Unpacking
Sustainable Development Goal 4
Education 2030

GUIDE

Education
2030

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Purpose

This guide, organized around a set of questions and answers to "unpack" SDG4, provides overall guidance for a deeper understanding of SDG4 within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in order to support its effective implementation. The guide outlines the key features of SDG4-Education 2030 and the global commitments expressed in the SDG4 targets as articulated in the Incheon Declaration and the Education 2030 Framework for Action. The guide also examines the implications of translating these global commitments within, and through, national education development efforts.

This guide supplements the UNESCO technical guidelines (2016) for Mainstreaming SDG4-Education 2030 into sector-wide policy and planning.

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What is Education 2030?

What is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an inter-governmental commitment and "a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity". It comprises 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are "integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental"; and demonstrate the scale and ambition of the new universal Agenda.1 They result from what is arguably the most inclusive process of consultation in the history of the United Nations, reflecting substantive input from all sectors of society, all actors of the international community and all parts of the world. All Member States, the entire UN system, experts and a cross-section of civil society, business and, most importantly, millions of people from all corners of the globe, have committed themselves to this comprehensive agenda seeking to address globally-shared concerns and to promote the public good.

How is education articulated in the 2030 Agenda?

Sustainable Development Goal 4: Education is central to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Within the comprehensive 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, education is essentially articulated as a stand-alone goal (SDG 4) with its 7 outcome targets and 3 means of implementation.

Quality Education

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Education-related targets across the SDGs: Education in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is not restricted to SDG 4. Education, is specifically mentioned in targets of the five goals listed below, but also linked to almost all of the other SDGs in one way or another:

Health and Well-being

Target 3.7: By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes

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1   United Nations A/RES/70/1 (Distr.: General 21 October 2015) Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015 [without reference to a Main Committee (A/70/L.1)] 70/1. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
    http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

Gender Equality

Target 5.6: Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee women aged 15-49 years access to sexual and reproductive health care, information and education
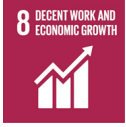
Decent Work and Economic Growth

Target 8.6: By 2020 substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training

Responsible Consumption & Production

Target 12.8: By 2030 ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature

Climate Change Mitigation

Target 13.3: Improve education, awareness raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning

What are the underlying principles?

1. **Education is a fundamental human right and an enabling right.** To fulfil this right, countries must ensure universal equal access to inclusive and equitable quality education and learning, leaving no one behind. Education shall aim at the full development of the human personality and promote mutual understanding, tolerance, friendship and peace.

2. **Education is a public good.** The state is the main duty-bearer in protecting, respecting, and fulfilling the right to education. As a shared societal endeavour, education implies an inclusive process of public policy formulation and implementation2. Civil society, teachers and educators, the private sector, communities, families, youth and children all have important roles in realizing the right to quality education. The role of the state is essential in setting and regulating standards and norms.

3. **Gender equality is inextricably linked to the right to education for all.** Achieving gender equality requires a rights-based approach that ensures that girls and boys, women and men not only gain access to and complete education cycles, but are empowered equally in and through education.

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2   UNESCO (2015) *Rethinking Education: Towards a common global good?*

How does SDG4 differ from the MDGs and from EFA?

As a global education agenda, SDG4 differs from both the education-related MDGs and from EFA in scope, geographical coverage and policy focus. Table 1 below highlights some of these differences.

Scope: While MDG2 was focused on children and access to primary education, EFA had a broader agenda aimed at 'meeting the basic learning needs of children, youth and adults'. As we know, the EFA commitment to ensure the right to basic education for all was not achieved by the deadline set for 2015. SDG4 therefore pursues this unfinished education agenda, but also goes beyond, committing all countries to ensure *equal opportunity in access to quality learning opportunities* at all levels of education in a lifelong perspective.

Geographical coverage: With its narrower scope on ensuring children's access to, and completion of primary education, the geographical coverage of the MDGs was focused on low-income and conflict-affected countries in the South. This was not the case for EFA. While originally intended as a universal agenda to ensure quality basic education for all in all countries across the world, in practice, EFA became focused on countries where the proportion of children out-of-school was the greatest. SDG4, on the other hand, is, by definition a universal agenda applicable to all countries both in the global North, as well as the global South.

Policy focus: From the narrower MDG focus on access to, and completion of, primary education, EFA was concerned with access to quality basic education for all children, youth and adults. This included early childhood care and education, primary and secondary education, as well as youth and adult literacy and life skills. The SDG4 continues the EFA focus on quality basic education for all and broadens the agenda further to include concern for equitable access to post-basic education and training for youth and adults through equitable access to appropriate learning opportunities. What is also new to the SDG4 is the focus on the relevance of learning outcomes both for the world of work, as well as for citizenship in a global and interconnected world.

