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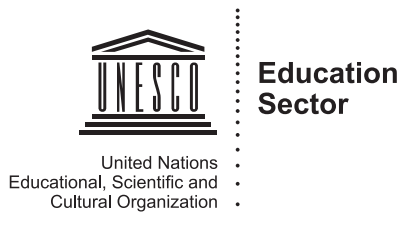
Education for Sustainable Development

A roadmap

#ESDfor2030

UNESCO Education Sector

Education is UNESCO's top priority because it is a basic human right and the foundation on which to build peace and drive sustainable development. UNESCO is the United Nations' specialized agency for education and the Education Sector provides global and regional leadership in education, strengthens national education systems and responds to contemporary global challenges through education with a special focus on gender equality and Africa.



The Global Education 2030 Agenda

UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to *"ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."* The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.



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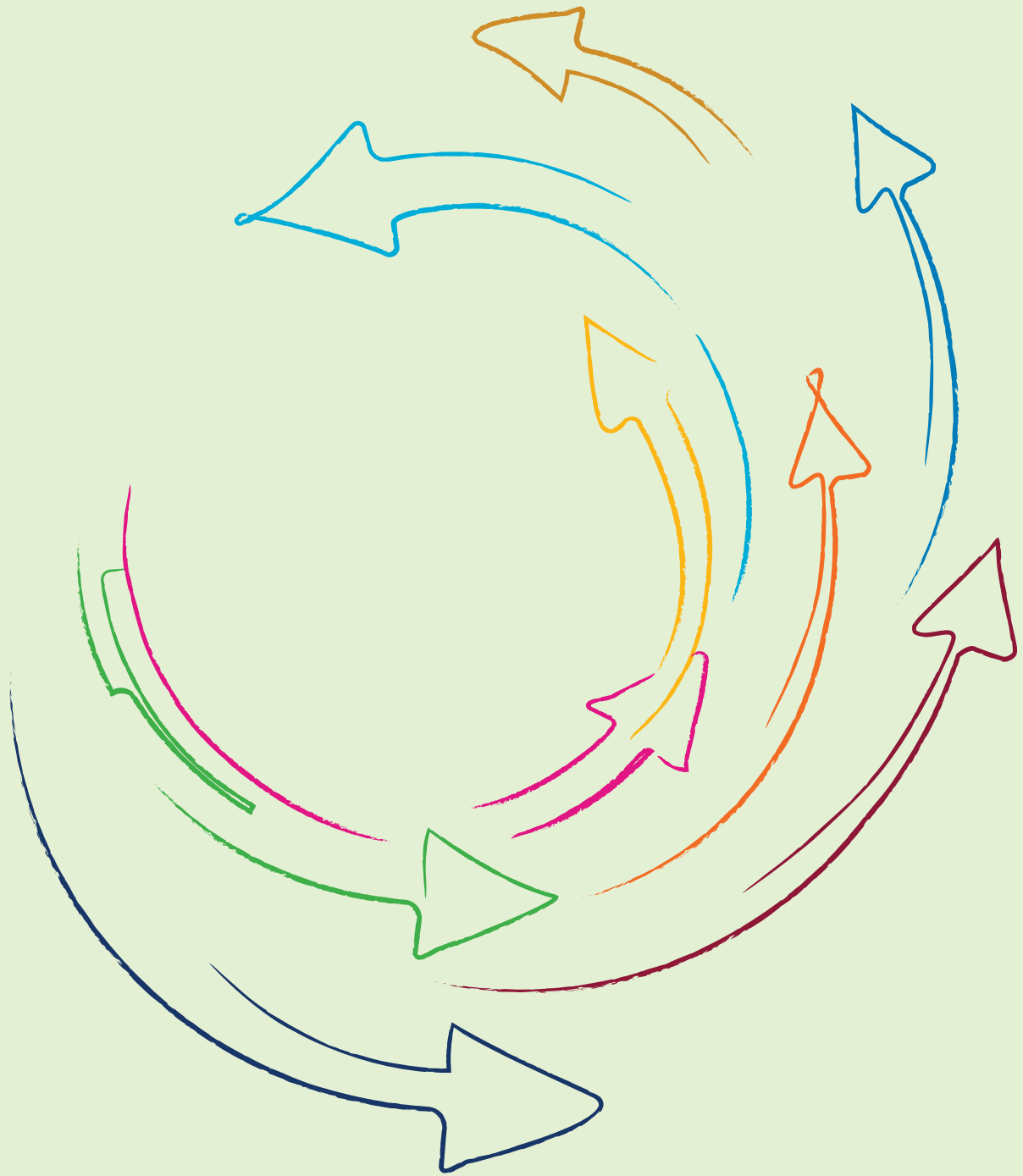
Education for

Sustainable

Development

A roadmap

#ESDfor2030



Foreword

The COVID-19 pandemic that spread across the planet in 2020 is not only a global health crisis. It is a crisis affecting every aspect of our lives, and one that has revealed the fragility of our interdependence with nature. We have learned that as forests are destroyed, not only are wild animals endangered and ecosystems weakened, but also humans become exposed to unknown infectious agents that can threaten their lives.

The earth's average global temperature has risen by around 1°C since the late nineteenth century with most of the warming occurring in the past thirty-five years. The 2019 Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) report¹¹ on biodiversity has warned that a million species are at risk of extinction, and that such a loss and a failure to conserve ecosystems will have catastrophic effects on people as well as nature. With the world's population set to rise from 7.7 billion to 9.7 billion by 2050, and natural resources under threat due to human activities, we face no less than a "battle for our lives" in the words of UN Secretary-General António Guterres.

For our very own survival, we must learn to live together sustainably on this planet. We must change the way we think and act as individuals and societies. So, in turn, education must change to create a peaceful and sustainable world for the survival and prosperity of current and future generations.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) was born from the need for education to address growing sustainability challenges. ESD employs action-oriented, innovative pedagogy to enable learners to develop knowledge and awareness and take action to transform society into a more sustainable one.

Building on the UN Decade on ESD (2005-2014) and the Global Action Programme on ESD (2015-2019), a new framework, ESD for 2030 was adopted by the 206th UNESCO Executive Board and the 40th UNESCO General Conference and acknowledged by the 74th UN General Assembly.

ESD for 2030 builds on the Global Action Programme (the GAP) that aimed to reorient and strengthen education and learning to contribute to all activities that promote sustainable development. It places a stronger focus on education's central contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). ESD for 2030 directly contributes to SDG 4 on quality and inclusive education, in particular Target 4.7, as well as all other SDGs, to provide relevant education that puts responsibility for the future at the centre.

To unlock concrete action for change, this roadmap identifies specific areas of work and interventions that can be developed and supported by Member States and concerned stakeholders including civil society organizations and development partners at regional and global levels.

ESD 2030 comes at the start of the Decade of Action to step up progress towards all the SDGs. Now is the time for every education system to lead the transformation that is needed to set our world on a more just and sustainable course, because our common future depends on our present actions.



Stefania Giannini
UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education

1 <https://ipbes.net/global-assessment>



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We are increasingly asking if what people learn is truly relevant to their lives, if what they learn helps to ensure the survival of our planet. Education for Sustainable Development can provide the knowledge, awareness and action that empower people to transform themselves and transform societies.

- Stefania Giannini, Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO



Executive summary

UNESCO has been the lead United Nations agency on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) since the United Nations Decade of Education (2005-2014). ESD is widely recognized as an integral element of Agenda 2030, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), and a key enabler of all the other SDGs.

This roadmap sets out the urgent challenges facing the planet and explores the next step UNESCO is taking in responding to them through education with detail on new emphases and actions. In order to build a follow-up to the Global Action Programme (GAP) (2015-2019) that contributes to Agenda 2030 and its 17 goals, the *Education for Sustainable Development: Towards achieving the SDGs (ESD for 2030)* framework was adopted with the aim of increasing the contribution of education to building a more just and sustainable world. *ESD for 2030* will step up actions on five priority action areas, stressing further ESD's key role for the successful achievement of the 17 SDGs and the great individual and societal transformation required to address the urgent sustainability challenges.

