



Relationship between Sustainable Development Goal 4 and the Education 2030 Framework for Action

Sustainable Development Goal 4 is the education-related goal of the United National 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in September 2015. Its overall aim is: to: ***“ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”***.

The **Education 2030 Framework for Action**, adopted in November 2015, provides a roadmap for achieving the 10 targets which constitute SDG4.

Below is a summary of how the Framework for Action proposes to operationalise the targets of SDG4.

Seven Outcome Targets

4.1 Universal primary and secondary education

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

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

4.2 Early childhood development and universal pre-primary education

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

The provision of at least one year of free and compulsory quality pre-primary education is encouraged, to be delivered by well-trained educators. This should be put in place taking into account different national realities, capacities, levels of development, resources and infrastructure.

4.3 Equal success to technical/vocational and higher education

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

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.

4.4 Relevant skills for decent work

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

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.

4.5 Gender equality and inclusion

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

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.

4.6 Universal youth literacy

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.

4.7 Citizenship education for sustainable development

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.

Three means of implementation

4.a Effective learning environments

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

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

4.b Scholarships

By 2030, 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.

4.c Teachers and educators

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

Teachers are the key to achieving all of the SDG4 targets, so this target is critical. 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.