are required to secure long-term funding for basic youth and adult learning?
- How can systems of recognition and validation of learning be strengthened so as to ensure multiple entry points and flexible learning pathways in a lifelong perspective?
- What partnerships are required to build and sustain such systems?
- What examples of cost-effective tools do we have to measure proficiency levels of functional literacy and numeracy skills of youth and adults?

Introduction to the thematic discussion on Education for Refugees and Migrants

Introduction

Prolonged global mobility on a massive scale has led to migration being a high priority issue in the region. Recent UN data indicates that the number of international migrants reached 244 million in 2015, more than a staggering 40% increase from 2000. Of these, 65 million are forcibly displaced persons and over 20 million are refugees, of which nearly half are children.

The crisis in Syria, ongoing violence in Afghanistan and Iraq, and violence and poverty in African nations such as Eritrea and South Sudan are the source of much of the surge of movement of persons across borders. In Europe, Greece and Italy face a disproportionate number of arrivals. According to the UNHCR, over 800,000 refugees and migrants came via the Aegean Sea from Turkey into Greece in 2015 (accounting for 80 % of the people arriving irregularly in Europe by sea) while about 150,000 reached Italy⁴⁷. Millions have continued onto Germany, Sweden and other northern European countries to claim asylum.

Education for Refugees and Migrants and SDG4-Education 2030

Human mobility intersects and influences numerous areas of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals; it also has direct relevance for education targets 4.1, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7. Among forcibly displaced persons only 50% of children are in primary school, 25% of adolescents are in secondary school, and a meager 1% access higher education⁴⁸.

The Incheon Declaration states that ‘Furthermore, we note with serious concern that, today, a large proportion of the world’s out-of- school population lives in conflict-affected areas, and that crises, violence and attacks on education institutions, natural disasters and pandemics continue to disrupt education and development globally. We commit to developing more inclusive, responsive and resilient education systems to meet the needs of children, youth and adults in these contexts, including internally displaced persons and refugees. We highlight the need for education to be delivered in safe, supportive and secure learning environments free from violence. We recommend a sufficient crisis response, from emergency response through to recovery and rebuilding; better coordinated national, regional and global responses; and capacity development for comprehensive risk reduction and mitigation to ensure that education is maintained during situations of conflict, emergency, post- conflict and early recovery’ (Incheon Declaration, WEF 2015, para 11).

Much needs to be done to ensure education in conflict and post-conflict zones. Much also needs to be done for migrants and refugees who have fled or migrated to European and North American regions.

⁴⁷ UNHCR. 2016. Over one million sea arrivals reach Europe in 2015. Accessed at <http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2015/12/5683d0b56/million-sea-arrivals-reach-europe-2015.html>

⁴⁸ GEMR 2016. No more excuses: Provide education to all forcibly displaced people. Policy Paper 26. UNESCO: Paris.

Challenges

The sheer volume of international migration flows and the variety of migrants have significant implications for education systems at every level. For instance, the waves of migrant families with children can abruptly shift school demographics in receiving countries. This results in pronounced increases in the demand for schooling in terms of infrastructure, classroom capacity, and qualified teachers. It also results in more heterogeneous learning environments. And even if resources are plentiful, and the policy of integrating migrant children publically supported, the actual task of integrating, teaching and assessing students falls on educators who may face students unfamiliar with the language of instruction or have little to no experience with formal education. Thus, while diversity in classrooms has been found to have positive effects, such as improving cognitive development, it also creates a bevy of curricular and pedagogical challenges.

The shortage of teachers, a critical issue in both several European and North American states, is another key concern with UIS reporting that at current trends, 33 countries will not have enough teachers to provide every child with a primary education by 2030⁴⁹. When large influxes of migrant and refugee children enter a country, such as the over 325,000 school-aged children who reached Germany in 2015, fulfilling the need for tens of thousands of qualified teachers becomes an even more pressing challenge.

Migrant and refugee children and youth are a highly vulnerable group facing tremendous challenges from access to education to academic issues. Their issues must be considered in designing policies and practices designed to reach SDG goal 4 and its targets.

Issues to be considered in education for refugees and migrants

Refugees face many obstacles in accessing and integrating into education systems such as lack of documentation needed to receive recognition of prior learning. The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region was signed by all European Union member states in 1997. A key point of the Convention states: “All countries shall develop procedures to assess whether refugees and displaced persons fulfill the relevant requirements for access to higher education or to employment activities, even in cases in which the qualifications cannot be proven through documentary evidence.” However, many signatories still need to develop such procedures⁵⁰.

Many refugees have gaps in their learning resulting from extended interruptions in their schooling. For instance, a 2016 Save the Children study in Greece determined that child refugees in the country have been out of school for an average of one and a half years⁵¹. There is a need for efficient evaluation systems to assess the education level of arrivals and to create accredited accelerated programs for children and youth.

For refugees and migrants, language acquisition is a critical step toward communicating and engaging with host communities. The opportunities for education, employment, and social connections are all

⁴⁹ UIS 2016. Global Teacher Shortage Threatens Education 2030. Accessed at <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/world-teachers-day-2015.aspx>

⁵⁰ Council of Europe. 2016. Tackling Today's Challenges Together. Data cited from Survey presented to the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee on February 29, 2016. Accessed at http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/Source/resources/FSRefugees_en.pdf

⁵¹ Save the Children. 2016. Education Needs Assessment Greece. Accessed at <https://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/download.php?id=1399>

enhanced with growing verbal and written literacy. Since the majority of arrivals initially do not speak the language of their host country and the language of instruction in schools, it is a significant barrier to entering the local education system.

Disaggregated data of refugee and migrant children in country's Education Management and Information Systems is needed to provide information on learning outcomes needed to support decision making and planning in the future.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for youth and adults can develop skill sets. Although there has been an increase in such programs in the past year, additional TVET opportunities for newcomers are needed. The substance of TVET raises questions. For instance, should the training be directed to the labor market needs of the host country or on to refugees' and migrants own choice of vocation?

There is great potential for technology to support second language learning, subject area tutoring, participating in MOOCs and other online training. However, the provision of education online raises other issues. For instance, what can be done to ensure that the provision of education via technology does not come at the cost of reduced socialization needed for refugees' and migrants' effective integration into host societies?

Examples of Measures Taken

The European Commission's Education & Training Monitor assesses inequalities in education by including data / monitoring for migrant pupils. In addition, migrant and refugee students were made a priority for EU's member state working groups. In order to tacking radicalizing in school, the 2015 joint report of the EC called for the promotion of social inclusion and to strengthen cooperation in education and training.

In 2015, the European Commission surveyed university and organizations in order to share information on practices amongst member states. Two such examples are:

- 1) For refugees arriving without credentials, the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education has created a fast-track procedure for recognition of qualifications.
- 2) Blekinge Institute of Technology's project offers newly arrived refugees with an academic degree the possibility to obtain a Swedish university degree after having taken one or two courses at Swedish higher education institutions

Discussion questions:

- Which education policies and practices contribute to the successful integration of migrant and refugee children in schools and societies within European / North American contexts?
- What measures can be taken to address the shortage of teachers?
- How can education and training systems be adapted and developed to maximise migrant and refugee students' capacities and qualifications for (decent work, employment and entrepreneurship) sustainable livelihoods through formal and non-formal education?
- What is needed to include disaggregated data on refugee and migrant pupils in EMIS?
- There is a rise in xenophobia that can result in refugee and migrant children being verbally or physically attacked in schools. How can education systems, at all levels, be engaged to create safe and nurturing learning environments?