This publication sets out clearly what Member States must do in relation to each priority action area. For **priority action area 1** on policy, ESD must be integrated in global, regional and national and local policies related to education and sustainable development. For **priority action area 2** on education and training settings, attention is required to promote the whole-institution approach to ensure we

learn what we live and live what we learn. In **priority action area 3** on building capacities of educators, the focus is on empowering educators with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed for the transition to sustainability. **priority action area 4** on youth must recognize young people as key actors in addressing sustainability challenges and the associated decision-making processes. **Priority action area 5** on local level action emphasizes the importance of actions in the communities as they are where meaningful transformative actions are most likely to occur.

The roadmap also underlines the key areas of implementation of the *ESD for 2030* framework. **Country initiatives on ESD for 2030** will lead the mainstreaming of ESD in education and sustainable development. The new framework will aim to encourage strong leadership from Member States and diverse stakeholders from education and sustainable development communities through **ESD for 2030 Network (ESD-Net)** at global and regional levels. **Communication and advocacy** efforts including the UNESCO-Japan ESD Prize will be strengthened; evidence-informed implementation of the framework by **tracking issues and trends** in education and sustainable development and **mobilizing resources** through making full use of the inter-sectoral, multidisciplinary nature of UNESCO as well as its diverse partners should be further strengthened. Various efforts to **monitor the progress** will be pursued with the aim of achieving SDG target 4.7 by 2030.





1.

An urgent call
for action

1.1. Where we are

The current climate emergency and other environmental sustainability crises are the product of human behaviour. The collective activities of human beings have altered the earth's ecosystems to the extent that our very survival is threatened. The change is becoming more rapid, dramatic, visible and difficult to reverse every day. Two-thirds of the 1°C global temperature increase in the past 100 years has occurred since 1975, while the amount of renewable and non-renewable resources yearly extracted globally has doubled since 1980².

It is clearly evident that unprecedented and dramatic changes are taking place and that humankind is directly responsible.

The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warns that in order to contain the effect of global warming to 1.5°C until the end of this century compared to the 2°C scenario

regarded as catastrophic, we need 'rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society'³.

This means not only addressing environmental challenges but also revisiting the complex mix of social and economic issues such as inequality that are intertwined with the cause and impact of these problems.

What we know, what we believe in and what we do needs to change.

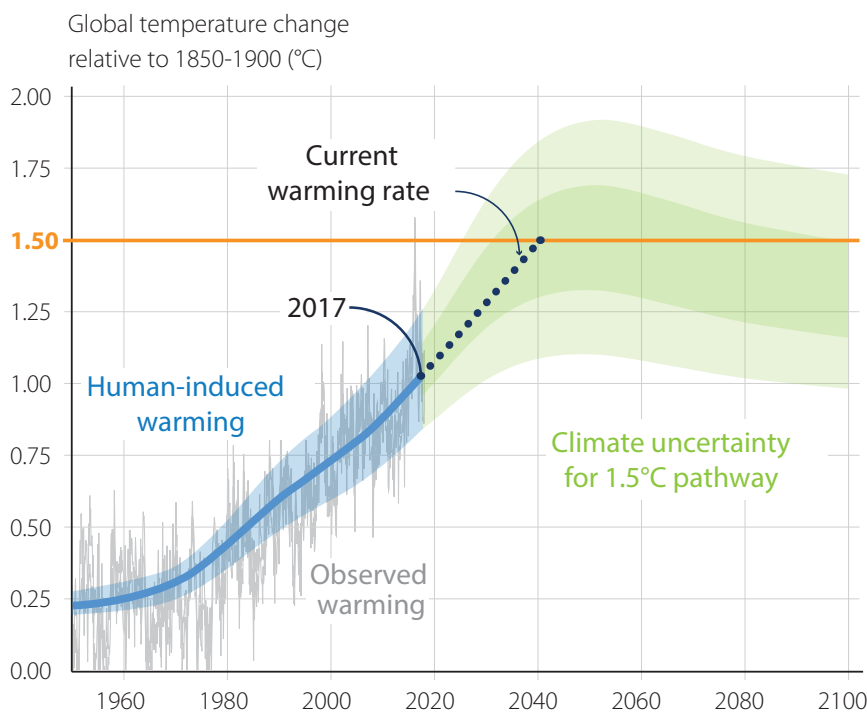
What we have learned so far does not prepare us for the challenge.

This cannot go on. And the window of opportunity is closing fast.

We must urgently learn to live differently.

Figure 1. How close are we to 1.5°C?

Human-induced warming reached approximately 1°C above pre-industrial levels in 2017



Human-induced warming reached approximately 1°C above pre-industrial levels in 2017. At the present rate, global temperatures would reach 1.5°C around 2040. Stylized 1.5°C pathway shown here involves emission reductions beginning immediately, and CO₂ emissions reaching zero by 2055.

Source: FAQ 1.2 Figure 1 in Chapter 1 from Allen, M.R., O.P. Dube, W. Solecki, F. Aragón-Durand, W. Cramer, S. Humphreys, M. Kainuma, J. Kala, N. Mahowald, Y. Mulugetta, R. Perez, M. Wairiu, and K. Zickfeld, 2018: Framing and Context. In: Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty [Masson-Delmotte, V., P. Zhai, H.-O. Pörtner, D. Roberts, J. Skea, P.R. Shukla, A. Pirani, W. Moufouma-Okia, C. Péan, R. Pidcock, S. Connors, J.B.R. Matthews, Y. Chen, X. Zhou, M.I. Gomis, E. Lonnoy, T. Maycock, M. Tignor, and T. Waterfield (eds.)]. In Press.

² <https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/world-of-change/DecadalTemp>

³ <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>



We are in
a battle
for our lives.
But it is a battle
we can win.

- UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres

1.2. What needs to be done

To shift to a sustainable future, we need to rethink what, where and how we learn to develop the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that enable us all to make informed decisions and take individual and collective action on local, national and global urgencies.

How can we prepare learners of all ages for the 'battle for our lives' as the UN Secretary-General calls it?

ESD is a well-established framework for doing this.

ESD empowers learners with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to take informed decisions and make responsible

actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society empowering people of all genders, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity.

ESD is a lifelong learning process and an integral part of quality education that enhances cognitive, social and emotional and behavioural dimensions of learning. It is holistic and transformational and encompasses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment itself.

ESD is recognized as a key enabler of all SDGs and achieves its purpose by transforming society.

Societal transformation:

Enable the achievement of the SDGs towards building a more sustainable world

Pedagogy and learning environment:

Employ interactive, project-based, learner-centred pedagogy. Transform all aspects of learning environment through a whole-institution approach to ESD to enable learners to live what they learn and learn what they live

Learning outcomes:

Empower people to take responsibility for present and future generations and actively contribute to societal transformation

Learning content:

