

A UNESCO position paper on the future of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

(Revised draft after Technical Consultation Meeting on the Future of ESD, 9-10 July 2018, Bangkok, Thailand.)

1. Why this paper?

- 1.1. In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro recognized, in its framework for action Agenda 21, the critical role that education can play in the transition to sustainable development. In 2002, the UN General Assembly declared the ten years from 2005 to 2014 to be the *Decade of Education for Sustainable Development* (DESD), calling on governments to integrate the principles of sustainability into their educational strategies and action plans. UNESCO, which had been assigned the role of task manager for Chapter 36 on education of Agenda 21, became the UN-designated lead agency.
- 1.2. In 2014, the DESD came to an end and, as the follow up, UNESCO launched¹ the *Global Action Programme (GAP) on Education for Sustainable Development* for an initial phase of five years (2015-2019) at the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan. At the same time, the Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development was adopted.² To build on the efforts made by the DESD for advocacy and awareness-raising, the GAP, acknowledged by the UN General Assembly³ as the official follow-up to the DESD, focused on the scaling up of actions on the ground. Advancing policy, transforming learning and training environments, building capacities of educators and trainers, mobilising youth, and accelerating sustainable solutions at local level were identified as five Priority Action Areas for implementation.
- 1.3. The 5-year cycle of the GAP is due to end in 2019. To build a post-GAP position, this draft is being prepared. Once revised through the consultation processes planned in 2018, the final draft will be submitted in 2019 to the Governing Bodies of UNESCO and the UN for their approval processes. Once approved, it will be summarised into a post-GAP programme and launched in 2020 for implementation onwards to 2030.

2. How this paper has been prepared

- 2.1. **Mid-term review of the GAP:** The mid-term review of GAP implementation conducted in 2017 for the period of 2015 and 2016⁴ revealed good progress being made in the implementation of

¹ As endorsed by the 37th session of the UNESCO General Conference (37 C/Resolution 12).

² <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002310/231074e.pdf>

³ Resolution A/RES/69/211.

⁴ The final evaluation of the GAP implementation will be carried out by the end of 2019. If the result of the final evaluation was to be fully integrated into the post-GAP position, there would be a gap of about one year before the new post-GAP position is launched, which requires institutional processes involving the Governing Bodies of UNESCO and UN. In order to avoid the break in implementation, and also as the results of the mid-term review showed a progress trend not expected to be reversed in any way, the process to prepare this post-GAP position has been advanced. This advanced process is supported by Decision 28 of the 204th session of UNESCO's Executive Board, which calls for "seamless follow-up to the Global Action Programme and continued UNESCO leadership in ESD beyond 2019".

the targeted objectives set by the Key GAP Partners.⁵ In the additional consultation held with Key GAP Partners and others, however, the need for more inter-linkages between partners working for different Priority Action Areas was voiced. In the internal review of the mid-term implementation, insufficient visibility of the engagement made by governments of the Member States in the implementation was also pointed out.

- 2.2. **Symposium series:** In order to identify issues and trends that need to be considered and updated in the post-GAP position, UNESCO planned and organized four intensive brainstorming symposia with more than 100 experts and 150 stakeholders involved. They were held in Asia, Europe, Africa and Latin America from 2016 to 2018, and comprised of interviews and visits to concrete actors and their practices on the ground. The discussions were focused on what made people living under different contexts act in favour of sustainable development. The symposium series provided important insight into the observations described in the Required Reflection part of this paper.
- 2.3. **Consultation process:** Based on the observations drawn from the above processes and several internal review processes of UNESCO's ongoing ESD activities, UNESCO prepared a zero draft of the position paper. The first version was shared with and reviewed by GAP Key Partners in a meeting organized in April 2018 in Costa Rica. The second version was submitted to the Technical Consultation Meeting on the Future of ESD, held in July 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand. A wider on-line consultation on the third version will be carried out with the general public up until the end of 2018.

3. Key contexts

- 3.1. **DESD and the GAP:** The DESD aimed at integrating the principles and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning. Its main contribution was awareness-raising, which helped generate interesting practices and projects. The evaluation of the DESD recommended that in order to scale up and maintain these momentous initiatives there should be institutional support, among other things.
- 3.2. The GAP came to fill this gap. Actors working on policy, education and training institutions, educators, youth and local authorities were identified as Key Partners to work in one of the five *Priority Action Areas* – advancing policy, transforming learning and training environments, building capacities of educators and trainers, empowering and mobilising youth, and accelerating sustainable solutions at local level. Their sectoral networking was supported by the five *Partner Networks* set up for the five Priority Action Areas.