Introduction to the thematic discussion on Global Citizenship Education

Introduction

In the face of the current challenges facing humanity, it is becoming increasingly important to ensure that education transmits values of solidarity beyond national borders, empathy, a sense of belonging to a common humanity, care for the future of humanity and the planet, and knowledge and skills for learning to live together and for sustainable development. These objectives are at the core of Target 4.7, which promotes Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED). Target 4.7 calls on countries to “ensure that all learners are provided with the knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development”.

ESD and GCED are recognized as mutually reinforcing approaches, with commonalities and specificities. Both focus on relevant content of education in order to ensure that education helps build a peaceful and sustainable world. Both also emphasize the need to foster the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behaviours that allow individuals to take informed decisions and assume active roles locally, nationally and globally.

For the present regional consultation meeting for Europe and North America on SDG4, focus is placed on GCED and more in particular on learning to live together, tolerance, respect for cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue, and the prevention of violent extremism (PVE) through education.

Global Citizenship Education and the Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education

Global Citizenship Education (GCED) aims to empower learners to assume active roles to face and resolve global challenges and to become proactive contributors to a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure world.

Integrating GCED at the policy level and into education systems is important to equip future generations with the knowledge, values, attitudes and skills that are based on and instill respect for human rights, social justice, diversity, gender equality and that empower learners to learn to live together and contribute to building peaceful and tolerant societies. Through GCED, learners would acquire sets of skills which are critical to think and act responsibly, in compliance with human rights principles.

Recently, increasing attention is being paid to the prevention of violent extremism, rather than solely focusing on security issues, and calls have been made for educational interventions to prevent violent extremism and radicalization.

Education can provide the knowledge and understanding of local, national and global issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations; can ensure learners experience a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, based on

human rights and develop attitudes of empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity; and can ensure learning the skills required to effectively and responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world.

The call for promoting education as a tool to prevent violent extremism is evident in the following strategic documents:

- **UNESCO Executive Board Decision** in 2015, co-sponsored by 86 Member States, in which Member States expressed their collective commitment to PVE-E and asked UNESCO to enhance its work on PVE-E (197 EX/Decision 46);
- **Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism**, presented by the UN Secretary-General in December 2015 (A/70/674);
- **UN General Assembly Resolution on the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review** (A/RES/70/291, July 2016).
- **Strategic Framework for Education and Training 2020**, setting common EU objectives to address challenges in education and training systems and, **2015 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training** (2015/C 417/04).
- **Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions supporting the prevention of radicalization leading to violent extremism** (COM2016 379).
- **Paris Declaration on Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education**, European Commission (17 March 2015).

What needs to be done by countries?

International consensus has been achieved around the need for an increased and human-rights based engagement of the education sector in the prevention of violent extremism and concrete and comprehensive education sector responses to the threats of violent extremism.

The UNESCO International Conference on Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education: Taking Action, which took place in New Delhi in September 2016, organized by UNESCO Headquarters and the UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development, made it clear that the following five key approaches are crucial for comprehensive action by the education sector to prevent violent extremism: (i) policy for inclusion and diversity; (ii) pedagogy for resilience; (iii) safe and supportive school environments; (iv) identifying students at risk; and (v) building partnerships. To implement these approaches, it is crucial to build the capacities of policy makers and teachers, as well as mobilize youth.

Current challenges in Europe and North America

The Regional Ministerial Conference on Education post-2015 for European and North American States, held on 19-20 February 2015 in Paris, identified education for citizenship as a common concern, given recent events at the national, regional and international levels. Several Member States mentioned that there was a need for more citizenship and human rights education.

UNESCO undertakes several initiatives in the area of Global Citizenship Education linked to these concerns.⁵² The momentum for learning to live together in the region was also demonstrated by the Summit on Countering Violent Extremism hosted by the White House on 17-19 February 2016, the Geneva Conference on Preventing Violent Extremism, the Way Forward, held on 7-8 April 2016; the 25th Session of the Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education “Securing democracy through education”, organized by the Council of Europe in Brussels on 11-12 April 2016; and an event on Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education organized by Albania, Jordan and the Holy See in the margins of the 71st UN General Assembly.

Agreement was built on the need to address the challenges in implementing citizenship education at national, European and global levels, and to promote awareness raising campaigns against hate speech and discrimination and to ensure the social inclusion of children and young people at risk through education, training and de-radicalization programmes.

Measuring progress towards Target 4.7

UNESCO is supporting tracking progress on Target 4.7. The sixth consultation on the implementation of the *Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* has been designed in a way that national reports will provide data for the global indicator that has been established to measure the progress on Target 4.7.

The Recommendation, which was adopted in 1974, contains many core principles underlying SDG Target 4.7. Therefore, this mechanism will now be used to collect data from Member States on their progress towards 4.7.

UNESCO commissioned an analysis of country reports from previous reporting cycles of the 1974 Recommendation in light of Target 4.7. From those countries from Europe and North America reporting in 2012, 95% have included human rights and fundamental freedoms in national education policy (88% of all reporting countries), 100% reported these themes as mandatory in curriculum (compared to 86% globally), and 57% included them as mandatory in teacher education (compared to 54% globally).

Other key findings from this analysis reveal that there might be a shortage in teacher capacity on GCED. GCED its related themes are mandatory in the curriculum in 100% of reporting Member States from Europe and North America (86% for all reporting countries), but are only included in teacher education in 67% of reporting Member States (61% globally).

The UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report 2016: Education for people and planet conducted an analysis of 108 national curriculum frameworks or national education sector plans from 78 countries. The terms “human rights, rights, and responsibilities”, appeared in 88% of countries which were part of the analysis. Among the different concepts included in SDG Target 4.7, human rights is the most prevalent one in national curricula.

⁵²https://www.unesco.de/fileadmin/medien/Dokumente/Bildung/2015_UNESCO_EFA_2015_Regional_Review_Europe_and_North_America.pdf

In addition, UNESCO concluded an agreement with the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) to help monitor progress on Target 4.7. In this context, the IEA launched the 2019 International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) which will extend the country and thematic coverage of this study, by reporting on indicators of knowledge and understanding, skills, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors relating to ESD and GCED.

Guiding questions for the discussion:

1. What policies and strategies should countries put in place towards the education for global citizenship, and the prevention of violent extremism through education, peace and human rights education and other areas, fostering values related to learning to live together?
2. How can curricula and teacher training be improved to ensure the acquisition of competencies required for responsible and active citizenship in a plural and increasingly interconnected world?
3. How can existing frameworks for student assessment be enhanced or new ones developed to better capture the range of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes encompassed in the ambition of SDG target 4.7?

Introduction to the thematic discussion on Implications of the new education agenda from an aid perspective

The global community's new development goals include achieving universal pre-primary, primary and secondary education of good quality by 2030. For the world to reach that target, aid to education needs to rise considerably. Donor countries have the means to bridge the gap. But the latest data, from 2014, show that for several years aid to education has been stuck at a level far below what is needed.⁵³

The 2015 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report estimated that \$US39 billion a year will be required on average over the next 15 years to reach the global education goals, over and above what low and lower middle income countries can mobilise themselves. Low income countries alone need \$US21 billion a year. Yet when these estimates were made, aid for basic and secondary education in low income countries amounted to only US\$3 billion — one-seventh of what these countries need.

The entire global education financing gap could be filled if the countries that belong to the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and selected non-DAC donor countries (Brazil, China, India, Kuwait, Qatar, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates) dedicated 0.7% of their gross national income to aid – a longstanding target for international aid levels – and allocated 10% of their aid to basic and secondary education.

However, even among the 15 European Union member states who pledged in 2005 to allocate 0.7% of their gross national income to aid by 2015, only four do so: Denmark, Luxembourg, Sweden and the United Kingdom. And education's share of total aid continues to fall.