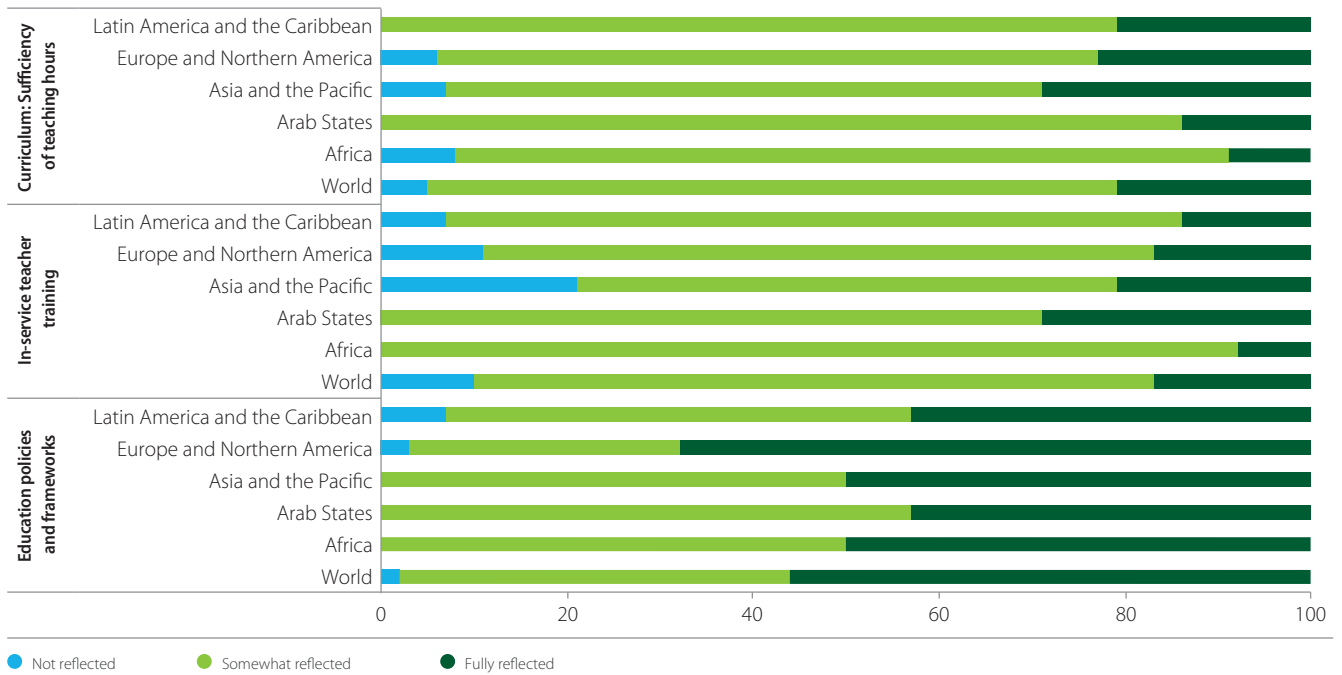
Integrate sustainability issues, in particular those enshrined in the 17 SDGs such as climate change, into all kinds of learning

The General Assembly reaffirms education for sustainable development as an integral element of the Sustainable Development Goal on quality education and a key enabler of all the other Sustainable Development Goals.

UN General Assembly Resolution 72/222 (2017)

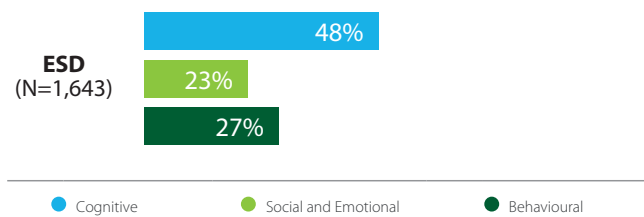
More countries say ESD is reflected in their education policy, teacher training and curricula. However, often ESD is interpreted with narrow focus on topical issues rather than with a holistic approach on learning content, pedagogy, and learning outcomes to bring about the fundamental behavioural shift to sustainable development.

Figure 2. Percentage of countries reflecting principles of the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation in their education policy, teacher education and curricula, 2012–2016



Source: 2019 Global Education Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2018), p. 205

Figure 3. Percentage of references to cognitive, social and emotional and behavioural learning by ESD content



Source: *Educational content up close: Examining learning dimensions of ESD and GCE* (UNESCO, 2020), p. 26

For example, a recent UNESCO study which reviewed policy documents of 10 countries shows that ESD is mostly associated with the teaching of scientific knowledge on environment. This is not enough to bring the transformative power of education to its full force.

How can we encourage learners to undertake transformative actions for sustainability to shape a different future, before it is too late?

To ensure individuals are able to understand sustainability challenges, to be aware of their relevance to the surrounding realities, and take action for change,

To trigger structural transformations in today's economic and social systems by promoting alternative values and contextualized methods,

To address the new opportunities and risks on sustainable development posed by emerging technologies,

Education needs to transform itself.

UNESCO's new global framework on ESD called *ESD for 2030* invites you to join this urgent mission.



2.

ESD for 2030

Education for Sustainable Development:
Towards achieving the SDGs (*ESD for 2030*)
is the global framework for
implementation of ESD in 2020-2030

2.1. What is *ESD for 2030*?

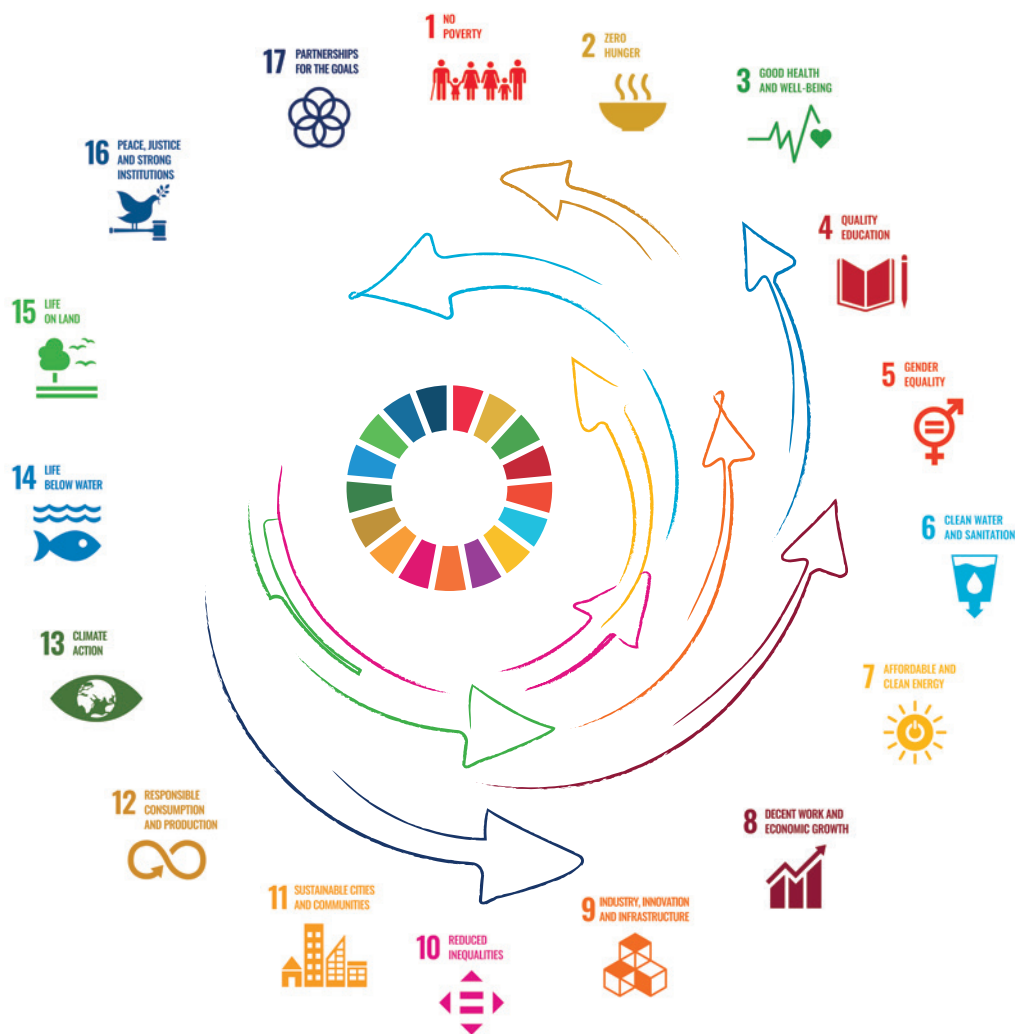
Education for Sustainable Development: Towards achieving the SDGs (*ESD for 2030*) is the global framework for implementation of ESD from 2020-2030.

ESD for 2030 builds upon the lessons learned from the Global Action Programme on ESD (GAP, 2015-2019), in response to the increased importance placed on ESD to promote the contribution of learning content to the survival and prosperity of humanity.