⁵ UNESCO (2017). Education for Sustainable Development: Partners in action. Halfway through the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0025/002597/259719e.pdf> According to the mid-term review, the Partners of GAP (and their cascaded networks of partners) supported over 430 strategic policy developments, while there were more than 700 programmes developed and implemented to support countries' policy development on ESD. Around 73,000 schools and 2,560,000 learners were supported by the Partners along with 1.5m educators and 15,000 teacher training institutions. The Partners also supported over 1.7m youth leaders and trained around 62,000 youth leaders as trainers. Finally, over 1,000 civil society organizations conducted ESD activities and over 700 local ESD activities were established.

- 3.3. The mid-term review of GAP implementation reported on the good progress the Key Partners are making in meeting their scaling-up targets. The networking mechanism was found to be useful for mutual learning, but less so for raising funds and developing joint projects. Lessons learned also include that networking efforts must be combined with concrete programme activities that bring Partners together, and that Partners of different sectors should work more collaboratively across the Priority Action Areas.
- 3.4. Furthermore, though policy development has been one of the Priority Action Areas and policy-makers have been active in the implementation of GAP through their participation in the Partner Network for policy development, the leadership assumed by the governments of the Member States was not visibly demonstrated in the current GAP implementation. This was partly due to the fact that global monitoring has focused mainly on the totality of actions scaled up on the ground, which are not necessarily categorized by the type of actors.
- 3.5. This is regrettable as data actually show that governments are indeed making increasing efforts to reflect sustainability principles in the policy arena. According to a survey UNESCO conducted in 2016⁶, for example, over 91 per cent of the responding Member States reported on the increase of their emphasis on ESD in the policy arena. In the post-GAP position, there has to be a special window for monitoring and reporting on the leadership taken by government actors.
- 3.6. **SDGs:** In 2015, the global community launched 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) addressing issues related to poverty, hunger, health, education, energy, work, industry, inequalities, cities, consumption, climate, ocean life, ecosystems, peace and partnership. Achieving these goals requires a profound transformation in the way we live, think and act; and the role of education in achieving all of the 17 SDGs is being given heightened emphasis.
- 3.7. ESD has advocated for the sustainability principle to be reflected in education policy, curricula, training and practice, as a means to empower individuals to take informed decisions. However, some further critical reflection is needed around the fact that, despite its advocacy on a holistic and system-wide approach, when it comes to implementation, ESD tends to be treated as a thematic topic. This has to change. ESD has to outgrow its topical understanding and work more proactively at the systemic level, as a part of SDG 4 on education and Target 4.7 in particular.
- 3.8. The SDGs provide an excellent opportunity to streamline our perspective on ESD. The UN General Assembly Resolution 72/222⁷ noted ESD as an integral element of SDG 4 on Education and a key enabler of all the other SDGs. The 17 SDGs cover all the key environmental challenges (e.g., climate change, water, ocean and land, etc.), and also the fundamental issues that need

⁶ As part of the 6th Consultation on the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which includes questions on ESD. The survey tool used for the monitoring of the 1974 Recommendation is also the one used for monitoring Target 4.7 of SDG 4 on Education, where ESD is an integral element.

⁷ ESD is also part of various other international agreements concerned with sustainable development, such as the three 'Rio Conventions' (on climate change, biodiversity and desertification), the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (2012-2021), among others.

to be taken into consideration in development discourses, such as poverty, gender equality and equity.

- 3.9. The criticism that ESD has received for its 'vagueness', which stems, in part, from its broad and inclusive perspective and the ever-changing nature of sustainability issues, can be addressed more concretely when the field is linked with the SDGs. ESD can also address the interlinkages of the SDGs, long advocated for as essential for genuine progress towards sustainable development. The marriage of ESD and the SDGs is not only a necessity but a 'win-win' for both fields.