After rising rapidly in the 2000s, aid levels stalled in 2010 as a result of the financial crisis in high income countries, and have barely budged since then. This chapter, which reviews 2014 data on aid to education, shows that there is little sign of that situation changing. Around the world, especially in low income countries, millions of children and young people are paying the price, in years of lost or low quality schooling.

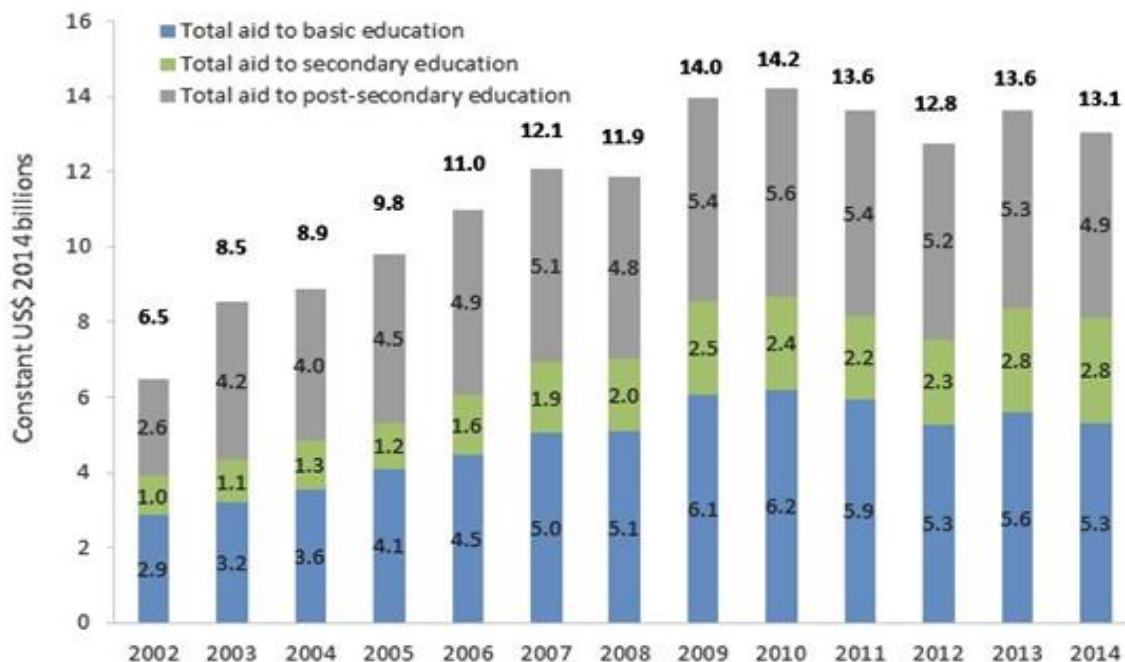
Aid to education fell in 2014

Total aid to education more than doubled in real terms between 2002 and 2010, when it reached US\$14.2 billion. Since 2010 it has stagnated. As of 2014, it was 8% below its 2010 peak of US\$13.1 billion (**Figure 1**).

Total aid to education fell by almost US\$600 million, or 4%, between 2013 and 2014, even though total aid levels increased by US\$10.1 billion over the same period. This shows that most donors are giving education a lower priority within their aid budgets. Education's share of total aid (excluding debt relief) fell from 10.2% in 2010 to 9.5% in 2013 and 8.2% in 2014.

⁵³ Note: Adapted from GEMR Policy Paper 25 (May 2016) "Aid to education stagnates, jeopardising global targets".

Figure 1: Aid to education fell by 4% between 2013 and 2014
Total aid to education disbursements, 2002 to 2014



Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report team analysis based on OECD Creditor Reporting System (2016)

While education aid from bilateral donors followed the overall trend, aid from multilateral donors rose. Total aid to education across bilateral donors fell by 9% or US\$945 million between 2013 and 2014. Three donors account for most of this drop: Japan, whose aid fell by US\$550 million, or 48%, the United Arab Emirates (down US\$529 million, or 74%) and the United Kingdom (down US\$208 million, or 13%). These reductions were partially countered by increases in aid from Australia (up US\$138 million, or 35%) and the United States (up US\$107 million, or 11%).

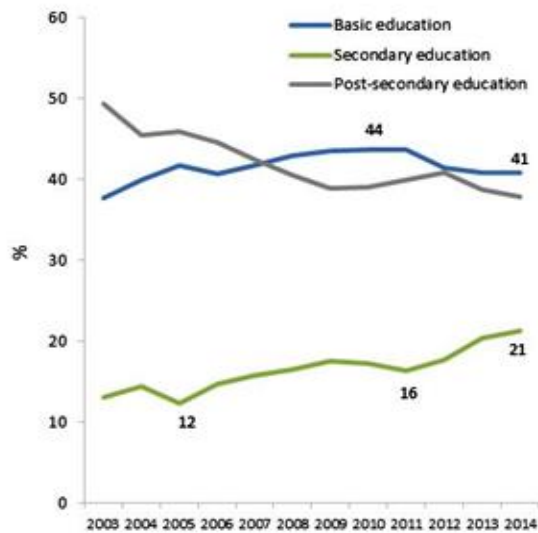
Conversely, multilateral donors increased their aid to education by 10% and now account for 29% of total aid to education, up from 25% in 2013. The World Bank increased its disbursements by US\$480 million, or 42%.

The share of basic education (which includes support to pre-primary and primary education as well as adult education and literacy programmes) in total aid to education in 2014 was 3 percentage points below the peak it reached in 2010. By contrast, secondary education's share increased from 12% in 2005 to 16% in 2010 and 21% in 2014. This suggests that aid to education priorities are gradually changing (**Figure 2**).

The United Kingdom and the World Bank reflect the average trend. But among the other top 10 donors, different trajectories can be observed. For example, the European Union and the Netherlands have decreased their relative aid to basic education in favour of post-secondary education. Australia, Norway and the United States have been increasing the share of their aid going to basic education. France, Germany and Japan maintain their high allocations to post-secondary education as share of total aid.

Figure 2: The share of basic education in total aid is still below its peak

Distribution of total aid to education by sector, 2003 to 2014



Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report team analysis based on OECD Creditor Reporting System (2016)

Aid to basic education fell even more

Total aid to basic education fell by US\$255 million between 2013 and 2014. As with total aid to education, the fall was concentrated among bilateral donors, who reduced aid to basic education by 12%. Four OECD DAC donors – France, Japan, the Netherlands and Spain – each reduced aid to basic education by 40% or more. The United Kingdom reduced aid to basic education by 21%, or almost twice its rate of reduction of total aid to education, and is no longer the largest bilateral donor. Its place has been taken by the United States, which increased aid to basic education by US\$164 million, or 23%. Other OECD DAC donors that expanded their aid to basic education rapidly in 2014 were Australia (39%), Finland (49%), Italy (40%), Luxembourg (81%) and Sweden (42%).

As aid may fluctuate on a year-to-year basis for reasons related to the timing of disbursements rather than changes in policy, it is necessary to look at averages across a number of years in order to understand long-term trends.

Among the top 10 bilateral donors over the period 2002-14, which account for 86% of total bilateral aid, the most striking trend is that the United Kingdom and the United States tripled their aid to basic education between 2002/03 and 2013/14 and are among the few donors that have continued to increase such aid after 2009/10. The only other countries to do so are Japan and, especially, Australia. The other six of the top 10 donors have collectively almost halved their aid to basic education between 2009/10 and 2013/14. France, Netherlands and Spain accounted for more than 25% of aid to basic education in 2002/03 but less than 7.5% in 2013/14.