ESD for 2030 places emphasis on education’s contribution to the achievement of the SDGs. It aims to review the purposes

and values that underpin education and reorient all levels of education and learning to contribute to sustainable development and to strengthen education and learning in all activities that promote sustainable development. Given the fact there is very little time left to achieve the SDGs, it is crucial to accelerate ESD in the decade of action⁴ to deliver the Goals.

As the follow up to the GAP, *ESD for 2030* was approved by the UNESCO General Conference at its 40th Session and acknowledged by the UN General Assembly at its 74th Session in 2019.



⁴ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/decade-of-action/>

A young child with a joyful expression is shown from the chest up, wearing a red, blue, and white plaid shirt. The child's hands are gently holding a mound of dark brown soil from which a small, vibrant green seedling with several leaves is growing. The background is softly blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image, with a yellow speech bubble icon containing two black quotation marks.

Education for Sustainable Development: Towards achieving the SDGs (*ESD for 2030*) is the global framework for implementation of ESD from 2020-2030.

2.2. Goal and objective

ESD is an integral element of the ambitious SDGs, and in particular of Target 4.7, and builds on the vision of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) and the GAP (2015-2019).

While ESD contributes to all 17 SDGs, it continues to have 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 SDG 4 in building a 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 content and its contribution to sustainability of people and the planet. In this way, ESD connects SDG 4 with all other SDGs.

Goal

ESD for 2030 aims to build a more just and sustainable world through strengthening ESD and contributing to the achievement of the 17 SDGs.

Objective

To fully integrate ESD and the 17 SDGs into policies, learning environments, capacity- building of educators, the empowerment and mobilization of young people, and local level action.

SDG Target 4.7

SDG Target 4.7 is one of the key targets in the SDGs that addresses the purpose and quality of education.

SDG 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.





ESD for 2030 will promote the integration of sustainable development and the SDGs into education and learning, as well as ensuring the integration of education and learning into all activities that promote sustainable development and the SDGs



2.3. Key features

Global efforts led by policy-makers, educators, learners⁵, practitioners and youth through the GAP, the UN Decade on ESD and beyond have made considerable progress in all parts of the world. Building on the lessons learned, *ESD for 2030* addresses new challenges of the day, in particular with the following three key features, namely emphasis on education's role for the 17 SDGs; focus on the big transformation; and emphasis on Member States' leadership.

Emphasis on education's role for the 17 SDGs

The first main feature of *ESD for 2030* is the emphasis given to the role of education in the achievement of the inter-connected 17 SDGs. UN General Assembly Resolution 72/222 (2017) noted ESD as 'an integral element of SDG 4 on Education and a key enabler of all the other SDGs', while Resolution 74/233 (2019) reinforced this by calling upon countries to enhance their ESD implementation.

So how can ESD enable the achievement of the 17 SDGs?

- ✓ **ESD raises the awareness of the 17 goals in education settings:** ESD enhances the understanding of learners and the general public on what the SDGs are and how these goals connect with individual and collective lives.
- ✓ **ESD promotes critical and contextualized understanding of the SDGs:** Sustainable development often requires a balancing act among diverse views and priorities. ESD raises questions on the inter-linkages and tensions between different SDGs and provides learners with the opportunity to navigate the required balancing acts with its holistic and transformational approaches.
- ✓ **ESD mobilizes action towards the achievement of the SDGs:** ESD efforts address sustainable development issues, more specifically the SDGs. These efforts continue to mobilize action for sustainable development in education settings, in particular in communities, through whole-institution approaches to ESD.

⁵ 'Learners' refers to students in formal schools and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions; trainees in private company training institutions; those learning in lifelong learning and non-formal learning institutions and situations; and those learning outside of education institutions. 'Educators' includes teachers, trainers, local community leaders, parents and family members.

Education for Sustainable Development aims to raise knowledge, awareness and action in order to:



Focus on the big transformation

ESD must focus on the big transformation that is needed for sustainable development and provide relevant educational interventions. The idea of big transformation implies changes in individual action intertwined with reorganization of societal structures, and it requires ESD to track the transformation towards a more just and sustainable direction.

What are the key reflections that inform *ESD for 2030*?

- ✓ **Transformative action:** Fundamental changes required for a sustainable future start with individuals. ESD has to place emphasis on how each learner undertakes transformative actions for sustainability, including the importance of opportunities to expose learners to reality, and how they influence societal transformation towards a sustainable future. ESD in action is citizenship in action.
- ✓ **Structural changes:** ESD must pay attention to the deep structural causes of unsustainable development. A balancing act between economic growth and sustainable development is needed and ESD should encourage learners to explore alternative values to those of consumer societies, as well as having a structural view on how to address ESD in the context of extreme poverty and vulnerable situations.
- ✓ **The technological future:** ESD has to respond to the opportunities and challenges brought about by technological advances. Some 'old' problems will be resolved through technology, but new challenges and risks will arise. Critical thinking and sustainability values become ever more relevant, as the task of teaching ESD may become more challenging with the illusion that technologies can resolve the majority of sustainability problems.

(...) 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.

(Para 4.2, Framework for the implementation of ESD for 2030)



Emphasis on Member States' leadership

The urgency of the current challenges calls for strong leadership from Member States to mainstream ESD in all activities on education and sustainable development at the country level as a part of their implementation of SDG 4 and all the other SDGs. To this end, *ESD for 2030* focuses on Member States' initiatives towards the achievement of the SDGs.

What should Member States do?

- ✓ **Address the five priority action areas:** Member States are invited to focus on reinforcing country initiatives on the five priority action areas of *ESD for 2030*, namely, advancing policy, transforming learning environments, building the capacities of educators, empowering and mobilizing youth and taking action in communities, and monitoring their progress.
- ✓ **Engage all concerned stakeholders:** In line with the multi-faceted nature of ESD, Member States are urged to mobilize, engage and support diverse stakeholders under a coordinated strategy related to the national framework on the SDGs. This type of multi-stakeholder engagement is relevant at local, national, regional and global levels to ensure partnership and collaboration among all stakeholders.
- ✓ **Advocate and mobilize resources:** To ensure the effective implementation of ESD at country level, it is also important for Member States to reach out to a wider public through strong communication and advocacy efforts on ESD. At the same time, efforts should be made to enhance outreach through increased mobilization of resources for ESD.

ESD's contribution to UNESCO's global priorities

Priority Africa and ESD	ESD supports innovative solutions for sustainable development in the context of the needs and opportunities in Africa, one of the regions most vulnerable to climate change. In particular, ESD is relevant to populations in extreme poverty who are also often the victims of calamitous development and natural disasters.
Priority Gender Equality and ESD⁶	ESD takes a cross-disciplinary and systemic approach that links gender equality to specific gendered challenges related to each of the SDGs. There is, for example, a gendered facet of vulnerability to hazards induced by climate change. <i>ESD for 2030</i> actively promotes gender equality and creates conditions to empower women. When implementing <i>ESD for 2030</i> , the gendered approach to the five priority action areas should be considered.

Small Island Developing States

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are on the 'front lines' of climate change, as they face rising sea levels, dying coral reefs and ocean ecosystems, and increasing natural disasters. Environmental challenges undermine social and economic sustainability with women often suffering a disproportionate impact. Communities are threatened with displacement and forced migration, and maritime industries are hit by the exploitation of marine resources.

ESD has to prepare people of all genders with the knowledge, skills and values to respond to the changes, building on indigenous knowledge and practices. Lifelong learning, including Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) can help ensure professionals and communities are well prepared to meet the changes.

⁶ See UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan (2014-2021) <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000370905.locale=en> and <https://en.unesco.org/genderequality>



Innovation Collaboration
Sustainable Development Goals


Innovation Collaboration
Sustainable Development Goals

Through pursuing the goal and objective of *ESD for 2030*, in **10 years' time** we aim to create a world in which...



Governments

mainstream ESD in their education policies and frameworks to transform education.