4. Required reflections

- 4.1. **Transformative action:** How to encourage learners to undertake transformative actions for sustainability has been a major preoccupation for ESD. The symposium series, which has been undertaken in the preparation of this document, revealed a few important insights into how transformative actions take place.
- 4.2. First of all, transformation necessitates, among other things, a certain level of disruption, with people opting to step outside the safety of the status quo or the 'usual' way of thinking, behaving or living. It requires courage, persistence and determination, which can be present at different degrees, and which are best sourced from personal conviction, insight, or the simple feeling of what is right.
- 4.3. Second, there are different degrees of transformation. With the acquisition of knowledge and information, learners come to be aware of the existence of certain realities. With a critical analysis, they begin to understand the complexity of those realities. An experiential exposure to the realities provides them with a deeper connection with the issues, which can also lead to an empathic connection to those affected by the said realities. Empathy can turn into compassion if the exposed realities bear relevance to the learners' own lives. A tipping point arrives where a compassionate mind is set on the path of empowerment.⁸
- 4.4. The pedagogical implications of this understanding are not few. Opportunities to launch critical inquiry, exposure to realities, relevance to our own lives and the presence of influential peers, mentors or role models, as well as tipping points, play an important role in empowering individuals to take decisive actions. It is also important for learners to have the space to experiment with new 'disruptive' ideas, which can facilitate critical perspectives as well as reaching a tipping point. Formal education alone is not enough. Non-formal and informal learning, including from a lifelong learning perspective taking place in the community provides learners with critical opportunities to relate them to the realities that concern them and to be influenced to take the necessary actions.

⁸ One does not necessarily go through the stages (awareness, understanding of complexities, empathy, compassion, empowerment) in a linear fashion. Stages can be skipped with individuals moving from, say, the first factual stage, directly, to the final stage of empowerment. There can also be cases where individuals start with empathy or compassion, and only later on approach the matter with cognitive awareness, instead of starting with the awareness stage. The pace at which individuals go through these stages can also vary.

- 4.5. There has to be more attention to individuals and how they are transformed. Fundamental changes required for a sustainable future start with individuals and their change of behaviour, attitude and lifestyle, while the contextual factors and institutional supports provide an enabling environment and can bulwark individual contributions. This is particularly so among the younger generation whose transformative action is often prompted when they attach importance to certain values and a lifestyle that corresponds to their sense of identity. ESD is needed to provide them with critical thinking skills to reflect on individual values, attitudes and behaviours as well as lifestyle choices.
- 4.6. Last, but not least, the reflection on transformative action points to the absolute importance of community. In a community, which can be defined not only physically, but also virtually, socially, politically or culturally, learners find causes that concern them both individually and collectively. They can also find other fellow members and bond with them, which generates solidarity and facilitates collective action for transformation.
- 4.7. ESD in action is basically citizenship in action. It evokes the lifelong learning perspective, taking place not only at schools, but also outside the school environment, throughout the life of each individual. Based on human rights and principles such as participation, non-discrimination and accountability, it interacts with the social and cultural milieu of the community and stimulates social learning within the community. Cultural identity can play an important role. In order to link up with communities more closely, schools should be granted more autonomy in implementing the curricula framework and managing their daily activities. ESD in action requires a new perspective on the roles and functions of schools.
- 4.8. **Structural changes:** As much as attention is required for what is happening at the individual level in relation to transformative decisions and experience, there is a need for ESD to focus more on deep structural causes.
- 4.9. The relationship between economic growth and sustainable development is one of the pertinent issues in this regard. There is wide agreement that it is challenging to reconcile economic growth with the principles of sustainable development, as far as current industrial and production patterns continue. Ever accelerating production and consumption deplete natural resources, produce unmanageable amounts of waste and lead to a rise in global temperatures. Many laudable and credible initiatives to promote sustainable production and consumption exist, but their impact has been limited.
- 4.10. ESD in the future will have to encourage learners to explore values which could provide an alternative to consumer society, such as sufficiency, moderation and solidarity. The emerging interest in a circular economy and a sharing economy represents one of those alternatives.⁹ ESD also has to affect the unsustainable production patterns of current economic structures

⁹ A circular economy promotes a shift from a 'take, make and dispose' model to a 'cradle to cradle' approach based on long-lasting product design, repair, reuse, refurbishing and recycling. It argues that even in a sustainable world, consumers can keep enjoying similar products and services. For example, mobile phones can be designed in a different way to allow valuable parts to be reused more easily. While massive amounts of clothes are thrown away due to the 'fast-fashion' trend, some textile companies are restructuring their operation systems to enable use of more recycled fibres in place of primary raw materials.

more directly. This means, people have to be empowered to engage directly in the political process and advocate, for example, for appropriate environmental regulations for businesses.

