



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



Sustainable  
Development  
Goals

# Education transforms lives





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**Education**

**transforms**

**lives**





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# Education at the heart of the Global 2030 Agenda

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The world has a bold new Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by the international community in September 2015, to wipe out poverty through 17 sustainable development goals by 2030. These ambitious goals were unanimously adopted by the 193 Member States of the United Nations who have the prime responsibility to realize them.

Education is captured in one goal – Sustainable Development Goal 4 – which aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” but is key to achieving all the sustainable development goals.

UNESCO, as the sole UN agency mandated to cover all aspects of education and with a worldwide network of specialized institutes and offices, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the achieving of this goal with its partners through the Education 2030 Agenda.

# Education 2030



*The Education 2030 Agenda is built on the fact that education drives development by transforming lives. To achieve this, education itself must be transformed: it must be open to all, inclusive and of good quality.*

The roadmap to achieve the Agenda is the *Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action*, which outlines how countries, working with UNESCO and global partners, can translate commitments into action.

The Education 2030 Agenda pursues the global commitment of the Education for All movement to ensure access to basic education for all.

### **The Education 2030 Agenda:**

- Stretches from early childhood learning to youth and adult education and training;
- Emphasizes the acquisition of skills for work;
- Underlines the importance of citizenship education;
- Focuses on inclusion, equity and gender equality;
- And aims to ensure quality learning outcomes for all, throughout their lives.

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

## Global education challenges

69m

new teachers are needed worldwide to reach the 2030 education goals

758m

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

US\$39bn

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

263m

children and youth are out of school

14%

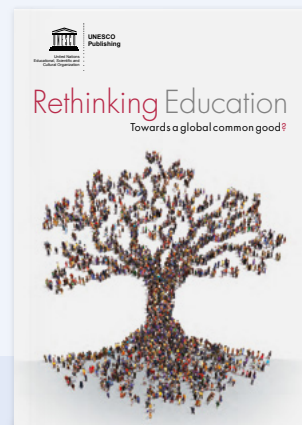
of youth – and just 1% of the poorest girls – complete secondary education in low-income countries

35%

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

### Rethinking Education

The vision and challenges of the new Education 2030 Agenda are captured in the UNESCO flagship publication *Rethinking Education*. This publication revisits the purpose of education and the organization of learning in a changing global context. It is intended as a call for dialogue inspired by a humanistic vision of education and development.



# Ten targets to achieve the Education 2030 Agenda

*The 10 targets of Sustainable Development Goal 4 encompass many different aspects of education. Seven targets are of expected outcomes and three are means of achieving these targets.*



#### **4.1 Universal primary and secondary education**

By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes



#### **4.2 Early childhood development and universal pre-primary education**

By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education



#### **4.3 Equal access to technical/vocational and higher education**

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



#### **4.4 Relevant skills for decent work**

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



#### **4.5 Gender equality and inclusion**

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





#### 4.6 Universal youth and adult literacy

By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy



#### 4.7 Education for sustainable development and global citizenship

By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed 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



#### 4.a Effective learning environments

Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all



#### 4.b Scholarships

By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries



#### 4.c Teachers and educators

By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States

# UNESCO's contribution

*For UNESCO, education is a priority as a human right and a public good. The Organization assists countries in developing high-quality and inclusive education systems through building capacity to design and implement education policy.*

## Coordinating at all levels

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

At the global level, UNESCO:

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

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

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

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

## Monitoring progress

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

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

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

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

## Providing policy advice

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

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

## Developing capacities

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

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

### UNESCO's key roles

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

## Priority countries

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

### Least developed countries

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

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

### Countries in crisis

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

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

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

## Indigenous adolescents assert their rights in Guatemala

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







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## Life-skills and mentoring project gives new hope to traumatized Syrian youth

A UNESCO life-skills project is helping young Syrians cope with the trauma of conflict and build a future. Ala, 20, is taking part in vocational training through the UNESCO Youth Skills Development and Mentoring Project in Amman, Jordan. He says: "In Syria I had to deal with the war and the death of my fiancé. The project is helping me to cope." Khaldoun, 22, said: "I went from depressed to very eager to come to school." The two-year project will provide opportunities for 1,300 youth to succeed in their academic programmes and daily lives. The project is part of the larger Sustaining Quality Education and Promoting Skills Development for Young Syrian Refugees in Jordan programme. UNESCO Amman Office is implementing this 4.3 million Euro project funded by the EU to sustain quality education and promote skills development opportunities for young Syrian refugees and Jordanian youth.