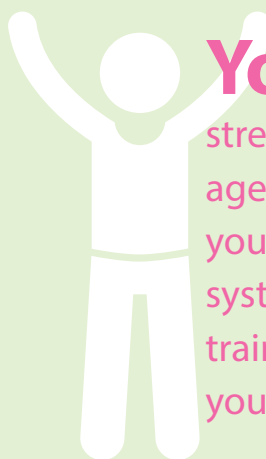
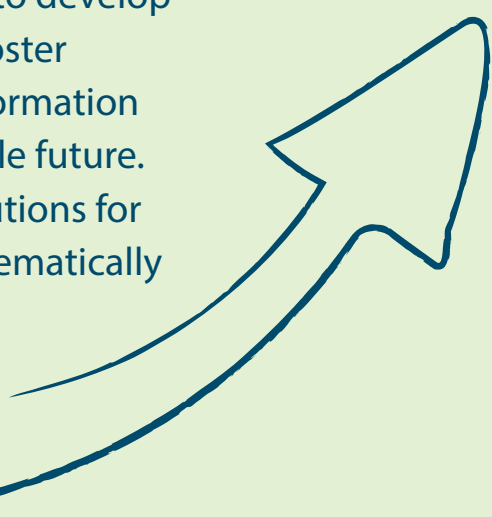
Learners

 in all walks of life across the world have opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed for promoting sustainable development and achieving the 17 SDGs and to experience sustainable development in action through a whole-institution approach to ESD.

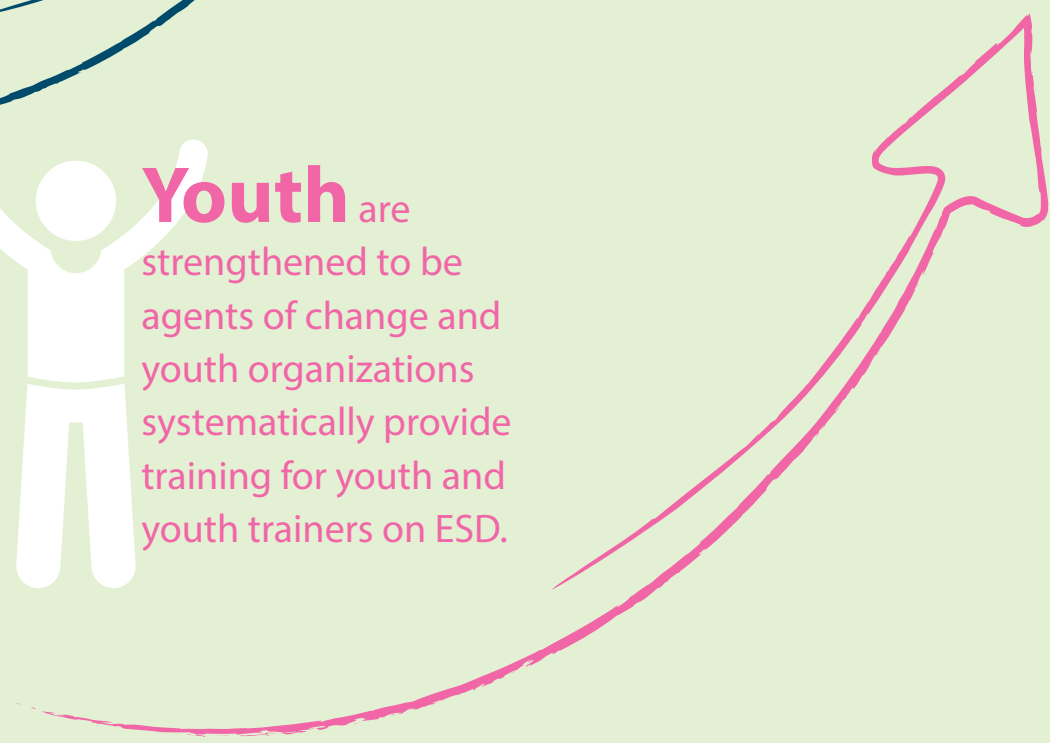


Educators

across the world have the opportunities to develop capacities to foster societal transformation for a sustainable future. Training institutions for educators systematically integrate ESD.



Youth are strengthened to be agents of change and youth organizations systematically provide training for youth and youth trainers on ESD.



People living in cities and communities across the world recognize ESD as a key instrument and lifelong learning opportunity to achieve sustainability at a local level.







3.

Priority action

areas

Member States, regional and global stakeholders are called upon to develop activities on the five priority action areas

Priority action area 1: Advancing policy

Policy-makers have a special responsibility in bringing about the massive global transformation needed to engender sustainable development today. They are instrumental in creating the enabling environment for the successful scaling up of ESD in education institutions, communities and other settings where learning takes place. Policy support is equally important for the formal, non-formal and informal sectors, as well as for the creation of synergies between the sectors. Moreover, advancing policies that support ESD does not only concern the education sector, but all sectors involved in sustainable development.

Main actors

- ✓ Education policy-makers at institutional, local, national, regional and global levels, in particular in Ministries of Education.
- ✓ Policy-makers from the sustainable development sectors, in particular in Ministries of Environment and others.
- ✓ Civil society organizations, private companies, and academia who contribute to policy discourse on sustainable development and education.
- ✓ UNESCO and its partners.

Suggested actions

- ✓ Ministries of education should **review the purpose of their education systems in light of the ambitions of the SDGs** and define learning objectives fully aligned with those goals. Education policy-makers at local, national, regional and global levels should **integrate ESD into education policies**, including those that concern learning environments, curricula, teacher education as well as student assessment, and always with a gender perspective in mind.

- ✓ Education policy-makers should **embed ESD in education quality assurance criteria** in order to ensure that education institutions are monitored and assessed for progress on how well they develop learners' capacities as change agents.
- ✓ Education policy-makers, in collaboration with other ministries, civil society organizations, private companies, and academia, should **develop policies to systematically strengthen synergetic** relationships between formal, non-formal and informal education and learning. This may include, for example, policy measures to encourage project-based learning on sustainability issues in the community.
- ✓ Policy-makers from the sustainable development sectors should **integrate ESD into all policies that explicitly address the achievement of the SDGs**, in collaboration with education policy-makers, civil society organizations, private companies, and academia. For example, ESD should be prominently placed in all policies that address climate change (SDG13). These efforts will require close collaboration between policy-makers from the sustainable development and education sectors, in particular among relevant ministries, as well as strengthened collaborative governance among diverse stakeholders.

To support these actions, UNESCO and its UN partners among others, put in place a programme to **support country initiatives** on *ESD for 2030* to integrate ESD in education and sustainable development policies, **foster inter-sectoral and intergovernmental multi-stakeholder partnership** through a global platform for policy-makers, and advocate for ESD at global level along with UN partners and international and national stakeholders including National Commissions for UNESCO.



**TOOL
BOX** 
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Priority action area 2: Transforming learning environments

To encourage learners to become change agents who have the knowledge, means, willingness and courage to take transformative action for sustainable development, learning institutions need, themselves, to be transformed. The entire learning institution needs to be aligned with sustainable development principles, so that learning content and its pedagogies are reinforced by the way facilities are managed and how decisions are made within the institution. This whole-institution approach to ESD calls for learning environments where learners learn what they live and live what they learn.

Main actors

- Leaders of learning institutions, including school principals, presidents and rectors of universities and colleges, heads of TVET centres and of staff training centres in private companies.
- Educators, learners, as well as administrative staff in learning institutions.
- Local community leaders, families in the local community, as well as non-governmental and private sector actors working for sustainability.
- Education policy-makers.
- UNESCO and its partners.

Suggested actions

- ✓ Leaders of learning institutions, including school principals, presidents and rectors of universities and colleges, heads of TVET institutions and staff training centres in private companies, should **develop concrete, timebound plans on how to implement the whole-institution approach to ESD** together with their members and the local community.
- ✓ For example, leaders of learning institutions should **make sure their governance and culture are aligned with sustainable development principles**. One possible measure is to ensure democratic bottom-up decision-making processes in which all members of the institution

and other stakeholders can have a voice on specific sustainability challenges that need to be addressed in the institution. Efforts should be made to move the culture of institutions towards collaboration, solidarity and inclusion for people of all genders and backgrounds.