- 4.11. A structural view is required also to address ESD in the context of extreme poverty. Some consider that ESD is a 'luxury' in the context of extreme poverty or other challenging survival situations (e.g., conflict, war or refugee situation). There is some truth to this in that the full complexity of the concept of sustainable development does not immediately resonate with people trying to survive on a daily basis. But this does not negate the relevance of ESD to populations in need.
- 4.12. Populations in extreme poverty are often the victims of calamitous development and natural disasters. They are affected much more directly by environmental degradation and the lack of economic and social sustainability. ESD approaches that may work for populations living in more fortunate situations may not necessarily be effective for populations in need, as they are. ESD approaches need to be contextualized to the realities of target populations.
- 4.13. For example, the use of community, advocated above as the platform for action, may be approached differently in contexts of extreme poverty. Extreme poverty is often rampant among migrant populations. The 'members' of these groups are brought together artificially with no inherent ties or shared identity. Populations in refugee or other conflictual situations often face the same fate. For such populations, community, which could provide a useful platform for action, should take into consideration the particular issue of group identity.
- 4.14. Furthermore, the approach for populations in extreme poverty may require more attention to the fundamentals. The starting point should be, first and foremost, to ensure and restore human dignity and the right to live decently. Providing people with basic and other relevant life-skills or skills to ensure their livelihood in order to confront and overcome extreme poverty is a priority. And this cannot be done without addressing the wider political, historical, social and economic contexts from which their suffering springs and is perpetuated.
- 4.15. **The technological future:** According to a report published in 2015 by the World Economic Forum, by 2025, or within less than just 10 years, the world will witness major technological shifts that will change every aspect of our societies. The tipping points will eventually change not only our lives and environments, but also our discourse on sustainability. Some 'old' problems will be resolved, but new challenges and risks will arise. ESD for the future cannot afford not to address the implications of the technological era.
- 4.16. The ubiquitous connection of the internet to our environments will help us better monitor and manage energy use. For example, smart city technologies will increase efficiency in managing energy, traffic and logistics. Innovations like 3-D printing may reduce the transportation required for the delivery of materials. Some of the long-standing ESD efforts to change people's behaviour in relation to energy saving, resource management and a green environment may no longer be relevant. At the same time, new opportunities will open up for ESD. For example, ESD can accelerate the transition to green technologies through equipping people with the required green skills.
- 4.17. On the other hand, there will also be a surge of new challenges. For example, 3-D printing can result in the growth of waste for disposal. A digitally automated and connected world helps

secure comfort and quality of life, but it can also pose its own security and safety risks and lead to disasters, the impact of which could be even more spread than in the less connected world. The unequal sharing of the benefits of technological progress can also enlarge the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. ESD for the future should prepare the next generations to stay vigilant for 'new' problems.

- 4.18. Importantly, a critical perspective is required on the continuing relevance of the 'traditional' sustainability values. With sensor-equipped buildings, the behaviour of switching off lights itself may become unnecessary and extinct, but the value of saving energy will and should remain relevant. Ironically, the task of teaching sustainability principles may become more challenging, as technologies give the illusion that they have resolved or can resolve the majority of sustainability problems.
- 4.19. Considering the fact that the business, manufacturing, and enterprise sector as well as the scientific community are often the forefront actors and beneficiaries of technological innovations, it is of utmost importance for ESD to link up more closely with the stakeholders in these communities. Orienting ESD to support the achievement of the SDGs will provide the opportunity for the ESD community to work more closely with the actors of the above communities, who are the main stakeholders of these various goals.