Table 1: Global education agendas compared: MDG2, EFA and SDG4

Global Education Agendas		
MDG2	**EFA**	**SDG4**
Scope Primary Education [children]	Basic Education [children, youth & adults]	Basic Education; Post Basic Education/Training; Lifelong perspective
Geograhical coverage Low-income countries Conflict-affected	While universal in intention, in practice focus on lower-income countries	Universal agenda for all countries regardless of income level/ development status
Policy focus Access to and completion of primary education for all	Access to quality basic education for all	Access to quality basic education for all; + Equitable access to post-basic education & training; + Relevance of learning for both work and 'global citizenship'

What are the key features of SDG4-Education 2030?

A universal agenda for all countries: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is framed by 5 key objectives: (1) **People -** to end poverty and hunger; (2) **Planet -** to protect the planet from degradation (3) **Prosperity -** to ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives (4) **Peace -** to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies and (5) **Partnership -** to mobilize the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalised Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. The concern for sustainable development and its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental - is at the heart of the 2030 global development agenda. This globally shared concern for sustainability implies a *universal agenda* relevant to all societies regardless of income and/or development status. This can be understood as a *universality of principles* (human rights), *universality of reach* (focus on equity and inclusion), and *universality of country coverage*.

A broad scope ensuring lifelong learning opportunities for all: SDG4-Education 2030 aims to ensure equitable opportunities to education in a holistic and *lifelong learning* perspective. It aims to ensure universal pre, primary and secondary education leading to effective and relevant learning outcomes for all children, youth and adults as a foundation for lifelong and life wide-learning. In addition, SDG 4 also aims to ensure *equal opportunity in access to further learning opportunities* for youth and adults throughout life.

Renewed focus on equity, inclusion and gender equality: SDG4–Education 2030 includes a renewed and broader focus on inclusion, equity and gender equality. This is particularly explicit 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 including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples.

Renewed focus on effective learning: SDG4–Education 2030 includes a renewed focus on *effective learning* and the acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills and competencies. This is evident in the targets and global indicators for primary and secondary education (Target 4.1), as well as for youth and adult literacy (Target 4.6).

New focus on relevance of learning: What is new in the SDG4-Education 2030 is the focus on the *relevance of learning*, both in terms of vocational and technical skills for decent work (Target 4.4), as well as for 'global citizenship' in a plural, interdependent, and interconnected world (Target 4.7).

What are the SDG4 targets and commitments?

SDG4, and its corresponding targets, aim to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." A full understanding of each of the ten SDG4 targets requires reference to the Incheon Declaration and the Education 2030 Framework for Action. Each of the targets listed below presents a brief statement of the main policy commitments as derived from the Framework for Action.

Outcome Targets

Target 4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

The provision of **12 years of free, publicly-funded, inclusive, equitable, quality primary and secondary education** – of which **at least nine years**[4] are **compulsory**, leading to relevant learning outcomes – should be ensured for all, without discrimination.

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4   The first nine years of formal education, i.e. the cumulative duration of ISCED 1 and 2: ISCED 1 is the primary level, typically lasting six years (with variation across countries between four and seven years), and ISCED 2 is lower secondary, typically lasting three years (again, with variation). (UIS. 2012. International Standard Classification of Education: ISCED 2011. www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/isced-2011-en.pdf.)

Target 4.2 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

The provision of **at least one year of free and compulsory quality pre-primary education** is encouraged, to be delivered by well-trained educators, as well as that of early childhood development and care.

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

It is imperative to **reduce barriers to skills development and technical and vocational education and training** (TVET), starting from the secondary level, as well as to tertiary education, including university, and to provide lifelong learning opportunities for youth and adults. The **provision of tertiary education should be made progressively free**, in line with existing international agreements.

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

1. Access: **Equitable access to TVET needs to be expanded** while quality is ensured. Learning opportunities should be increased and diversified, using a wide range of education and training modalities, so that all youth and adults, especially girls and women, can acquire relevant knowledge, skills and competencies for decent work and life.

2. Skills acquisition: Beyond **work-specific skills**, emphasis must be placed on developing **high-level cognitive and non-cognitive/transferable skills**, such as problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, communication skills and conflict resolution, which can be used across a range of occupational fields. Moreover, learners should be provided with opportunities to update their skills continuously through lifelong learning.

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

1. Inclusion and equity: **All people**, irrespective of sex, age, race, colour, ethnicity, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property or birth, as well as persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples, and children and youth, especially those in vulnerable situations or other status, **should have access to inclusive, equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities**. Vulnerable groups that require particular attention and targeted strategies include persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities and the poor.

2. Gender equality: **All girls and boys, women and men, should have equal opportunity to enjoy education of high quality, achieve at equal levels and enjoy equal benefits from education**. Adolescent girls and young women, who may be subject to gender-based violence, child marriage, early pregnancy and a heavy load of household chores, as well as those living in poor and remote rural areas, require special attention. In contexts in which boys are disadvantaged, targeted action should be taken for them. Policies aimed at overcoming gender inequality are more effective when they are part of an overall package that also promotes health, justice, good governance and freedom from child labour.