Among the top five multilateral donors over the period 2002-14, which account for 87% of total multilateral aid, two main findings stand out. Total aid to basic education disbursed by the World Bank, which more than halved in 2012, bounced back in 2014 almost to earlier historic high levels. By

contrast, aid disbursed to basic education by the European Union remains at 2005 levels, close to the level of aid disbursed by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees.

Aid to basic education is not sufficiently targeted to countries most in need

Aid by region

Aid to basic education to sub-Saharan Africa, which is home to over half the world’s out-of-school children, fell below US\$1.5 billion in 2014, returning to 2002/03 levels. Sub-Saharan Africa’s share of total aid to basic education plummeted from 49% to 28% during this period (**Figure 3a**). Part of the decline may be accounted for by the sharp increase in the share of aid that is not allocated by region or country (from 2% to 13%); this includes disbursements by the Global Partnership for Education. Even so, there is an unmistakable decline in aid to sub-Saharan Africa.

Regions whose share increased in this period include Northern Africa and Western Asia (from 7% to 17%, notably in Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine) and Southern Asia (from 19% to 23%, notably in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan).

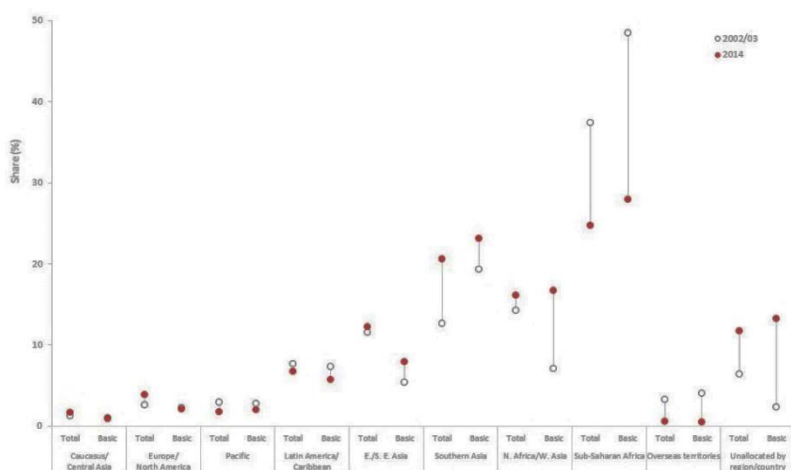
Aid by country income group

The percentage of aid to education that is targeted at low income countries is one of the thematic indicators proposed to monitor the Sustainable Development Goals’ target 4.5 – to ensure equal access to education. In the case of total aid to education, the share of low income countries fell from 24% in 2002/03 to 22% in 2014. In the case of total aid to basic education, the share received by low income countries has fallen even further, from 34% to 28% (**Figure 3b**). However, more research is needed to determine the destination of aid that is unallocated by income group; the share of such aid tripled to 15% during this period in the case of basic education.

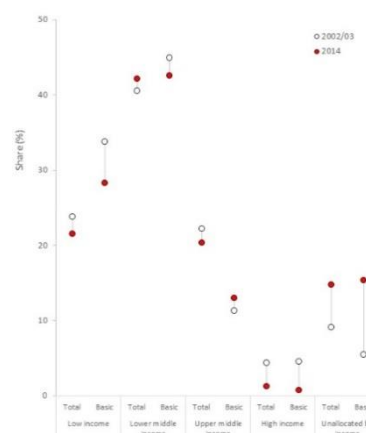
Figure 3: The share of poorer countries in aid to basic education has fallen but part is accounted for by increases in unallocated aid

Total aid to education and total aid to basic education, 2002/03 and 2014

a. Share by region



b. Share by country income group



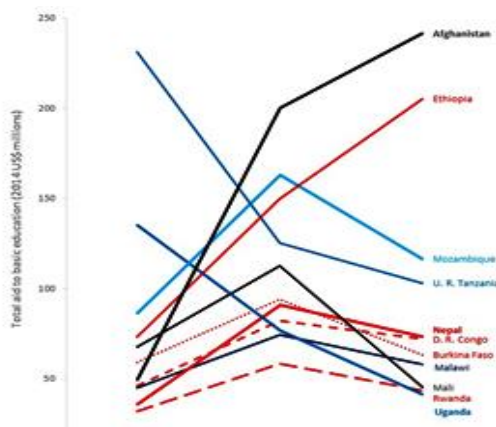
Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report team analysis based on OECD Creditor Reporting System (2016)

Among low income countries, there have been contrasting trends. Two countries have benefited from large increases. Ethiopia saw its aid to basic education increase from US\$47 million in 2002 to US\$259 million in 2014. Afghanistan, in turn, had its aid increase 15-fold to reach US\$278 million in 2014.

Among the 11 low income countries that received the most aid to basic education, all the other countries experienced declines between 2008/10 and 2012/14, ranging from 12% in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to 60% in Mali (Figure 4). The two countries whose aid for basic education has fallen most since 2002/04 are the United Republic of Tanzania (by 55%) and Uganda (by 69%).

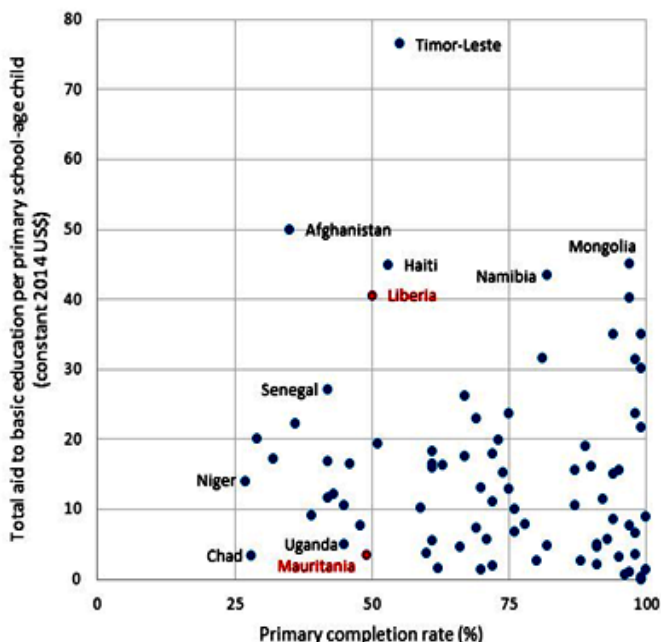
These shifting priorities have an impact on the distribution between countries of the absolute amount of aid that corresponds to each child. The average primary school age child in a low income country received US\$15 in 2014, compared with US\$7 for children in lower middle income countries. However, there are vast disparities, not only across countries but also according to need. For example, the average child in Mongolia receives US\$45 even though the primary completion rate was 97% in 2010. By contrast, Chad, where the primary completion rate was 28% in 2010, received only US\$3 per primary school age child in 2014 (Figure 5). Likewise, while in Liberia and Mauritania about half the children complete primary school, Liberia receives 10 times the amount of aid to basic education per school age child. Donors need to address these disparities urgently attention if they are to help both achieve ambitious targets and ensure equity.

Figure 4: Low income countries have seen their aid to basic education fall in recent years
Total aid to basic education, top eleven low income country recipient countries (2002-14)



Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report team analysis based on OECD Creditor Reporting System (2016)

Figure 5: Aid is very weakly related to needs
Total aid to basic education per primary school-age child (2014) and primary completion rate (2008/14)



Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report team analysis based on OECD Creditor Reporting System (2016); World Inequality Database on Education

Some donors are shifting aid to secondary education

Total aid to secondary education remained at the same level between 2013 and 2014. As with total aid, bilateral donors reduced aid to secondary education, by 8%. In 2014, the top three bilateral donors to secondary education were the United Kingdom (US\$457 million), France (US\$250 million) and Germany (US\$204 million).