5. Implementation framework

- 5.1. **Title:** The proposed name for the programme to support the post-GAP position is *Global Action Programme 2030 on Education for Sustainable Development: Towards achieving the SDGs (GAP2030)*. It aims to make clear the aspect of continuity from the current framework of the GAP to the post-GAP position, while highlighting the alignment of the post-GAP position with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.
- 5.2. **Goal:** GAP2030 aims to build a more just and sustainable world through the achievement of the 17 SDGs. GAP2030 will achieve this goal through three approaches.
- 5.3. All ESD activities contribute to the achievement of the SDGs. ESD activities carried out by Member States and UNESCO, even without explicit reference to the SDGs, addressed many issues now concretized into specific SDGs. They include, among others, climate change, enshrined in SDG13 on climate action, ocean life in SDG14, biodiversity in SDG15 as well as clean energy in SDG7, sustainable cities and communities in SDG11, responsible consumption and production in SDG12, and education in SDG4. The contributions of these long-standing ESD activities to the achievement of the SDGs are evident and they deserve continuing support.
- 5.4. Meanwhile, with the presence of the SDGs announced specifically, there could also be a more proactive role for ESD to play for the achievement of the SDGs, with explicit reference to them. Communication and advocacy activities related to the SDGs in educational settings are good examples. They will typically involve informing learners of all ages of the existence of the 17 SDGs, and the implications of these goals for their individual and group lives, including the responsibilities individuals and institutions have to assume to help achieve them. These ESD activities are in great demand, as there is a need to reach out to learners of all ages and the

general public to broaden their understanding of the SDGs and education's role in achieving them.

- 5.5. ESD's linkages to the SDGs can go even deeper and beyond communication and advocacy. ESD activities might raise critical questions on the inter-linkages between and among different SDGs, which can involve tensions and lack of clarity. These types of ESD activities will not stop at just addressing topics related to the SDGs or with serving as the communication tool for the SDGs. They will find their *raison d'être* in raising critical questions related to development or sustainable development itself, with the inter-linkages between the different SDGs.
- 5.6. SDG12 on responsible consumption and production, for example, needs to be addressed in connection with SDG8 on decent work and economic growth. There are structural quandaries to be resolved between the two SDGs. SDG9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure needs to consider issues related to SDG11 on sustainable cities and communities. The achievement of both of these SDGs demands a balancing act. ESD in the post-GAP position should present a balancing perspective on development.
- 5.7. The attempt to raise critical and structural questions and view development as a balancing act is not new to the ESD community. From the DESD and throughout the implementation of the current framework of the GAP, reorienting societies towards sustainable development has remained as the ultimate aim of ESD. The 17 SDGs, which encompass main issues related to development and sustainability in a single framework, offer to the global community a renewed window of opportunity to reinforce this fundamental function of ESD.
- 5.8. While ESD contributes to all 17 SDGs, it continues to have a particular relevance for the global education agenda enshrined in SDG 4, in which ESD has a distinct place. ESD is a key element of quality education. Its cross-cutting competencies in cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural dimensions of learning bear relevance to all areas of education. Its particular emphasis on competencies related to empathy, solidarity and action-taking can help advance the SDG 4 agenda towards the future where education contributes not only to the successes of individuals, but also to the collective survival and prosperity of the global community. It will also help the global education agenda move away from an exclusive focus on access and quality measured mainly in terms of learning outcomes, towards an increased emphasis on learning contents and their contribution to the humanity.
- 5.9. **Structures:** The principal aim of the current framework of the GAP is to support the scaling up of actions on the ground. This objective, according to the mid-term review, is being achieved successfully by the GAP Key Partners, generating a large volume of activities on the ground. With the overall approach adopted by the current framework of the GAP proven effective, GAP2030 recommends its main structural components be maintained, while a few adjustments and updates are suggested, based on the lessons learned from the implementation.
- 5.10. First, the five *Priority Action Areas*, – namely, advancing policy, transforming learning and training environments, building capacities of educators and trainers, empowering and mobilising youth and accelerating sustainable solutions at local level – remain valid. They serve as useful entry points for developing GAP2030 activities.