Target 4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

The principles, strategies and actions for this target are underpinned by the contemporary understanding of **literacy as a continuum of proficiency levels** in a given context. It goes beyond the understanding of a simple dichotomy of 'literate' versus 'illiterate'. Therefore, action for this target aims at ensuring that by 2030, all young people and adults across the world should have achieved **relevant and recognized proficiency levels in functional literacy and numeracy skills** that are equivalent to levels achieved at successful completion of basic education.

Target 4.7 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

It is vital to give a central place to strengthening education's contribution to the fulfilment of human rights, peace and **responsible citizenship** from local to global levels, gender equality, sustainable development and health. The content of such education must be relevant, with a focus on both cognitive and non-cognitive aspects of learning. The knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required by citizens to lead productive lives, make informed decisions and assume active roles locally and globally in facing and resolving **global challenges** can be acquired through education for sustainable development (ESD) and global citizenship education (GCED), which includes peace and human rights education, as well as intercultural education and education for international understanding.

Means of Implementation

> **Target 4.a** Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

This target addresses the need for adequate physical infrastructure and safe, inclusive environments that nurture learning for all, regardless of background or disability status.

> **Target 4.b** 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

Scholarship programmes can play a vital role in providing opportunities for young people and adults who would otherwise not be able to afford to continue their education. Where developed countries offer scholarships to students from developing countries, these should be structured to build the capability of the developing country. While the importance of scholarships is recognized, donor countries are encouraged to increase other forms of support to education. In line with the SDG4 -Education 2030 focus on equity, inclusion and quality, scholarships should be transparently targeted at young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Target 4.c 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

Teachers are the key to achieving all of the SDG4 targets. It requires urgent attention, with a more immediate deadline, because the equity gap in education is exacerbated by the shortage and uneven distribution of professionally trained teachers, especially in disadvantaged areas. As teachers are a fundamental condition for guaranteeing quality education, teachers and educators should be empowered, adequately recruited and remunerated, motivated, professionally qualified, and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems.

What is the 2030 Framework for Action?

The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of SDG4 at country, regional and global levels. The first part outlines the vision and principles on which SDG4 is based. Part 2 then presents the overarching goal and each of the seven outcome targets and the three means of implementation, providing rationales for each and proposing indicative strategies. Finally, Part 3 of the Framework for Action outlines issues relative to implementation modalities, including: Governance, accountability and partnerships; Coordination; Monitoring and Review, and Financing. It also includes the framework of global and thematic indicators proposed for the monitoring of progress towards SDG4 commitments. These frameworks can also be found in Annexes 3 and 4 of the present guide.

Translating SDG4 commitments at country level

Can SDG4 commitments be *contextualized* at national level?

SDG4 targets express a global commitment for all countries to ensure the right to quality education for all throughout life. This includes commitments to ensure both access to quality pre-primary, primary and secondary education for all, as well as equal opportunity in access to effective quality post-secondary education and training. Across all targets is a central concern for ensuring equal opportunity in access to effective and relevant learning. These commitments are articulated either as **global targets** and/or as **global signposts:**

1. Global Targets: A number of SDG4 targets express the renewed global commitment to universalize access to quality basic education for all and gender parity by 2030. These global targets reflect most clearly the **'unfinished EFA agenda'**.

- Target 4.1 - Ensuring that all children and youth have access to a full cycle of 12 years of quality primary/secondary education, of which a minimum of 9 years are to be compulsory, public, and free.

- Target 4.2 - Ensuring that all children have access to quality early childhood development, care and at least one year of pre-primary education for all children.

- Target 4.5 – Ensuring gender parity at all levels of education.

- Target 4.6 - Ensuring that all youth [15-24 years of age] have adequate literacy and numeracy skills.

Despite different baselines that exist in each context, the common global commitment for all countries remains the same – to universalize access to quality pre, primary and secondary education for all children and youth and ensure gender parity in education by 2030.

2. Global 'Signposts': Other SDG4 targets do not articulate a global (quantitative) target for all countries to reach. Rather than quantitative targets, they serve as *global signposts*. These signposts express **global commitments that need to be contextualized and reflected in national education policy priorities**. As global signposts for national educational development, these targets **require the setting of quantifiable targets at national level**.

- Target 4.3 – Ensuring expanded and equitable access to all forms of post-basic education and training

- Target 4.4 – Ensuring relevant skills for the world of work

- Target 4.7 – Ensuring relevant learning for citizenship in a global world

- Target 4.a – Ensuring safe and inclusive learning environments

- Target 4.c – Ensuring adequate teacher recruitment, training and professional development, and working conditions

National benchmarks: Whether expressed as global targets or as global signposts, national governments are expected to integrate these global SDG4 commitments into

national education development efforts. In all cases, appropriate intermediate national/ local benchmarks will need to be established. Intermediate benchmarks for each target can serve as quantitative goalposts for review of overall progress vis-à-vis the longer-term goals. Intermediate benchmarks at national level are indispensable for addressing the accountability deficit associated with longer-term targets.