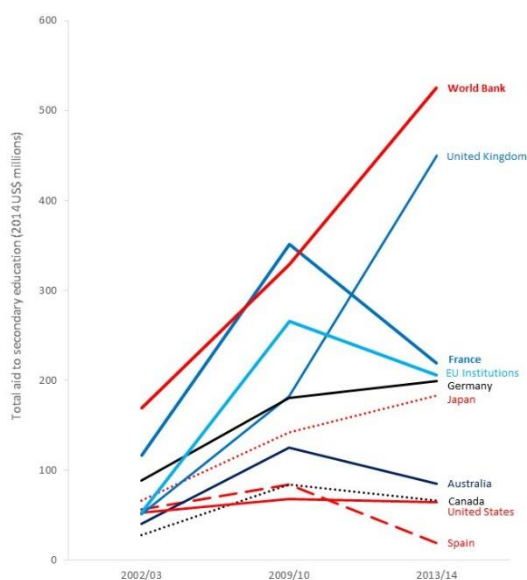
By contrast, multilateral donors increased their total aid to secondary education by 18%. This was mainly due to the World Bank increasing its volume by 41% to US\$615 million. The second-highest multilateral donor was the European Union, whose aid to secondary education remained constant at US\$204 million.

Taking the top 10 donors over the period 2002-14, which account for 74% of total aid to secondary education, the most striking trend is the steadily rising disbursements of the United Kingdom and the World Bank, which increased their aid to secondary education by almost US\$400 million per year between 2002/03 and 2013/14. In the case of the United Kingdom this is equivalent to almost a 10-fold increase during the period; the United Kingdom accounted for 16% of total aid to secondary education in 2013/14 compared with 5% in 2002/03.

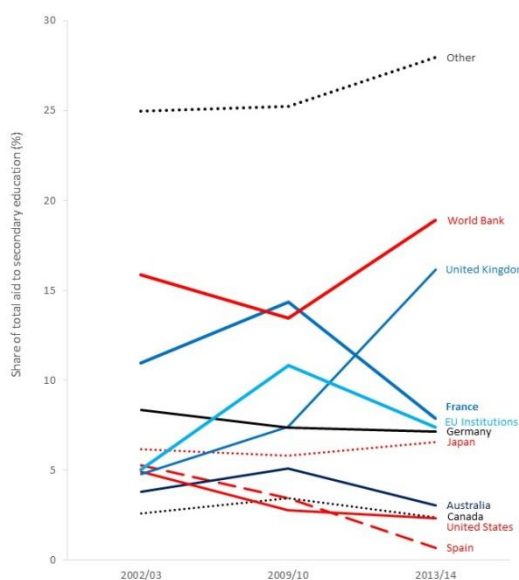
Five of these top 10 donors considerably reduced their aid to secondary education between 2009/10 and 2013/14: Canada (-21%), the European Union (-22%), Australia (-31%), France (-38%) and Spain (-77%).

Figure 6: The UK and the World Bank give almost US\$1 billion of aid to secondary education
Total aid to secondary education, top ten donors (2002-14)

A. Volume



B. Share



Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report team analysis based on OECD Creditor Reporting System (2016)

Humanitarian aid: Education’s double disadvantage

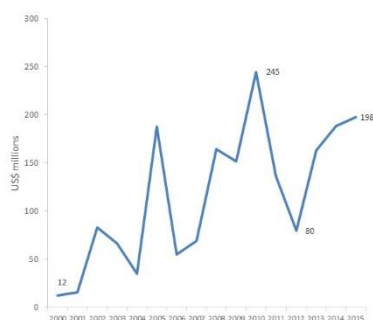
Humanitarian aid makes up only a small share of the external financing that countries receive for education. In 2014, the education sector received US\$188 million in humanitarian aid, which is less than 1.5% of the amount of development aid that was disbursed for education.

In 2015, out of a total amount of US\$10.6 billion of humanitarian aid, the education sector received US\$198 million (Figure 6a). This is an increase of 5%. At the same time, it is less than 1.9% of total funding despite a target set by the UN Secretary-General’s Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) for education to receive at least 4% of humanitarian aid. (Figure 6b). Education is suffering a double disadvantage because it is not only receiving the smallest proportion of humanitarian appeals, but it is also receiving consistently a lower than average share of what it requests: in 2015 the sector received 31% of what it had requested in terms of humanitarian aid. This compares with an average of 55% across all sectors (Figure 6c).

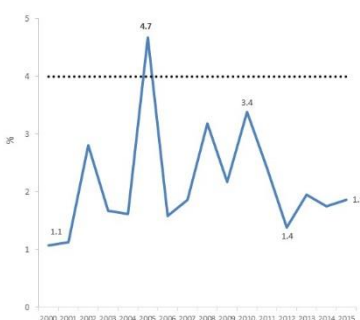
Figure 6: Education remains an under-prioritised and underfunded sector of humanitarian aid

Selected statistics on consolidated and flash appeal requests and funding for the education sector, 2000-2015

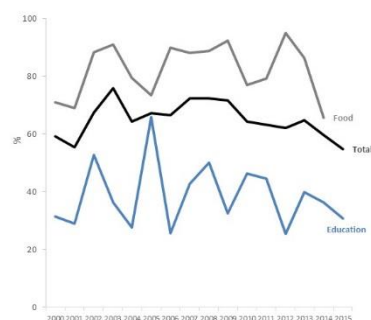
a. Total humanitarian aid to education



b. Share of education in total humanitarian aid



c. Share of humanitarian aid requests funded



Source: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2016)

Conclusion

Recent international meetings galvanizing support for the adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda generated optimism that the International Community stood ready to reverse the stagnating trend of aid to education. This is especially critical for the poorest countries, given the enormous ambition of the new agenda in education. However, the latest figures show few signs of renewed commitment: in 2014, aid to education was still 8% below its peak in 2010.

The recent establishment of the Education Cannot Wait Fund at the Humanitarian Summit is a step forward to improving the articulation of humanitarian and development. More priority needs to be accorded to education in aid budgets. The impact of such crucial measures will not be felt for a few more years. There is no time to waste.

Guiding questions for the discussion:

- How could the role and prioritization of aid to education change in order to ensure implementation the sustainable development agenda?
- Will the imminent changes in the definition of aid have any effect on aid to education?
- What are the main challenges in implementing the recommendations of the International Commission on the Financing of Global Education Opportunity report?
- What steps can donors take to better target aid to countries and populations in need?
- What are the challenges in expanding humanitarian aid to education after the establishment of the Education Cannot Wait fund?
- What role can foundations play for the implementation of the agenda?

Introduction to the thematic discussion on Global and thematic indicators for SDG4-Education 2030 and monitoring mechanisms

Introduction

With the adoption of the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda, a universal commitment has been made to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all. Monitoring progress towards achievement of the targets is critical to provide guidance for what needs to be done, by when and by whom. However, the SDG process for determining monitoring indicators and mechanisms is complex given the large number of targets, the ambiguities in their formulation and the diversity of stakeholders. The steps which have been taken to define what will be measured and the selection of indicators have important implications for national education data and information systems which will have to be ready to monitor an ambitious agenda that prioritizes education quality and equity. Countries face barriers in producing and using the specific indicators and new initiatives at the national and international level are needed to help build greater technical capacity, and mobilise attention and resources for the measurement needed to ensure a strong link between the data gathered and the national plans and policy objectives they are meant to inform.