- 5.11. Second, the five *Partner Networks* have been instrumental in reaching grassroots actors. The concept deserves continuing support,¹⁰ but the collaboration among the Networks should be reinforced. To that effect, the programme support to each Network is now suggested to be provided for activities involving different groups of Partners.¹¹ Furthermore, it is suggested that the five Partner Networks be merged into one inclusive *Network of Partners*, with five groups of Partners specialised in the five Priority Action Areas included within, but working collaboratively with other groups of Partners. Further efforts will be made to involve representatives of governments, local authorities, the private sector, civil society organisations, the donor and development communities, as well as the SDG communities in the Network of Partners.
- 5.12. Finally, the UNESCO-Japan Prize for ESD, an integral part of the GAP strategy, and which has become one of the most successful prize programmes in UNESCO, deserves further support as an important advocacy tool for ESD and particularly the post-GAP position.
- 5.13. **Activities by Member States:** ESD is an integral element of Target 4.7 of SDG 4 on Education. It is included as one of the global education targets for which progress will regularly be monitored. ESD is now well understood as a *sine qua non* for quality education in relation to the urgency of building a peaceful and sustainable world for the survival and prosperity of current and future generations. To further support ESD as a key enabler of all the other SDGs and especially SDG4 on education, the Member States shall make the following efforts.
- 5.14. For Priority Action Area 1 on policy, ESD must be integrated in global, regional and national policies related to education and sustainable development so that these policies can create an enabling environment for pedagogies that support individual empowerment and provide skills for socio-political engagement. Coordinated efforts should be made for ESD to find synergies with other relevant national and international agendas on education and sustainable development.
- 5.15. For Priority Action Area 2 on education and training settings, attention is required to promote the whole-institution approach, emphasising the importance and necessity for schools or other education institutions at all levels, from early childhood to higher education and lifelong learning in communities, to work together. There have to be strategic policies and measures to reinforce the interaction and cooperation of the formal, non-formal and informal educational settings.
- 5.16. For Priority Action Area 3 on educators, there will have to be more opportunities for them to increase their capacities to empower learners. The understanding on how transformative actions occur must be reflected in the capacity-building programmes for formal and non-formal educators so that they are clearly aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the various pedagogical approaches they employ. Educators must be facilitators of learning that guide the learners through the transformation as well as expert transmitters of knowledge.

¹⁰ The current membership of the Key Partners Network, however, needs to be renewed, as their terms of reference will finish at the end of 2019, along with the entire current framework of the GAP. There will be a new process to identify partners and the terms of reference for the network will be revised in line with the post-GAP position.

¹¹ The Partners referred to in this document concern around 90 Partners identified at the global level within the current framework of the GAP, whose networking activities have been supported by UNESCO.

- 5.17. For Priority Action Area 4 on youth, the focus will be to provide opportunities for young people's engagement. They should be mobilised in key decision-making processes concerning sustainable development. Young people must be recognized as key actors in addressing sustainability challenges. Creative and innovative minds are among their strengths and activities for young people should tap into these. Trends among youth related to their behavioural patterns and values need to be monitored closely to identify the best way to tap their strengths.
- 5.18. Finally, for Priority Action Area 5 on community, there has to be, first and foremost, a clear understanding that it is in the community where meaningful transformation and transformative actions are most likely to take place. In view of the concentration of the world's population in urban areas, empowering local governments in urban areas is a particularly sound strategy. In that regard, GAP2030 recommends that Priority Action Area 5 is implemented not only as one of the five Priority Action Areas, but also and more importantly as a nodal Priority Action Area that needs to be linked closely to the implementation of all other Priority Action Areas, especially that on youth.
- 5.19. In implementing activities for the five Priority Action Areas, Member States are invited to mobilise the concerned stakeholders working in the Priority Action Areas and support their collaborative networking under a coordinated strategy, related to the national framework on the SDGs. There shall also be more concrete efforts to develop communication and advocacy actions to reflect the SDGs in educational practices and frameworks. Nationwide multi-stakeholder initiatives can be set up to support GAP2030 at the country level.
- 5.20. **Activities by UNESCO:** As was the case with the current framework of the GAP, actions are to be undertaken by Member States through and with multiple stakeholders. UNESCO's function will be to support and assist Member States, providing them with technical guidance, platforms for information exchange and networking, and programme supports that could serve to motivate further scaling up on the ground. GAP2030 will maintain the same stance, within which UNESCO will support the following areas of work:¹²
- 5.21. First, UNESCO will continue to strengthen national capacities for policy advancement. UNESCO will also set up a programme component to support selected nationwide initiatives for GAP2030 at the country level, which could include their roadmap for the implementation, and sharing their experiences and results with other countries.
- 5.22. Second, UNESCO will continue supporting the networking of the key partners identified at the global level and their networking process. This will be done by providing them with regular platforms to meet and exchange information and experiences and plan initiatives collaboratively. The platforms will necessarily include representatives and actors from both government and private sectors and from the donor, development and SDGs' communities, as well as stakeholders working in the five Priority Action Areas at national, regional and global levels.

¹² A full implementation of the post-GAP position described in this paper will require a substantial amount of extra-budgetary resources to be raised for UNESCO and for the Member States.