What are the policy implications for educational development?

Key Featuresand Policy Priorities	Implications for Educational Development
Universally-relevant agenda with sustainability at its core	**Collaboration, cooperation and partnerships:** As a universally-relevant agenda, SDG 4 – Education 2030 is a collective commitment of all countries regardless of their level of development. This has implications for patterns of cooperation, partnerships, and coordination among stakeholders within and across countries. **Inter-sectoral coordination at country level:** The inter-linkages between and among SDGs require going beyond a 'silo approach' to education. Any strategies that aim to realize SDG 4, and ultimately all SDGs, should be based on an inter-sectoral coordination mechanism that is linked to the wider SDG coordination.
Expanded access to **all levels of education** in a holistic and **lifelong learning** approach based on the principles of education as a basic human right and as a public good	**Legislation:** The commitments (1) to universal youth literacy, at least one-year of pre-primary education, 12 years of public and free primary and secondary education (of which at least nine years are compulsory), and (2) to ensure equal opportunity in access to post-basic education and training may require adjustment/strengthening of national legislation. **Sector-wide policy, planning and coordination:** The fact that SDG4-Education 2030 concerns all levels of formal and non-formal education, as well as learners of all age groups, requires a truly sector-wide approach to education policy, planning, and coordination. **Recognition, validation and accreditation of learning:** A lifelong learning approach requires a system of recognition, validation and accreditation (RVA) of learning and competencies acquired outside formal education and training institutions. RVA is essential for the establishment and facilitation of pathways between formal and less formal learning opportunities, as well as between education, training and work. **Financing:** The ambition of the SDG4-Education 2030 agenda to expand access to learning opportunities for all throughout life places greater pressure on public funding of education. There is a need to ensure more efficient and equitable use of scarce resources and to promote greater accountability in the use of public resources for education. There is also a need to increase public education budgets through greater fiscal capacity, innovative partnerships with non-state actors, and advocacy for increased official development assistance.

Renewed focus on **equity, inclusion and gender equity**	**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 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.
Renewed focus on **effective learning**	**Curriculum and teacher training:** Focus on effective and relevant learning may require review of existing curricula frameworks; teaching and learning contents, pedagogy, materials and classroom teaching practice; assessment frameworks; as well as teacher training and professional development. A holistic and coherent curricular approach will require alignment between curriculum content, assessment, teacher training, as well as school leadership and management.
	Assessment of learning outcomes: Focus on effective and relevant learning requires fairer and more balanced mechanisms for measuring and validating knowledge, skills and competencies across a broader spectrum of users and of competences and thus greater flexibility in assessment practice.
New focus on **relevance of learning** both for the world of work and civic life	**Quality assurance and qualification frameworks:** Focus on the effective acquisition of competencies and the relevance of learning for the world of work and civic life requires the establishment or the strengthening of national quality assurance and qualification frameworks.

What does it mean to *implement* SDG4?

A range of terms are often used interchangeably when it comes to the 'implementation' of SDG4. These include 'mainstreaming', 'streamlining', 'translating' and 'integrating' SDG4 goal and targets into national education sector policies and plans, as well as 'aligning' and 'adapting' education sector policies and plans with SDG4. Whatever the terms used, it is important to highlight that because of its sector-wide scope, SDG4 cannot be implemented as something different and separate from national education sector development efforts.

'Implementing' SDG4 at country level implies an effort to align/adapt national education policy and planning to global targets and policy priorities reflected in the 2030 agenda. The degree of alignment of national policies and plans to SDG4 will depend on countries' policy

priorities, political commitment, planning cycles, institutional arrangements, as well as human, technical, and financial capacity.

Are national SDG4 plans necessary?

SDG4 targets and policy priorities should be part of existing national education policies, plans and processes. Efforts to realize SDG4 commitments should **not** result in parallel or separate plans or processes. SDG4 policy commitments do not exist outside of existing national policies, planning, management and monitoring processes and mechanisms. Rather, existing country-led systems, processes and mechanisms should be supported or strengthened to ensure better alignment/adaptation with global commitments.

What are the steps involved in translating global commitments at country level?

Building a shared understanding at country level: Building a shared understanding of the 2030 agenda among all stakeholders is a necessary precondition in order to translate global SDG4 commitments into national education development efforts. This involves inclusive consultations around the new agenda within the education sector and across other sectors to ensure two-way integration of education and the other SDGs. The participatory process of building this shared understanding is key to ensuring buy-in from all stakeholders involved in the development of the national education system.

Assessing country readiness: Based on this, it is then necessary to assess country readiness for the translation of SDG4 commitments into national education systems. This includes assessing the policy, planning, monitoring, and management contexts of national education systems in order to identify the gaps with SDG4 commitments and ambitions, as well as the actions required to strengthen, adjust and/or adapt policy and planning frameworks and processes to reflect 2030 targets and commitments.