1 - Global, thematic and regional indicators for SDG4

The Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) proposed a set of **global indicators** for all SDGs which was approved by the 47th session of the United Nations Statistical Commission. It has proposed 11 global indicators for the targets under SDG4, which represent the minimum set proposed to countries for the global monitoring of SDG 4 targets. The process of final approval of global indicators is still unclear; formal adoption is scheduled for March 2017.

A broader set of internationally-comparable **thematic** indicators was also developed by the Technical Advisory Group on Education Indicators (TAG), which was led by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). This set of **43 thematic indicators** serves to chart progress on education and to monitor the SDG4 education targets more comprehensively across countries globally, allowing the possibility to further inform targets that are not adequately addressed by the global indicators. The thematic indicator framework includes the global indicators as a subset. The selection of additional indicators to be used in each national context will depend on policy priorities, technical capacity, and data availability. Following the completion of the work of the TAG, UIS has convened the **Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG4 - Education 2030** (TCG SDG4-ED2030) which is composed of representatives from Member States, multilateral SDG4 partner agencies, civil society and UNESCO. The objective of the TCG is to identify needs and provide recommendations for the development of thematic indicators and lead in the application of the thematic indicator framework to monitor the global education targets.

Additional **regional indicators** may be developed to take account of specific regional contexts and relevant policy priorities given initiatives to establish regional monitoring frameworks. At the national level, countries may also need to use additional indicators that reflect the specificities of their

national contexts and that correspond to their education systems, policy agendas, strategies and plans.

Regional developments related to the thematic indicators

The 43 thematic indicators were presented and discussed in detail by the UIS and OECD at the 16th meeting of the OECD INES Working Party (WP) in October 2015. The INES delegates confirmed their support for the SDG4 agenda and encouraged UIS, OECD, Eurostat and others to work together to develop the new indicators with their associated targets and indicators. Regarding data availability to monitor SDG4, the INES delegates noted that 34 of the 43 thematic indicators were already covered or touched upon by existing OECD surveys and instruments. Moreover, the INES delegates raised issues about the challenges for internalising all of the SDG4 targets and indicators within current OECD policy instruments and data collection systems and therefore agreed on highly prioritizing the 11 global indicators together with those of the remaining thematic indicators that were most relevant for OECD countries.

SDG 4 was also on the agenda of the 18th meeting of the OECD INES Working Party (WP) in October 2016. The INES delegates noted the limitations of establishing thresholds for SDG4 indicators and underlined the importance of showing the progress of countries towards the goal in addition to the value of the indicators at a given time. Moreover, the delegates indicated that there is currently considerable confusion in several countries regarding the global process for the development of the SDG indicators and therefore expressed the need for the UN system to clarify global governance of the SDG indicators development and national governments to clarify the responsibilities of the different national ministries for SDG reporting.

Challenges in education indicators

The education sector faces many issues with respect to data, some of which were identified in the report of the Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development, including the need for documented standards in several areas, improved technical capacity and stronger coordination at national and international levels. The points below highlight some of the challenges ahead:

Data availability and methodological challenges

- The growing evidence on the importance of early childhood development has produced a number of potential measures, including an index collected through UNICEF's MICS survey, but there is no field-tested consensus on an indicator that can be collected in a cost-effective way and compared across different countries, especially across low- and high-income countries.
- The agenda highlights the need to measure learning outcomes at different ages or grades. Despite growing participation in national and cross-national learning assessments, learning outcomes are not yet tracked over time and across countries in a systematic way. Efforts are underway to develop an approach to equate and link national definitions of key learning outcomes in order to compare assessment results across countries.
- The proposed indicator framework prioritizes the measurement of literacy and numeracy by level of proficiency, which marks a new and challenging approach. It will be critical to build on lessons learned from other assessment studies (e.g. PIAAC, STEP, LAMP) to assess these skills

in order to promote cost-effective approaches that can be used by countries with limited resources.

- Work needs to continue to improve coverage, accuracy and timeliness of finance data. It would be useful to consider new approaches (including national education accounts) that could more accurately reflect the respective shares of governments, donors and households in total education financing.

Equity and data disaggregation

- Ensuring equity in education is critical in the new agenda which requires data disaggregation for measuring progress. This will require different and often more costly methods for collecting data on populations that are most difficult to reach. Administrative data sources can be disaggregated by sex, age, location. Disability status is often not well-captured by any data source. Dimensions such as income, ethnicity, migratory status and many others will require household or individual level survey items which, for many countries, will mean considering how to adapt existing surveys and how to extend the background information available through administrative sources.

Financing data and evidence

- In order to ensure countries are well-placed to assess their progress towards achieving the goals by 2030, significant resources will need to be mobilised which go beyond the financial capacities of many national statistical systems.
- At the international level, additional resources are also needed (in 2013 less than one quarter of one per cent (0.24%) of ODA went towards improving statistics) to develop new approaches and methodologies, to capture data from a much wider range of sources and data providers, and to support countries to develop their national capacities to produce and analyse the data needed to follow up and review their progress throughout the next 15 years.

Coordination

- The new agenda has many more indicators than the MDGs and many more actors – both nationally and internationally – and requires a much wider range of data sources to be used. In order to ensure that efforts are not duplicative but well-targeted and focused, good coordination between organizations and within countries will be required.
- At the international level, the UIS remains the official source of cross-nationally comparable data on education and will continue to produce international monitoring indicators. It is also contributing to other goals in its field of responsibility. The IAEG-SDGs is considering nominating custodian agencies for each of the global indicators but there is also a need for coordination at the goal level as well as of major cross-cutting themes.
- At the national level, there is a need for good coordination between ministries and with national statistical offices. In particular, line ministries such as education, health and agriculture which may have responsibilities for data collection will need to work closely with national statistical offices to ensure coherence in data collection and reporting across the whole SDG agenda.

To address some of these challenges the following initiatives have been launched by UIS:

1. As outlined above, the TCG will produce recommendations to the UIS for ensuring the relevant and comparable education data that are required to track progress and monitor SDG4.

2. The strategy to improve learning assessment within the new agenda calls for strong actions in the area of methodological innovation, technical assistance and capacity building, funding mobilization and the definition and assessment of quality standards and practices across initiatives. Therefore, the UIS established the Global Alliance for Monitoring Learning (GAML), an institutional platform to oversee the coordination of efforts to measure learning and the harmonization of standards for measuring learning.

3. In response to the call for a greater focus on equity, an Inter-Agency Group on Disaggregated Education Inequality Indicators (IAG-DEII) was established, with the UIS, UNICEF and the World Bank as the lead agencies. The goal of the IAG- DEII is to promote the use of survey data for education monitoring purposes at the global, regional and national level, ensuring harmonised indicator standards and reporting in order to complement evidence available through administrative data.

2 - Monitoring mechanisms for SDG4-Education 2030

As outlined in the chapter on Overview of Global and Regional Follow-Up, Review and Reporting on the SDGs and Coordination of SDG4-Education 2030, the provisions for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development include thematic reviews. In the case of education, the ‘critical milestones’ report by the Secretary-General identified the World Education Forum as the intergovernmental mechanism upon which the global follow-up and review process should build. The forum, in its Incheon Declaration, requested *‘an independent Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR), hosted and published by UNESCO, as the mechanism for monitoring and reporting on the proposed SDG 4 and on education in the other proposed SDGs, within the mechanism to be established to monitor and review the implementation of the proposed SDGs’*.⁵⁴

The first edition of the 2016 Global Education Monitoring Report focused on two issues. First, it explores the complex relationship between education and the other SDGs. It shows what the world stands to lose if the education goal is not achieved but also how education needs to adjust in order to help accelerate the achievement of the other SDGs. Second, it discusses the challenges of monitoring progress on the new global education goal and targets. The report has also adapted its coverage of issues to increase its relevance to countries in the Europe and Northern America region.