- 5.23. Third, implementation of GAP2030 should be evidence-informed. Emerging issues and trends need to be monitored closely and analysed for their pedagogical implications. To that effect, UNESCO is suggested to conduct action research on issues identified, especially those related to individuals' transformational process, structural issues underlying development and sustainability and the future of ESD in the era of technological advances, with the results disseminated to the actors on the ground.
- 5.24. Fourth, there will have to be more concentrated communication and advocacy efforts on the role of education in supporting the achievement of SDGs. At the national level, this will be part of the nationwide initiatives for GAP2030. At the global level, UNESCO will develop a dedicated programme to inform the concerned communities of the SDGs as well as learners and educators of the crucial role education can play in supporting the achievement of the SDGs. The UNESCO-Japan Prize programme, if it can be continued, will be an integral part of the UNESCO communication and advocacy strategy.
- 5.25. Fifth, in order to carry out these tasks, UNESCO needs to further develop its partnerships, not only with the ESD community, but also with the wider sustainable development and SDG community. The cooperation and coordination with UN DESA and other UN entities responsible for the management of the SDGs¹³ at global and regional levels need to be reinforced.
- 5.26. Also required are partnerships with other key players, such as multilateral financial institutions, national development agencies, the private sector, civil society and community actors. The alliance with national mechanisms set up to support the achievement of the SDGs through education will also need further attention. In developing partnerships, the use of innovative and creative financing mechanisms will deserve particular attention¹⁴.
- 5.27. Within UNESCO, the Education Sector shall further strengthen its inter-sectoral partnership with other Sectors, especially the Culture and Science Sectors, integrating the implementation of GAP2030, where possible, into their relevant programmes, which include, among others, World Heritage sites, intangible cultural heritage, the network of Biosphere Reserves, Small Island Developing States, and local and indigenous knowledge. The Education Sector should also further enhance its intra-sectoral collaboration on ESD and encourage the contribution of relevant programmes and networks to GAP2030, including the ASPnet, UNESCO Chairs, UNEVOC Centres on TVET, the Learning Cities Network, as well as the Education 2030 Steering Committee.
- 5.28. Finally, various types of monitoring and evaluation will remain as one of the important tasks of UNESCO as outlined below.
- 5.29. First, the scaling-up of actions in the five Action Areas by the Member States as well as by the identified Partners at global level needs close monitoring. Progress will be measured against baselines set at the outset. For the scaling-up carried out by Partners, UNESCO will adopt the

¹³ As well as related frameworks such as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

¹⁴ These mechanisms could be elaborated at various fora, such as UNESCO's Structured Financing Dialogue.

survey approach which was used in the mid-term review and which will also be used in the final review of GAP implementation.

- 5.30. For the measuring of scaling-up in the Member States, UNESCO will revise the existing survey questionnaire for the monitoring of Target 4.7.¹⁵ It is proposed to integrate the effort to measure progress of countries' scaling-up of actions in the five Action Areas into this instrument. This is conceptually feasible and will also help avoid multiplying questionnaires to address to the Member States for varying monitoring purposes.
- 5.31. The second type of monitoring will be carried out within the defined scope of a programme or a project, the focus of which will be to ensure the production of the planned outputs and the spread of their impact. Implementation of the programme support for governments and global partners, the establishment of platforms and one inclusive network for actors, the carrying-out of communication and advocacy activities including the management of the UNESCO-Japan ESD Prize, will be monitored for their outputs as well as outcomes, with the necessary indicators set at the outset.
- 5.32. Furthermore, there will be a new monitoring effort made by UNESCO. In order to support the evidence-informed principle underpinning the implementation of the post-GAP position, UNESCO will carry out regular thematic surveys to identify and analyse key issues, trends and developments. This is to draw critical insights, with evidence and data, into the most strategic and effective pedagogies to implement GAP2030. This thematic monitoring will complement the normative monitoring of progress being made by the Member States that will be assisted by the survey tool for Target 4.7.
- 5.33. Throughout the implementation of GAP2030, periodic evaluations of the progress of the implementation of the programme will be undertaken.

¹⁵ The questionnaire has certain limitations in measuring progress on ESD. The ESD topics that it covers are not mutually exclusive, nor comprehensive. It also pays insufficient attention to non-formal and informal education. To rectifying these limitations, UNESCO has a plan to revise the questionnaire to reflect more comprehensive aspects of ESD.