- **Policy context:** Assessment of the national legislative and policy context against global 2030 policy commitments. This implies an examination of legislative and policy frameworks and an identification of potential gaps that may exist between the national policy context and global commitments.

- **Planning context:** Identification of entry-points that would allow for the mainstreaming or integration of 2030 commitments into the national planning context. Depending on specific national policy/planning cycles, this could be done either through the development of a sector-wide, or sub-sector plan(s), or by realigning/updating existing plans to better reflect SDG4 commitments.

- **Monitoring and evaluation:** This involves an examination of existing national monitoring and evaluation frameworks to better reflect the requirements of the global indicator framework proposed for the monitoring of SDG4 progress.

- **Management context:** This involves a review of existing sector coordination mechanisms and processes in view of the system-wide, inclusiveness and transparency requirements of the Education 2030 ambitions. Partner dialogue can also be organized to ensure coordinated efforts to contextualize SDG4 commitments.

These are the first steps in translating 2030 commitments at country level. In all cases, efforts undertaken to translate global Education 2030 commitments at country level must be country-led and country-owned. They must be embedded in national education policy and planning processes and structures.

How are the efforts of partners coordinated?

Translating SDG4 commitments into national education development efforts involves the engagement of, and coordination among, a wide range of partners at all levels. Whether at the global, regional or national level, strong multi-stakeholder partnerships linked to broader SDG processes are essential for successful translation of 2030 commitments into national education development efforts.

Principles for mutual accountability: The principles of (i) country ownership, (ii) focus on results, (iii) transparency, and (iv) shared responsibility, apply to all partners at all levels, as well as to all stages of policy, planning and implementation cycles. Partners are all expected to adhere to these principles in working together to provide support to countries. The principles are key to ensuring mutual accountability in the pursuit of shared SDG4 commitments.

Coordination of partners: Achieving the aspirations of the education goal and targets in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires coordinated efforts at all levels among all partners involved. In supporting government efforts to ensure quality inclusive education and lifelong learning opportunities for all, partners are expected to clearly define their respective commitments and the nature of their support based on their own comparative advantage. Given the diversity of both development partners and the support they may provide, coordination is key at country, regional and global levels.

Coordination at country level: At country level, coordination may be ensured through a variety of existing mechanisms or partnerships. The nature and dynamics of existing education sector coordination mechanisms vary across very diverse country settings. SDG4 commitments may require the strengthening and/or adaption of existing mechanisms to ensure they are truly sector-wide, inclusive and country-led.

SDG–Education 2030 Steering Committee: At the international level, the SDG–Education 2030 Steering Committee, convened by UNESCO, constitutes the global multi-stakeholder governance mechanism for SDG4. The primary objective of the Steering Committee is to provide strategic guidance, to review progress against the Global Education Monitoring Report, to make recommendations to the education community on key priorities and actions to achieve the new agenda, to monitor and advocate for adequate financing, and to encourage coordination of partner activities. The Steering Committee is composed of 34 members representing a majority from Member States, as well as Education 2030

co-convening agencies (UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women, the World Bank, ILO), OECD, GPE, regional organizations, teacher organizations, and civil society networks.

Coordination mechanisms at regional/sub-regional levels: Regional and sub-regional coordination is essential to support national efforts and to ensure harmonization between efforts at the global and country levels. Regional coordination mechanisms should build on and be in line with existing mechanisms and structures to the extent possible, including with the broader UN coordination mechanisms for monitoring and reporting established for follow up and reporting on the overall SDG framework. Composition of regional Education 2030 coordination mechanisms include representatives of Education 2030 co-convening agencies, regional organizations, regional CSO networks, as well as other regional or international partners that may be involved in supporting educational development in countries within the region.

The regional and sub-regional levels are key both to informing the global Steering Committee about regional realities and national priorities, as well as to translating global guidance provided by the global Steering Committee into country-level action. In order to ensure optimal articulation between the global Steering Committee and country realities, the composition of the regional coordination mechanism at (sub)regional level should include the global Steering Committee members who represent the region.

Financing Education 2030

What are the implications for domestic financing?

Financing the translation and implementation of SDG4 commitments will not only require higher levels of sustained funding, but also more efficient and equitable use of these funds. As outlined in the Education 2030 Framework for Action (para 106), domestic resources remain the most important source for funding education. There must therefore be a clear commitment by governments to provide equitable financing commensurate with national educational priorities, needs, and capacities to advance the progressive realization of the right to education. In order to increase and improve domestic financing for education, countries will need to:

Increase public funding for education: This requires widening the tax base, preventing tax evasion and increasing the share of the national budget allocated to education. International benchmarks recommend allocating 15-20% of public expenditure to education and 4 - 6% of GDP.

Increase efficiency and accountability: While domestic funding for education needs to be increased, existing resources need to be used more efficiently. Improving governance and accountability can increase efficiency and effective use of existing resources.