## UK winners of 'green' prize prove the power of 'peer-to-peer'

A student-led environmental accreditation scheme is one of three winners of the 2016 UNESCO-Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development. The Green Impact programme is the National Union of Students UK's flagship sustainability engagement programme and one of the largest, most successful student-led sustainability schemes in the world. Green Impact is centred on student mentors and auditors, over 1,000 each year, who support staff to green their workplaces through bespoke workbooks. It currently runs in 270 organizations, with 1,889 Green Impact teams or departments, reaching 29,191 staff. Last year the scheme marked its 250,000th 'green' action and saved participating institutions an estimated £1.2m through resource efficiency and procurement discipline, compared to participation fees of £385,000.



## Afghan police better their lives with literacy

Afghan police officers, Ms Aziza and Gul Rahman, have overcome huge personal obstacles to advance in their lives and jobs thanks to a UNESCO literacy project. They enrolled in the Literacy for Empowerment of Afghan Police (LEAP) class. LEAP, funded by the Government of Japan, is part of UNESCO's Enhancement of Literacy in Afghanistan programme which has enabled 600,000 youth and adults (60 per cent female) to graduate since it began. As a result of the project Ms Aziza and Gul Rahman plan to continue their education and advance their careers.





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## Bridging the gap between skills and industry in Africa

UNESCO's Better Education for Africa's Rise (BEAR) programme, funded by the Republic of Korea, brings practical skills into classrooms and strengthens links between training and the job market. Young students and adult school leavers in southern Zambia benefited from the integration of skills such as tailoring, cutting and design training alongside the regular curriculum with literacy classes as a precondition for enrolment. Students like Ms Agness Bwalya Kaulwe were happy to receive formal design qualifications and literacy skills at the age of 47. A hospitality management course, aligned to the needs of local industry in Botswana, trained 200 students in culinary arts, hospitality and travel management. The programme runs in Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Namibia and Zambia.

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

### Global Citizenship Education

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

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

### Education for Sustainable Development

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

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

### Women's and girls' education

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

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

### Digital learning

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

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



### Rewarding innovative projects

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

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

### Education in emergencies and crises

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

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



# A unique network across the world

*UNESCO's Education Sector works through its extensive global network.*

## Headquarters

The Education Sector is the largest in UNESCO with some 400 staff. Around 120 staff work at the **Paris headquarters**.