- ✓ Administrative staff of learning institutions should **ensure that facilities and operations embody sustainability principles**. This can include, for example, passive energy buildings, sustainable and safe transportation options for staff and learners, procurement of locally produced sustainable products, and sustainability audits.
- ✓ Educators, learners, and administrative staff should cooperate with community-based local leaders, families, as well as non-governmental and private sector actors working for sustainability in order to **engage the local community as a valuable setting for interdisciplinary, project-based learning and action for sustainability**.
- ✓ Education policy-makers should **create enabling environments for educators to integrate the whole-institution approach on ESD**. This includes, for example, placing emphasis on ESD among other competing priorities, allowing more flexibility, facilitating partnership, and reflecting the whole-institution approach to ESD in the performance assessment of learning institutions.

To support these actions, UNESCO and its UN partners among others, are making concentrated efforts to **develop and distribute step-by-step guidance materials** on implementing the whole-institution approaches to ESD, and to **provide a global platform for relevant stakeholders** to exchange information, experiences and build partnerships, in particular through global networks such as the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), UNESCO-UNEVOC Centres and the UNESCO Chairs.



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Priority action area 3:

Building capacities of educators

Educators remain key actors in facilitating learners' transition to sustainable ways of life, in an age where information is available everywhere and their role is undergoing great change. Educators in all educational settings can help learners understand the complex choices that sustainable development requires and motivate them to transform themselves and society. In order to guide and empower learners, educators themselves need to be empowered and equipped with the knowledge, skills, values and behaviours that are required for this transition. This includes understanding key aspects of each of the 17 SDGs and their interlinkages, as well as understanding how transformative actions occur and which gender-transformative pedagogical approaches can best bring them about.

Main actors

- Leaders and staff of teacher colleges at all education levels.
- Leaders and staff of training institutions for non-formal educators.
- Leaders and staff of private companies.
- Policy-makers.
- Educators.
- UNESCO and its partners.

Suggested actions

- ✓ Leaders and staff of teacher colleges should **include systematic and comprehensive ESD capacity development in pre-service and in-service training and assessment of teachers** in pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education including adult education. This will include learning content specific to each SDG as well as transformative pedagogies that help to bring about action.

- ✓ Leaders and staff of TVET institutions and training institutions for private companies should work together to **develop the capacities of educators** in TVET and private companies on knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to achieve sustainable development, with a focus on green economies and sustainable production and consumption. Leaders and staff of training institutions for non-formal educators should also integrate ESD into all their capacity-building activities.
- ✓ Trainers of educators should **systematically provide opportunities for peer-to-peer learning** where pioneering educators can share their successes and challenges and thus demonstrate that, while ambitious as an aim, ESD can be integrated step-by-step into daily teaching practice.
- ✓ Policy-makers should **enable, motivate and celebrate** educators who successfully integrate ESD into their teaching to make education more relevant to the demands of today's world. For example, this could be done by providing incentives and recognizing ESD initiatives as a part of reviews of institutional education quality.
- ✓ Educators should **be facilitators who guide learners through the transformation** as well as expert builders and transmitters of knowledge for a sustainable future. Educators can employ innovative pedagogies to empower learners to become change agents.

To support these actions, UNESCO and its UN partners among others, **support the capacity-building of educators** and provide policy guidance and resource materials to facilitate the integration of ESD into training curricula, and **provide a global platform to connect educators and training institutions** to share best practices and collaborate at global level.



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Priority action area 4:

Empowering and mobilizing youth

It is today's youth and following generations who will be left to face the consequences of unsustainable development. It is their present and future that are at stake. In return, it is young people who are becoming increasingly vocal and active, demanding urgent and decisive change and holding world leaders accountable, in particular to address the climate crisis. They have, and continue to envision, the most creative and ingenious solutions to sustainability challenges. In addition, young people are an important consumer group and the way their consumption patterns evolve will greatly influence the sustainability trajectory of their countries. Empowering and mobilizing young people of all genders, therefore, is a central part of ESD implementation.

Main actors

- Youth across the world.
- Youth-led and youth-focused groups, organizations and networks.
- Decision-makers and members of public and private institutions.
- Community actors, parents and families.
- UNESCO and its partners.

Suggested actions

- ✓ Young people across the world, who are both beneficiaries and drivers of this priority action area, are creative and active social innovators and entrepreneurs that can lead the change for a sustainable future. Young people could **use online communities and other communication channels to share messages on the urgency of the sustainability challenges, advocate for the inclusion of ESD in education settings they are in, empower themselves and take action** for societal transformation.

- ✓ Youth-led and youth-focused groups, organizations and networks should **create opportunities for young people to empower each other** with transformational knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. This includes skills to advocate and speak up for young people's causes and engage policy-makers and other population groups with the urgency of sustainable development.
- ✓ Youth-led and youth-focused groups, organizations and networks should **reach out to connect, mobilize and engage young people towards increasing their participation in sustainable development action**. This includes raising awareness of the SDGs through advocacy and communication including youth-led campaigns on how the goals are connected to what is most relevant to young people in their communities.
- ✓ Decision-makers and members of public and private institutions must **recognize young people as key contributors and actors in all efforts to promote sustainable development**. In particular, young people must be fully included in the design, delivery and monitoring of policies and programmes on education and sustainable development. Secured seats for youth representatives in the decision-making bodies of institutions at all levels are one of the ways to achieve this.

To support these actions, UNESCO and its UN partners, among others, **support relevant training opportunities and tools** for young people to enhance their knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to make themselves heard, and **provide a global platform for young people to foster multi-stakeholder collaboration and engage in inter-generational dialogue**, in line with the UN wide youth strategy⁷.



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⁷ Through its Operational Strategy on Youth (2014-2021)(<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000227150.locale=en>), UNESCO works with young people and is committed to accompany them to work together to drive social innovation and change, participate fully in the development of their societies, eradicate poverty and inequality, and foster a culture of peace. ESD is an integral part of this package of UNESCO actions by, with and for youth (<https://en.unesco.org/youth>).



PLANET
EARTH

Priority action area 5: Accelerating local level actions

Meaningful transformation and transformative actions for sustainable development are most likely to take place in the community. It is in their daily lives, at the community level, where learners and people make their choices for sustainable development and act upon them. It is also in the local community where people find partners for their sustainability efforts. This is why active cooperation between learning institutions and the community should be promoted to ensure the latest knowledge and practices for sustainable development are utilized to advance the local agenda.

Main actors

- Local public authorities, including municipal governments, city councils and education offices, as well as policy-makers at national and regional level.
- Civil-society organizations, private companies, and media in the community.
- Formal and non-formal education stakeholders in the community, including community learning centres and higher education institutions.
- All people in the local community.
- UNESCO and its partners.

Suggested actions

- Local public authorities, including municipal governments, city councils and education offices, in coordination with all concerned stakeholders in the community, should **develop an action plan on how the whole community can become a learning laboratory for sustainable development and an important element of ESD for 2030 country initiatives**, providing opportunities for all citizens to become change agents.
- Local public authorities, in coordination with all concerned stakeholders, including civil society organizations, private companies and local media, should **provide capacity development for local**

decision-makers and opinion leaders as well as for the wider public, unpacking the SDGs to understand their concrete local implications in the community. This includes informal learning in daily life such as providing infrastructures for the safe use of public transport and regular sustainability information in the local newspaper, among others.