Prioritize those most in need: Finally, education resources allocated to education should be used in a more equitable manner. Disadvantaged children, youth and adults, as well as women and girls and people in conflict-affected areas, typically have the greatest education needs and financing should therefore be targeted towards them.

What are the implications for Official Development Assistance?

As outlined in the Education 2030 Framework for Action (para 107), shortage of funds should not jeopardize the right of billions of learners entitled to relevant educational opportunities. The annual financing gap between available domestic resources and the funding necessary to meet the 2030 commitments in low and lower middle income countries is even more important than it was with the Education for All agenda. The gap is particularly large in low income countries, where it constitutes 42% of annual total costs. An important use of international public finance, including Official Development Assistance (ODA), is to catalyse additional resource mobilization from other sources, public and private. Aid will thus remain a crucial source of education finance if the 2030 commitments are to be met. External financing of education needs to be increased and improved. In order to do so, education partners therefore need to:

Reverse the decline in aid to education: The fall in aid to education in recent years must be reversed. The fulfilment of all commitments related to ODA is crucial, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) for ODA to developing countries and 0.15% to 0.2% of GNI to least developed countries. Moreover, support to least developed countries for education has to be increased with predictable patterns of aid to education.

Improve aid effectiveness through harmonization and better coordination: Donors, middle income countries and other partners should support the financing of Education 2030 commitments according to each country's needs and priorities, seeking to leverage domestic and external finance in support of the common agenda. Donors should ensure that aid is better harmonized and coordinated and that it strengthens country ownership and accountability to its citizens.

Improve the equity of external financing: While declining ODA flows need to reversed, external financing should also be better targeted at supporting neglected subsectors and low income countries, and vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in middle income countries. Multi and bilateral donors for education should develop strategies in cooperation with recipient countries to jointly define what kind of support should be best provided and through which channels and modalities of delivery.

Promote South-South and triangular cooperation: South-South cooperation is an important means of supplementing international cooperation for development. South-South cooperation should be seen as an expression of solidarity among peoples and countries of the South, based on their shared experiences and objectives. Triangular cooperation should be strengthened as a means of financing education and bringing relevant experience and expertise to bear in development cooperation. Moreover, the establishment of the BRICS Development Bank by Brazil, China, India, the Russian Federation and South Africa may offer new sources of funding for education and help reverse aid declines.

Increase aid flows to education in conflict and crisis: It will be impossible to deliver education to all without successfully reaching children, youth and adults in fragile states and those affected by conflict and natural hazard. The 2030 Framework for Action calls for urgent efforts to significantly increase support for education in humanitarian responses and protracted crises. Creating synergies between humanitarian and development financing can increase the effectiveness of investments in recovery efforts in fragile and conflict-affected states.

What are the global processes and mechanisms for financing SDG4?

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.

Global Partnerships for Education: The Global Partnership has grown out of the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) established in 2002. In 2012, the FTI was transformed into a constituency-based partnership, governed by its Board of Directors with stronger representation from developing country partners and non-state actors, and was rebranded as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). Following this reform, the GPE's operational platform continued to focus on the value of country-owned education sector plans, supported by key stakeholders at the country level (ideally in a Local Education Group). But the Global Partnership also expanded its direct technical support to country processes, through technical engagement, new guidelines, capacity development activities, and sharing of global best practices and innovations, to accommodate fragile and post-conflict countries and to include all six EFA goals while continuing emphasis on basic education. As "a compact explicitly linking increased donor support for education to recipient countries' policy performance and accountability for result", the GPE Board adopted a new funding model in 2014. The GPE has now emerged as the fourth largest funder of basic education in developing countries with rapid expansion of GPE developing country partners, from 44 countries in 2010 to 59 in 2014, of which 28 are fragile or conflict-affected. To join the Global Partnership, countries make domestic commitments to credible sector plans and to enhance domestic financing.

'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. Education Cannot Wait 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.

Monitoring progress

How will progress be monitored?

As the primary responsibility for monitoring lies at the national level, countries should establish effective monitoring and accountability mechanisms which are adapted to national contexts and priorities, in consultation with all stakeholders. At the global level, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) remains the official source of cross-nationally comparable data on education and supports countries to strengthen national education data systems. The Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report is the global mechanism for monitoring and reporting on SDG4 and on education in the other SDGs. It also reports on the progress of implementation of national, regional and international strategies to help hold all relevant partners accountable for their commitments as part of the overall SDG follow-up and review.

What indicator framework is proposed to monitor progress?