## Field offices

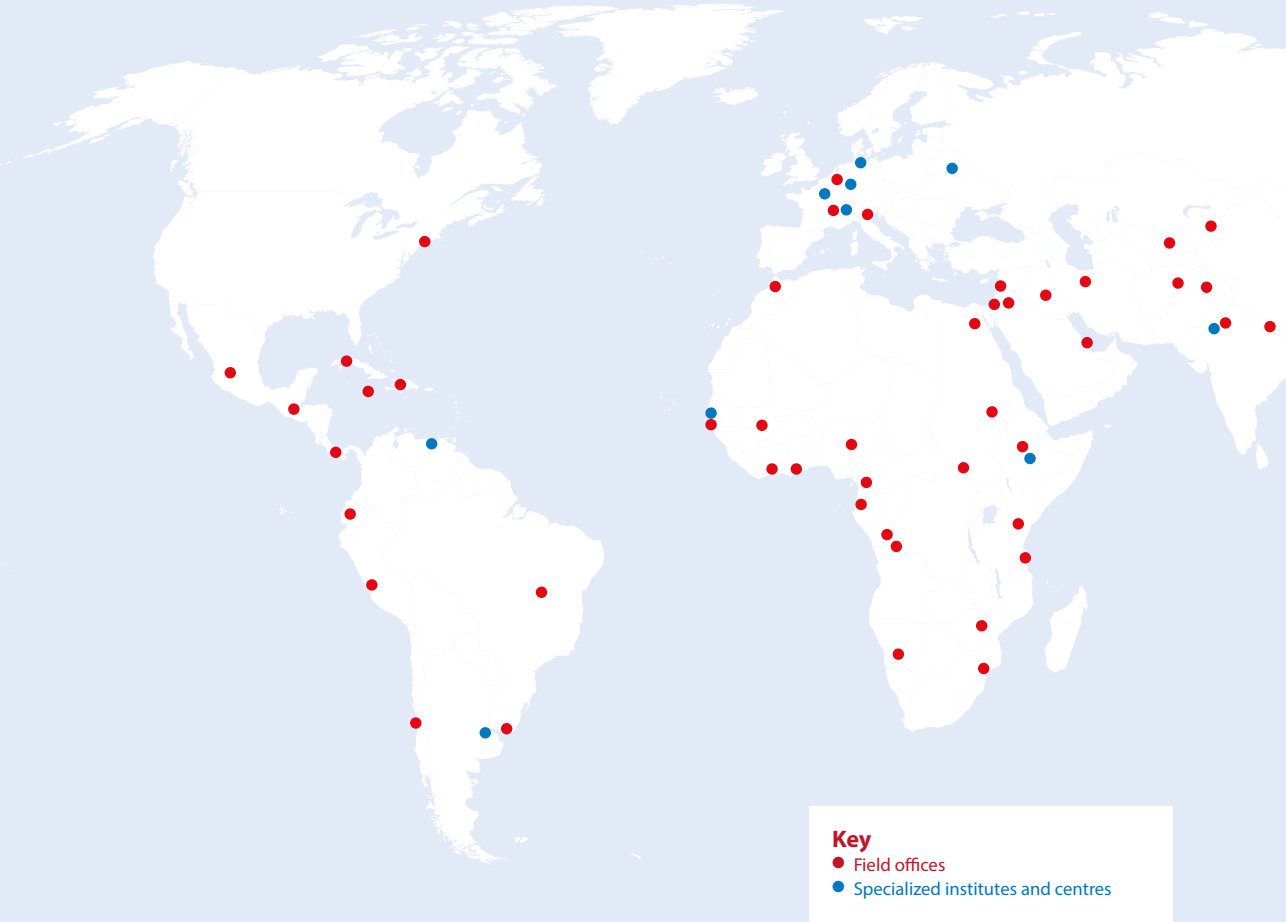
Through its 53 field offices, UNESCO develops strategies, programmes and activities in consultation with national authorities and other partners.

### Sub-Saharan Africa:

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

### Arab States:

Amman, Bagdad, Beirut, Cairo, Doha, Khartoum, Rabat, Ramallah



## Specialized institutes and centres

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

### Asia and the Pacific:

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

### Europe and North America:

Brussels, Geneva, New York, Venice

### Latin America and the Caribbean:

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



### The International Bureau of Education

(Geneva, Switzerland) works to enhance curriculum development and education content.



### The International Institute for Education Planning

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



### The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

(Hamburg, Germany) promotes lifelong learning policy and practice, with a focus on adult education literacy and non-formal education.



### The Institute for Information Technologies in Education

(Moscow, Russian Federation) assists countries in the use of information and communication technologies in education.



### The International Institute for Higher Education in Latin American and the Caribbean

(Caracas, Venezuela) promotes the development of higher education in the region.



### The International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa

(Addis Ababa, Ethiopia) helps strengthen Africa's educational institutions with a focus on teachers.



### The Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development

(New Delhi, India) specializes in research, knowledge-sharing and policy formulation for peace, sustainability and global citizenship.



### The International Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training

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

## Global networks

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



Founded in 1953, the **UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet)** is a global network of 10,000 educational institutions in 181 countries. Member institutions ranging from pre-schools, primary, secondary and vocational schools to teacher training institutions work in support of international understanding, peace, intercultural dialogue, sustainable development and quality education in practice.



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



Started in 1993, the **UNEVOC Network** is an exclusive global platform for Technical and Vocational Education and Training. It consists of 290 UNEVOC Centres, based in 167 UNESCO Member States. The Network is instrumental in the production and dissemination of research, case studies, databases and publications, and enables the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre to perform its function as a clearinghouse.

## Development partners

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

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

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



## Stay in touch

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## Education transforms lives

This brochure explores UNESCO's role in leading and coordinating the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".

UNESCO is the United Nations' specialized agency for education and the Education Sector provides global and regional leadership in education and responds to contemporary global challenges through education with a special focus on gender equality and Africa.