- Formal and non-formal education providers in the community should **coordinate their programmes so that together they address all SDGs and related local sustainability challenges in a coherent way**. Community learning centres can serve as a hub for lifelong learning on ESD in their communities.
- Policy-makers at national level should **encourage and support the efforts made by local communities and coordinate** them as a part of national action on *ESD for 2030* and national contributions to the achievement of the SDGs. This includes providing incentives for local authorities to include localized ESD in education curricula as well as embedding ESD in their lifelong learning systems.
- All people in the local community should actively take interest in key sustainability challenges, develop skills to compare different future scenarios for their community, embrace values and attitudes that support a more sustainable future, **engage in public decision-making processes and take action as responsible members of the community**.

To support these actions, UNESCO and its UN partners among others, **collaborate with existing networks of cities and communities to integrate ESD** at all levels of learning in local communities and align national and local level actions, and **support global platforms for local communities to enhance partnership and collaboration** on ESD.



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40 UNESCO 4th General Conference

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4.

Implementation

The five priority action areas of *ESD for 2030* are to be implemented by Member States and regional and global stakeholders with the support and assistance of UNESCO and its partners

4.1. Implementing *ESD for 2030* at country level



In implementing activities for the priority action areas, Member States are invited to mobilise the concerned stakeholders working in the five 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 *ESD for 2030* at the country level.

(Para 5.19, Framework for the implementation of *ESD for 2030*)

Objective

In order to create momentum to implement *ESD for 2030* and its five priority action areas, Member States are encouraged to engage in country initiatives to mainstream ESD in education and sustainable development.

Suggested country level activities

To implement *ESD for 2030* at country level, Member States are invited to:

- Engage in country initiatives on *ESD for 2030* that have or potentially could have country-wide impact. They can build on existing initiatives related to ESD or create a new initiative if necessary, in the context of SDG 4 contributions and expand them where possible. Typically, a country initiative would be initiated and led by the government, or by a non-governmental actor in collaboration with government.
- Integrate *ESD for 2030* activities into national frameworks on the SDGs, education or other relevant frameworks in order to ensure coherent action at country level.
- Address one or more of the five priority action areas through multiple activities that can be included as a part of one umbrella multi-stakeholder country initiative per country.
- Promote multi-sectoral partnerships and collaboration in particular with the key stakeholders of the five priority action areas in order to address all relevant education and sustainable development sectors. A working group at the country level should be responsible for overall coordination of planning, implementation, networking, monitoring, reporting, and communication with UNESCO. A national steering body on the SDGs, National Commissions for UNESCO, or relevant ministries and institutions may host the working group.
- Strengthen communication and advocacy efforts on the SDGs in order to mobilize populations beyond sustainable development communities.
- Monitor and report on the progress of country initiatives, with a clear set of targets, where possible.

UNESCO's activities

- UNESCO supports country initiatives on *ESD for 2030* based on the proposals submitted by Member States.
- UNESCO supports partnership and collaboration between country initiatives.
- UNESCO provides dedicated technical support to the identified country initiatives and organizes regional information meetings to provide technical guidance on their establishment.
- UNESCO monitors the progress of identified country initiatives to be included in global reporting of *ESD for 2030*. (See page 48 for more information).
- Country initiatives are expected to be self-funded. UNESCO may provide seed funding for country initiatives of developing countries.



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4.2. Harnessing partnership and collaboration



In implementing activities for the priority action areas, Member States are invited to mobilise the concerned stakeholders working in the five areas and support their collaborative networking under a coordinated strategy, related to the national framework on the SDGs.

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 SDG communities, as well as stakeholders working in the five priority action areas at national, regional and global levels.

(Para 5.19, 5.22, Framework for the implementation of *ESD for 2030*)

Objective

In order to implement the five priority action areas of *ESD for 2030*, networking opportunities among Member States and other stakeholders are organized to foster cross-national and cross-sectoral collaboration and create synergies.

Suggested country level activities

To harness partnership and collaboration, Member States are invited to:

- Strengthen partnership and collaboration among formal, non-formal and informal learning sectors, including intergenerational lifelong learning taking place in the community.
- Develop and support partnership and collaboration among the education, sustainable development and SDG including SDG 4 stakeholders.
- Reinforce public-private sector partnerships and collaboration to achieve structural changes required for a sustainable future and mobilize resources to support the process.
- Develop country level networks of *ESD for 2030* stakeholders to coordinate activities of country initiatives on *ESD for 2030*, and facilitate partnership and collaboration among the diverse stakeholders involved.
- Align and strengthen coordination and cooperation at global, regional, national, sub-national and local level concerning policies and practices on ESD to ensure mutually supportive synergies.

UNESCO's activities

ESD for 2030 Global Network (*ESD-Net*)

UNESCO establishes the *ESD for 2030* Global Network (*ESD-Net*):

- To facilitate dialogue, partnership and collaboration between representatives of country level initiatives and other partner organizations.
- To share lessons learned and best practices related to the implementation of *ESD for 2030* to provide peer-to-peer learning opportunities.
- To draw attention to ESD's on-going contribution to the SDGs as part of global advocacy on ESD.
- To report on and monitor progress towards the implementation of *ESD for 2030*.

Who are the members?

- Representatives of country level initiatives including governmental and non-governmental organizations; individual institutions; UN partners; members of development communities and donor agencies.

How does the network operate?

- UNESCO convenes a global meeting of the *ESD-Net* every two years, with the first foreseen in 2023, to discuss the latest progress on the implementation of *ESD for 2030*.
- In between meetings, an interactive learning environment will be facilitated online to create synergies among the members of the network.
- Regional, thematic or issue-based sub-groups of the network may be set up depending on identified needs. The work of regional sub-groups should be carried out in ways that maximize synergies with regional SDG 4 coordination mechanisms and international processes.



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4.3. Communicating for action



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.'

'There will have to be more concentrated communication and advocacy efforts on the role of education in supporting the achievement of the SDGs. At the national level, this will be part of the nationwide initiatives for *ESD for 2030*. At the global level, UNESCO will develop a dedicated programme to inform concerned communities about the SDGs and learners and educators about the crucial role education can play in supporting the achievement of the SDGs. The UNESCO-Japan Prize programme, if it continues, will be an integral part of the UNESCO communication and advocacy strategy.

(Para 5.4, 5.24, Framework for the implementation of *ESD for 2030*)

Objective

In order to convey the urgency to act on the five priority action areas and ensure the success of *ESD for 2030*, Member States and other stakeholders are encouraged to conduct communication, outreach and advocacy activities, engaging a broader audience and a wider group of education and sustainable development partners.

Suggested country level activities

In relation to advocacy, Member States are invited to:

- Promote the role of education as a catalyst to meet all SDGs through targeted communication and outreach in all their ESD activities, mobilizing education stakeholders and the media.
- Emphasize the importance of education in their communication, outreach and advocacy work related to sustainable development and the SDGs, including public campaigns.
- Use innovative ways of communicating about their work on ESD, including digital fora, and prioritize engagement with young people.

UNESCO's activities

Empower key stakeholders in their communication efforts

UNESCO works with the key actors of the five priority action areas, namely education institutions, educators and practitioners, youth and policy-makers in order to enable them to inform and advocate for ESD among their stakeholders. UNESCO works to:

- Showcase best practices on ESD's contribution to the SDGs through its communication products and channels, including through the UNESCO Associated Schools Network
- Highlight outstanding ESD initiatives contributing to the achievement of the SDGs through the UNESCO-Japan Prize on ESD.
- Provide learning material and resources on the SDGs, featuring one or a selection of SDGs, highlighting relevant learning objectives and approaches, as well as inter-linkages and tensions between certain goals.
- Convene biennial global meetings of *ESD-Net* as a major platform for global advocacy for ESD as well as a network opportunity for relevant stakeholders.
- Support online channels to connect country initiatives and their stakeholders and organize joint days of action to create momentum and foster action on ESD at the global level.
- Build on the gains of UNESCO's 2020 campaign on ESD, engaging a global wider audience to encourage individuals and communities to take responsibility and action for sustainable development.
- Engage in UN and other international processes on sustainable development (such as Climate Change Conferences of the Parties) as opportunities to shine a spotlight on *ESD for 2030* and in collaboration with UN entities such as UN DESA, UNEP One Planet Network and others responsible for the management of the SDGs, as well as other global partners such as Regional Centres of Expertise on ESD.