At the **international level**, there are **11 global indicators** proposed for monitoring SDG 4 [see Appendix 3]. These 11 global indicators represent the minimum set of indicators proposed to countries for the global monitoring of the SDG 4 targets. A broader set of internationally-comparable indicators are also being developed. This set of **43 thematic indicators** serve to chart global progress on education and to monitor the SDG4 education targets more comprehensively across countries, allowing the possibility to identify conceptual challenges regarding the targets that are not adequately addressed and reflected by the global indicators. The thematic indicator framework [See Appendix 4] includes the global indicators as a subset and also proposes a set of additional indicators that countries may use to monitor their progress. The selection of which additional indicators to be used in each national context will depend on policy priorities, technical capacity, and data availability.

Additional **regional indicators** may be developed to take account of specific regional contexts and relevant policy priorities for concepts that are less amenable to global comparison. At the **national level**, countries will also have additional indicators that account for specificities of their national contexts and that correspond to their education systems, policy agendas, strategies and plans.

Appendix 1

Key Reference documents on SDG4 – Education 2030

Incheon Declaration   2015

Adopted at the WEF 2015, the Incheon Declaration Education 2030 expresses the collective commitment of the global education community to an ambitious education goal within the SDG framework. It also entrusts UNESCO to continue its mandated role to lead and coordinate the global education agenda.

Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development   2015

In September 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York. The Agenda includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) including SDG 4 '*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*'.
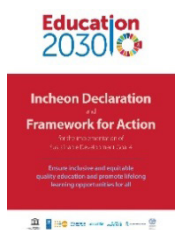
Education 2030 Framework for Action   2015

The main objective of the Education 2030 Framework for Action is to provide guidance for the implementation of SDG4. The Framework for Action was adopted by 184 Member States and the global education community at the high-level meeting (Paris, November 2015) alongside the UNESCO 38th General Conference.
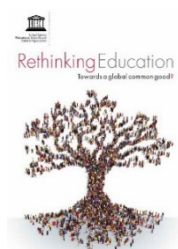
Rethinking Education: Towards a global common good?   2015

Inspired by a humanistic vision of education and development, this UNESCO publication is a call for dialogue and public policy debate. It proposes to reconcile the purpose and organization of education as a collective societal endeavour in a complex world.

Education for People and Planet: Creating sustainable futures for all
Global Education Monitoring Report   2016

The report highlights the ways in which education can serve as a catalyst for the overall 2030 agenda for sustainable development. It also tackles the many challenges of monitoring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goal 4, including recommendations for policy change at the national, regional and global level.

Appendix 2

Key Strategic Messages: SDG4-Education 2030

1. **Education is at the heart of the SDGs:** Education is key for progress towards the achievement of all of the SDGs and should therefore be part of the strategies to achieve each of them.

2. **Beyond a silo approach to education:** All SDGs are interdependent. They can only be achieved if implemented together. It is therefore necessary to go beyond silo approach and ensure that the education sector is better articulated with other development sectors.

3. **SDG4-Education 2030:** In addition to a stand-alone goal on education (SDG 4), the 2030 Agenda also includes targets on education under several other SDGs, notably those on health, economic growth and decent work, sustainable consumption and production and climate change. The term SDG4-Education 2030 encompasses both SDG4, as well as education-related targets across the SDGs.

4. **National ownership and leadership:** Implementation of SDG4-Education 2030 must be government owned and led in order to translate the global education agenda into achievable national policies, plans, targets, initiatives or actions based on their national development needs, policy and planning cycle, institutional capacity, organization of the education systems and the availability of resources.

5. **No separate SDG4-Education 2030 plan** should be developed. Rather, national system-wide education policy, planning and management should be aligned/adapted to 2030 goals and targets to the extent possible in each context.

6. **Building on/strengthening existing coordination mechanisms:** National and regional coordination mechanisms for SDG4 – Education 2030 implementation should – to the extent possible - build on existing coordination mechanisms, systems and processes, and be linked to broader SDG coordination mechanisms at national, regional, and global levels.

7. **Enhanced multi-stakeholder partnerships for implementation, monitoring and accountability:** The ambition of SDG 4 – Education 2030 requires enhanced multi-stakeholder partnerships between state and non-state actors for transparent implementation, monitoring, and accountability.

Appendix 3

Global Indicator Framework to Monitor SDG4 Targets

SDG4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Target 4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

Indicator 4.1.1 Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex

Target 4.2 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

Indicator 4.2.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex

Indicator 4.2.2 Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex

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

Indicator 4.3.1 Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex

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

Indicator 4.4.1 Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill

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

Indicator 4.5.1 Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated

Target 4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

Indicator 4.6.1 Percentage of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex

Target 4.7 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

Indictor 4.7.1 Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in: (a) national education policies, (b) curricula, (c) teacher education and (d) student assessment

Target 4.a By 2030, build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non- violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

Indicator 4.a.1 Proportion of schools with access to: (a) electricity; (b) the Internet for pedagogical purposes; (c) computers for pedagogical purposes; (d) adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities; (e) basic drinking water; (f) single-sex basic sanitation facilities; and (g) basic handwashing facilities (as per the WASH indicator definitions)