Monitoring education in the Europe and Northern America region has traditionally been anchored in regional organizations. The European Commission ET 2020 strategic framework on education and training is an example. These frameworks are accompanied by corresponding monitoring mechanisms: the European Commission, for example, prepares an annual Education and Training Monitor. Different strategies, indicators and monitoring mechanisms are proposed by other organizations, such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) or the Council of Europe. The question is how these regional strategies articulate with the SDG agenda. The OECD 2016 Education at a Glance report has provided a regional perspective for monitoring SDG 4 among its member states, which include the majority of countries in the Europe and Northern America region.

Guiding questions for the discussion:

⁵⁴ UNESCO (2015) Incheon Declaration: Education 2030: Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all, §18 <http://en.unesco.org/world-education-forum-2015/incheon-declaration>

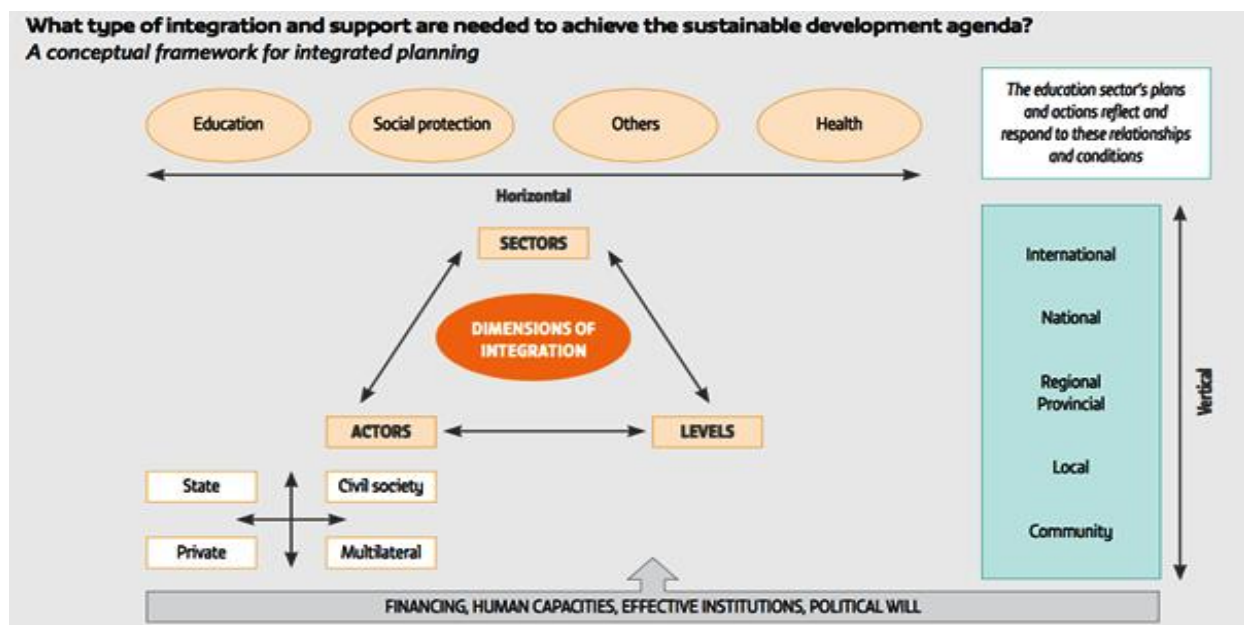
- Which thematic indicators should be prioritized for European and North American countries?
- Where are the most important gaps in terms of data available to calculate global and thematic indicators and what efforts and support would be needed to address the gaps?
- How can existing monitoring mechanisms be used to monitor SDG4 at the regional level and what are the major priorities and challenges?
- How can a regional monitoring process articulate with and help enrich a global monitoring process – and vice versa?

Introduction to the thematic discussion on Governance, coordination and partnerships – regional mechanisms and strategies and the global education agenda

Achieving the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development education goal and targets requires coordinated efforts at all levels among all partners.

Governance, accountability and partnerships

Strong partnerships and unity of action at regional level are essential for successful integration of SDG4-Education 2030 commitments and focus areas into national education development efforts in Europe and North America. The ambition of SDG 4 – Education 2030, with its widened scope and cross-sectoral reach, requires enhanced multi-stakeholder partnerships between state and non-state actors for transparent implementation, monitoring, and accountability. The figure below⁵⁵ shows the various types of integration which will need to be reinforced at regional level: vertical between different institutional levels, horizontal integration between different sectors and policy arenas, and participation of all relevant stakeholders⁵⁶.



Effective coordination

A broader, more holistic education agenda calls for inclusive and efficient regional coordination in Europe and North America which will need to focus on such aspects as policy-making; dialogue and cooperation with all relevant partners; formal meetings and high-level events; regional communication strategies; advocacy and resource mobilization; capacity building; implementation of joint projects; increasing mutual learning and exchange of good practices such as peer-learning

⁵⁵ UNESCO. 2016. Global Education Monitoring Report 2016. Education for Sustainable People and Planet: Creating Sustainable Futures for All.

⁵⁶ Pisano, Lange, Berger and Hamenter. 2015. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their impact on the European SD governance framework. ESDN Quarterly report N°35.

activities undertaken by the ET 2020 Working Groups; data collection and monitoring for SDG4 including further integrating Eurostat's monitoring processes into the global mechanism for monitoring and reporting on SDGs and SDG4⁵⁷; and conducting peer reviews among countries.

European Union: key priorities in education

Adopted in 2010, Europe 2020 is a ten-year EU strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. It could be one of the most potent drivers for SDG implementation within Europe and is currently undergoing a process of review. Education is one of the pillars of Europe 2020. Europe 2020 sets five main targets for employment, research and development, greenhouse gas emission, education and poverty reduction. The education headline target aims to (a) reduce the share of early school leavers to 10% from the current 15% and (b) increase the share of the population aged 30-34 having completed tertiary education from 31% to at least 40%.⁵⁸

Europe 2020's education headline target is adopted from two of the European benchmarks in the Strategic Framework for Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020). Agreed by the EU's Member States in 2009, ET 2020 is a framework for policy cooperation on education and training.⁵⁹ It is underpinned by the lifelong learning principle and covers learning in all contexts and at all levels. Its four strategic objectives are (1) making life-long learning and mobility a reality; (2) improving the quality and efficiency of education and training; (3) promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship; (4) enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship. In November 2015, following an elaborate mid-term stocktaking, the EU's Member States and the European Commission agreed on new priority areas for European cooperation in education and training up to 2020 (while staying within the context of the four strategic objectives).⁶⁰ There is a large degree of mutual compatibility between the new ET 2020 priority areas and SDG4-Education 2030. While the employability dimension of education and training cooperation remained important, the Member States and the European Commission decided to re-calibrate their policy focus to work in particular on the role of education in promoting social inclusion and in imparting common European values, intercultural competences and active citizenship. At the start of 2016, six new ET 2020 Working Groups were launched to ensure policy cooperation on the new priority areas.

Connected to ET 2020, and in line with the lifelong learning imperative of the global education agenda, the European Commission launched in June 2016 the New Skills Agenda for Europe, aimed at promoting "lifelong investment in people", combining work skills and life skills. The actions of the New Skills Agenda focus on improving the quality and relevance of skills formation, making skills and qualifications more visible and comparable, as well as improving skills intelligence and information for better career choices. Reflecting the cross-sectoral nature of SDG4-Education 2030, the strategy carries a strong employment dimension, but education and training issues also feature very prominently, notably through proposals to adapt existing transparency instruments in the education and training field, such as the European Qualifications Framework and Europass, as well as proposal

⁵⁷ For more information, see the chapter on "Monitoring mechanisms" in this Brochure.

⁵⁸ European Council. 2010. Conclusions, section I and annex I, 17 June.

⁵⁹ Council of the European Union. 2009. Council Conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training ('ET 2020'), Official Journal of the European Union C 119, 28.5.2009, p. 2–10.

⁶⁰ Council of the European Union and European Commission. 2015. Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) — New priorities for European cooperation in education and training, Official Journal of the European Union C 417, 15.12.2015, p. 25–35.

for a new 'Skills Guarantee' aimed at improving the prospects of low-skilled adults. The New Skills Agenda also includes a review of the EU's Recommendation of 2006 on Key Competences to help more people acquire the core set of skills and competences necessary to work and live in the 21st century.⁶¹

Council of Europe: key priorities in education

The overall aim of the Education Programme of the Council of Europe is to ensure the right to quality education for all in its 47 Member States, not only to prepare for employment but also for life as active citizens in democratic societies, for personal development and the development and maintenance of a broad, advanced knowledge base. In so doing, the Council of Europe seeks to help member States build a culture of democracy through education, to strengthen democratic culture among new generations as a prerequisite for sustainable democracy.

The Council of Europe's programme is currently separated into two broad thematic areas: skills and qualifications for life in democracy; and equal opportunities and quality education for all. Through programmes covering Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, Competences for Democratic Culture, Digital Citizenship Education, plurilingual education, ethics transparency and integrity in education, and the integration of refugees and migrants into education systems, the programme provides relevant authorities in member States with policy orientations, relevant tools and needs-based support for their national-level efforts.

Launched in 2016, a new conceptual model, a Framework on Competences for Democratic Culture, describes a set of competences which need to be acquired by learners if they are to participate effectively in a culture of democracy and live peacefully together with others in culturally-diverse democratic societies. This model will be used to inform educational decision-making and planning, helping education systems to be harnessed for the preparation of learners for life as effective democratic citizens. The model builds on and adds further momentum to the existing activities supporting the implementation of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.

To support the development of a long-term strategy for a more coherent and comprehensive approach to education for democratic citizenship and human rights education at the European level, the Council of Europe aims to play a regional role by identifying and sharing good practice between its member States, elevating best practice to the level of standards agreed between member States, in the process serving as a vehicle for its 47 member States to progress towards, and measure progress towards, common long-term objectives on global citizenship education, in line with global efforts to make progress towards Target 4.7 of SDG 4, in the 2030 Agenda.⁶²

The programme and its implementation is overseen by the Steering Committee for Education Policy and Practice (CDPPE), which comprises official representatives of Ministries of Education of the 50 States party to the European Cultural Convention as well as observers from civil society, international

⁶¹ European Parliament and Council of the European Union. 2006. Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning, Official Journal of the European Union L 394, 30.12.2006, p. 10–18.

⁶² Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education. 2016. Securing Democracy Through Education - The development of a Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture. 25th session. April 2016.

partner organisations and non-European states (Canada, Japan, Mexico, United States of America and Israel).

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

The OECD has a long history of engagement with major United Nations (UN) processes on human development and well-being, financing for development, environmental sustainability and climate change. It has contributed to shaping the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and is committed to leveraging its capacity and expertise to support the achievement of this vision.

Sound public policies grounded in evidence – and implemented effectively – will be crucial for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. In many of the areas covered by the SDGs, and especially in education, the OECD is already working with Member and Partner countries to generate evidence, identify good practices, develop standards, and help design and implement policies.

As it supports the achievement of SDG4-Education 2030, the OECD will:

- *Support the UNESCO-led SDG 4 architecture that has been put in place and of which it is a member, including the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, Technical Coordination Group on Education Indicators, the Advisory Board of the GEMR and the UIS-led efforts to monitor the SDG 4-Education 2030 indicators.*
- *Support countries as they identify where they currently stand in relation to the SDG4-Education 2030, where they need to be, and propose sustainable pathways based on evidence.* In this way, the OECD will be an important contributor to the “GPS” (global positioning system) which is important to achieve SDG4-Education 2030.
- *Reaffirm its role as a leading source of expertise, good practices and standards in areas of public policy that are relevant to the achievement of the Education SDG, including through its major policy instruments and international assessments of learning outcomes such as PISA, PIAAC, TALIS and Education at a Glance.*
- *Encourage a “race to the top” for better policies that can help deliver the Education SDG, through the use of hallmark OECD approaches (e.g. reviews and peer learning; monitoring and statistical reporting; policy dialogue; soft law).*

SDG4-Education 2030 constitutes an important part of the “backdrop” against which much of the OECD’s work in education takes place. This development in the international policy environment is being reflected in the evolution of the programmes of work of OECD Education Committees, all of which are encouraged to continue identifying opportunities to contribute to SDG implementation. Particular consideration is being given to ways in which OECD tools, such as PISA, can be further adapted to meet the needs of a broader range of countries, particularly developing countries with low capacity. The OECD’s PISA for Development project is a prime example of this.

The OECD already holds vast amounts of information on education – both quantitative and qualitative – that can contribute to global and regional SDG4-Education 2030 follow-up efforts. These include efforts to assess OECD countries’ preparedness towards the SDG4-Education 2030, to examine how countries’ domestic policies help or hinder the achievement of the SDG4-Education 2030 globally, and to contribute to OECD countries’ strategies to progress on SDG4-Education 2030 outcomes.

Priorities expressed in national reports for Western Europe and North America for 2015-2030

Within the Education for All 2015 Regional Review for Europe and North America, 63 national reports submitted by countries from Western Europe and North America point to the same set of priorities for the future:

- Improving the equity and quality of education (including pre-service and in-service teacher training; equality in learning outcomes and assessment of learning outcomes and evaluation of the education system);
- Enriching learning and training opportunities for youth and adults (including addressing early school leaving and improving skill levels among youth and adults);
- Universalizing pre-primary education.

Moreover, during the 2016 North American Leaders' Summit, the accent was also put on the need to forge innovative partnerships to mobilize human, technological, and financial resources to facilitate the availability and use of data to achieve and monitor progress towards the SDGs and promote evidence-based decision making and drive innovation to address sustainable development challenges in North America. With a view to fostering exchange among partners in the region, the leaders announced the creation of the North American Center for Collaborative Development to pursue joint research on climate change, energy, manufacturing, economic integration, and indigenous peoples. Furthermore, regional focus was put on the development of the next generation of indigenous leaders. The United States aim to bring together indigenous youth and promote linkages between North American higher education institutions on projects that provide indigenous youth with opportunities to hone their professional skills⁶⁴.

Priorities expressed in national reports for Eastern and Central Europe for 2015-2030

For Eastern and Central Europe, the common priorities include:

- Making compulsory education more inclusive and raising its quality (including the marginalized; strengthening teacher training and providing additional resources to schools to improve the learning environment; tailoring teaching to the needs of individual students; improving school management, reforming education financing and data collection);
- Strengthening the links between education and the labour market;
- Universalizing pre-primary education.

63 UNESCO. 2015. Education for All 2015: Regional Review, Europe and North America.

64 The White House. 2016. Fact Sheet: United States Key Deliverables for the 2016 North America Leaders' Summit, Office of the Press Secretary. 29 June 2016.

Guiding questions for the discussion:

Possible questions for the panel debate include:

- How could the new education agenda be integrated/taken into account in existing strategies and action plans of the European Union and of the Council of Europe up to 2020?
- How to integrate SDG4 into future regional strategies beyond 2020?
- What could be the role of the OCED in implementing SDG4?
- How could the existing partnership, coordination and monitoring mechanisms at regional level be modified to take into account the larger scope of the new education agenda and the vast spectrum of stakeholders?