Target 4.b 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

Indicator 4.b.1 Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study

Target 4.c 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

Indicator 4.c.1 Proportion of teachers in: (a) pre-primary; (b) primary; (c) lower secondary; and (d) upper secondary education who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training (e.g. pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country

Appendix 4

Proposed Thematic Indicator Framework to Monitor SDG4 Targets [Status - July 2016]

A broader set of internationally-comparable indicators were developed by the Technical Advisory Group on Education Indicators (TAG) and later will be finalized and implemented by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) working with countries, partners and stakeholders in the Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG 4 – Education 2030 (TCG). The thematic indicator set will serve to chart global progress on education and to monitor the SDG 4 education targets more comprehensively across countries, allowing the possibility to identify challenges regarding concepts of the targets that are not reflected well by the global indicators. The thematic indicator framework includes the global indicators as a subset and also represents a recommended set of additional indicators that countries may use to monitor based on the national context, policy priorities, technical capacity and data availability.

SDG4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Concept	Non	Indicator	Proposed global indicators
		Targets 4.1- 4.7	
4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes			
Learning	1.	Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex	Yes
	2.	Administration of a nationally representative learning assessment (i) during primary (ii) at the end of primary and (iii) at the end of lower secondary education	
Completion	3.	Gross intake ratio to the last grade (primary, lower secondary)	
	4.	Completion rate (primary, lower secondary, upper secondary)	
Participation	5.	Out-of-school rate (primary, lower secondary, upper secondary)	
	6.	Percentage of children over- age for grade (primary, lower secondary)	
Provision	7.	Number of years of (i) free and (ii) compulsory primary and secondary education guaranteed in legal frameworks	

4.2 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			
Readiness	8.	Proportion of children under 5 years of age who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex	Yes
	9.	Percentage of children under 5 years of age experiencing positive and stimulating home learning environments	
Participation	10.	Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex	Yes
	11.	Gross pre-primary enrolment ratio	
Provision	12.	Number of years of (i) free and (ii) compulsory pre-primary education guaranteed in legal frameworks	
4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university			
Participation	13.	Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education	
	14.	Participation rate in technical- vocational education programmes (15- to 24-year- olds)	
	15.	Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex	**Yes**
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			
Skills	16.1	Percentage of youth/adults who have achieved at least a minimum level of proficiency in digital literacy skills	
	16.2	Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill	Yes
	17.	Youth/adult educational attainment rates by age group, economic activity status, levels of education and programme orientation	
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			
Equity cross-targets	. . .	Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated	Yes
		Where possible, other indicators should be presented in relation to their distribution across the population	

Policy	18.	Percentage of students in primary education whose first or home language is the language of instruction	
	19.	Extent to which explicit formula-based policies reallocate education resources to disadvantaged populations	
	20.	Education expenditure per student by level of education and source of funding	
	21.	Percentage of total aid to education allocated to low income countries	
4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy			
Skills	22.	Percentage of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex	Yes
	23.	Youth/adult literacy rate	
Provision	24.	Participation rate of youth/ adults in literacy programmes	
4.7 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			
Provision	25.	Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in: (a) national education policies, (b) curricula, (c) teacher education and (d) student assessment	Yes
Knowledge	26.	Percentage of students by age group (or education level) showing adequate understanding of issues relating to global citizenship and sustainability	
	27.	Percentage of 15-year- old students showing proficiency in knowledge of environmental science and geoscience	
Provision	28.	Percentage of students by age group (or education level) showing adequate understanding of issues relating to global citizenship and sustainability	
	29.	Extent to which the framework on the World Programme on Human Rights Education is implemented nationally (as per UNGA Resolution 59/113)	

		Means of implementation **4.a - 4.c**	
**4.a By 2030, build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non- violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all**	
Resources	30.	Proportion of schools with access to (i) basic drinking water; (ii) single-sex basic sanitation facilities; and (iii) basic hand- washing facilities	Yes
	31.	Proportion of schools with access to (i) electricity (ii) the Internet for pedagogical purposes and (iii) computers for pedagogical purposes	Yes
	32.	Proportion of schools with adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities	Yes
Environment	33.	Percentage of students experiencing bullying, corporal punishment, harassment, violence, sexual discrimination and abuse	
	34.	Number of attacks on students, personnel and institutions	
**4.b 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**	
Number	35.	Number of higher education scholarships awarded by beneficiary country	
	36.	Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study	Yes
**4.c 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**	
Qualified	37.	Percentage of teachers qualified according to national standards by education level and type of institution	
	38.	Pupil/qualified teacher ratio by education level	
Trained	39.	Proportion of teachers in: (a) pre-primary; (b) primary; (c) lower secondary; and (d) upper secondary education who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training (e.g. pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country	Yes
	40.	Pupil/trained teacher ratio by education level	
Motivated	41.	Average teacher salary relative to other professions requiring a comparable level of education qualification	
	42.	Teacher attrition rate by education level	
Supported	43.	Percentage of teachers who received in-service training in the last 12 months by type of training	