Advocate at the global level

UNESCO also works to highlight the role of ESD at the global level, in particular its role as a key enabler for the achievement of all 17 SDGs. UNESCO works to:



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4.4. Tracking issues and trends



The implementation of *ESD for 2030* 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 analytical work 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.

(Para 5.23, Framework for the implementation of *ESD for 2030*)

Objective

In order to support the implementation of the five priority action areas of *ESD for 2030* with concrete evidence and strategic foresight, the latest developments in education and sustainable development sectors are to be reviewed.

Suggested country level activities

To track issues and trends, Member States are invited to:

- Encourage a review of the 17 SDGs within local, national, and regional contexts in education settings as part of ESD activities to identify relevant issues, trends and questions that need to be further examined and discussed.
- Conduct thematic research related to ESD and the SDGs, based on the key issues, trends and questions raised in relation to the five priority action areas. Higher education and research institutions should play a key role in this type of research activity, which can be included as a part of country initiatives on *ESD for 2030*.
- Disseminate and review the outcomes of research to create learning opportunities to raise critical questions, in particular on the inter-linkages and tensions between the different SDGs.
- Collaborate with other countries to review sustainable development and ESD-related emerging issues and trends in specific contexts, in order to find appropriate educational responses.

UNESCO's activities

UNESCO conducts thematic research, expert consultations, and publishes relevant reports on emerging issues and trends on key themes related to ESD's contribution to the SDGs. Together with its partners, UNESCO:

- Conducts expert consultations to identify and review key emerging issues and trends;
- Carries out studies to collect and analyse relevant evidence from Member States;
- Produces evidence-based reports in order to mobilize the actors of *ESD for 2030*.
- Disseminates the latest knowledge products through advocacy channels including biennial global meetings and training programmes.



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THE THEMATIC FOCUS AREAS

Special attention will be paid to the themes and potential questions related to key contexts and reflections of *ESD for 2030*, including but not limited to:

ESD and the SDGs

- What are successful pedagogical practices to achieve the 17 SDGs?
- How can ESD address the inter-linkages and tensions between and among different SDGs?

Transformative action and ESD

- How does individual transformation take place and how can education facilitate a tipping point for a learner to undertake transformative actions for sustainability?
- What is the role of communities to promote transformative action for sustainable future?

Structural issues and ESD

- How can ESD support the balancing act between economic and sustainable development?
- How can ESD encourage learners to explore alternative values to consumer societies?
- In the context of extreme poverty, what kind of ESD best connects with and supports learners' daily challenges?

Technological advances and ESD

- What are the implications of artificial intelligence and the 4th Industrial Revolution for ESD?
- How can ESD address the risks and benefits of green technologies?
- How can new technologies be harnessed to educate for sustainability?

4.5. Mobilizing resources



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 attention.'

'Within UNESCO, the Education Sector shall further strengthen its inter-sectoral partnership with other Sectors, especially Culture and Science, integrating the implementation of *ESD for 2030*, where possible, into their relevant programmes, which include, among others, World Heritage sites, intangible cultural heritage, the network of Biosphere Reserves, Geoparks, 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 *ESD for 2030*, including the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), UNESCO Chairs, UNEVOC Centres on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), the Learning Cities Network, as well as the Education 2030 Steering Committee.

(Para 5.25-5.27, Framework for the implementation of *ESD for 2030*)

Objective

In order to implement effectively the five priority action areas of *ESD for 2030*, mobilization of necessary resources is crucial.

Suggested country level activities

To mobilize resources for *ESD for 2030*, Member States are invited to:

- Explore existing funds associated with education to finance activities of *ESD for 2030* such as the budget and programme on school support, teacher training, youth empowerment, lifelong learning in cities and communities, with the understanding that ESD is not a topic but a holistic approach to reshaping education to address sustainability challenges.
- Tap into existing resources allocated on sustainable development, national implementation of the SDGs, as well as international cooperation to create synergies between ESD and relevant areas.
- Consider dedicating new budgets for *ESD for 2030* as a part of a national drive for quality education and its contribution to the collective survival and prosperity of humanity.
- Utilize relevant regional initiatives and their resources to make collaborative efforts with other countries on *ESD for 2030*.
- Mobilize resources in the private sector, in particular to transform TVET institutions and private company training centres to support skills development in green-related field areas and become active leaders of *ESD for 2030*.
- Find creative solutions to implement effectively *ESD for 2030* without major additional resources, such as embedding ESD into education quality assurance criteria to assess the performance of education institutions.

UNESCO's activities

- UNESCO's mobilization of resources for Member States' implementation of *ESD for 2030*
- At global level, UNESCO will make efforts to identify available funds for education and sustainable development, and advocate for use of these funds to support activities of *ESD for 2030*.
- All activities of *ESD for 2030*, including country initiatives are expected to be self-funded. UNESCO will provide some seed funding to a limited number of initiatives from developing countries, in particular the least developed countries.
- Resources for UNESCO's activities on *ESD for 2030*
- UNESCO will continue to make efforts to mobilize voluntary contributions.
- UNESCO will leverage in-kind support from UNESCO networks for the implementation of *ESD for 2030*, in particular, ASPnet, UNESCO Chairs, UNESCO centres including UNEVOC Centres on TVET, the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and Geoparks, World Heritage sites and intangible cultural heritage, and UNESCO Cities networks (notably the Global Learning Cities Network and the UNESCO Creative Cities Network).



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4.6. Monitoring progress



Various types of monitoring and evaluation will remain as one of the important tasks of UNESCO as outlined below. In light of the lessons from the GAP, concrete monitoring measures must be pursued and improved with the aim of achieving SDG target 4.7 by 2030.

First, the scaling-up of actions in the five priority action areas by the Member States as well as by the identified Partners at global level needs close monitoring. [...]

For the measuring of scaling-up in the Member States, UNESCO will revise the existing survey questionnaire for the monitoring of Target 4.7. It is proposed to integrate the effort to measure progress of countries' scaling-up of actions in the five priority action areas into this instrument. [...]

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. [...]

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. [...]

Throughout the implementation of *ESD for 2030*, periodic evaluations of the progress of the implementation of the framework will be undertaken

(Para 5.28-5.33, Framework for the implementation of *ESD for 2030*)

Objective

In order to strategically and effectively steer the actions undertaken on the five priority action areas, systematic assessment of the progress of *ESD for 2030* will take place.

Suggested country level activities

To monitor the progress of *ESD for 2030*, Member States are invited to:

- Develop national indicators to monitor the progress of dedicated country initiatives on *ESD for 2030* and contribute to the development of a meaningful scheme to monitor the outcome of ESD.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the progress on ESD at country level, in particular by conducting surveys to assess the progress of the five priority action areas.
- Report on ESD as part of global and regional SDG monitoring including that of SDG Target 4.7.

UNESCO's activities

UNESCO carries out periodic evaluation of the progress of the implementation of *ESD for 2030* on the basis of data and information collected through the following four activities:

- monitoring the overall progress of ESD Member States;
- monitoring the progress in the five priority action areas;
- monitoring the implementation of planned activities through country initiatives and others;
- reviewing additional data on the progress of ESD.
- UNESCO plans to conduct two evaluations in 2020-2030: A mid-term evaluation in 2025 and a final evaluation in 2030. Additional shorter reports are to be published in between.



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KEY INDICATORS TO MONITOR THE PROGRESS OF ESD FOR 2030

Policy

Extent to which legal frameworks and policies are in place to promote ESD.

Learning environment

Extent to which learning environment promotes ESD and its whole-institution approach.

Educators

Extent to which educators are trained to be able to teach ESD and apply whole-institution approaches to ESD in learning situations.

Youth

Extent to which youth are engaged in ESD.

Community

Extent to which ESD is promoted in local communities.

Progress of country initiatives:

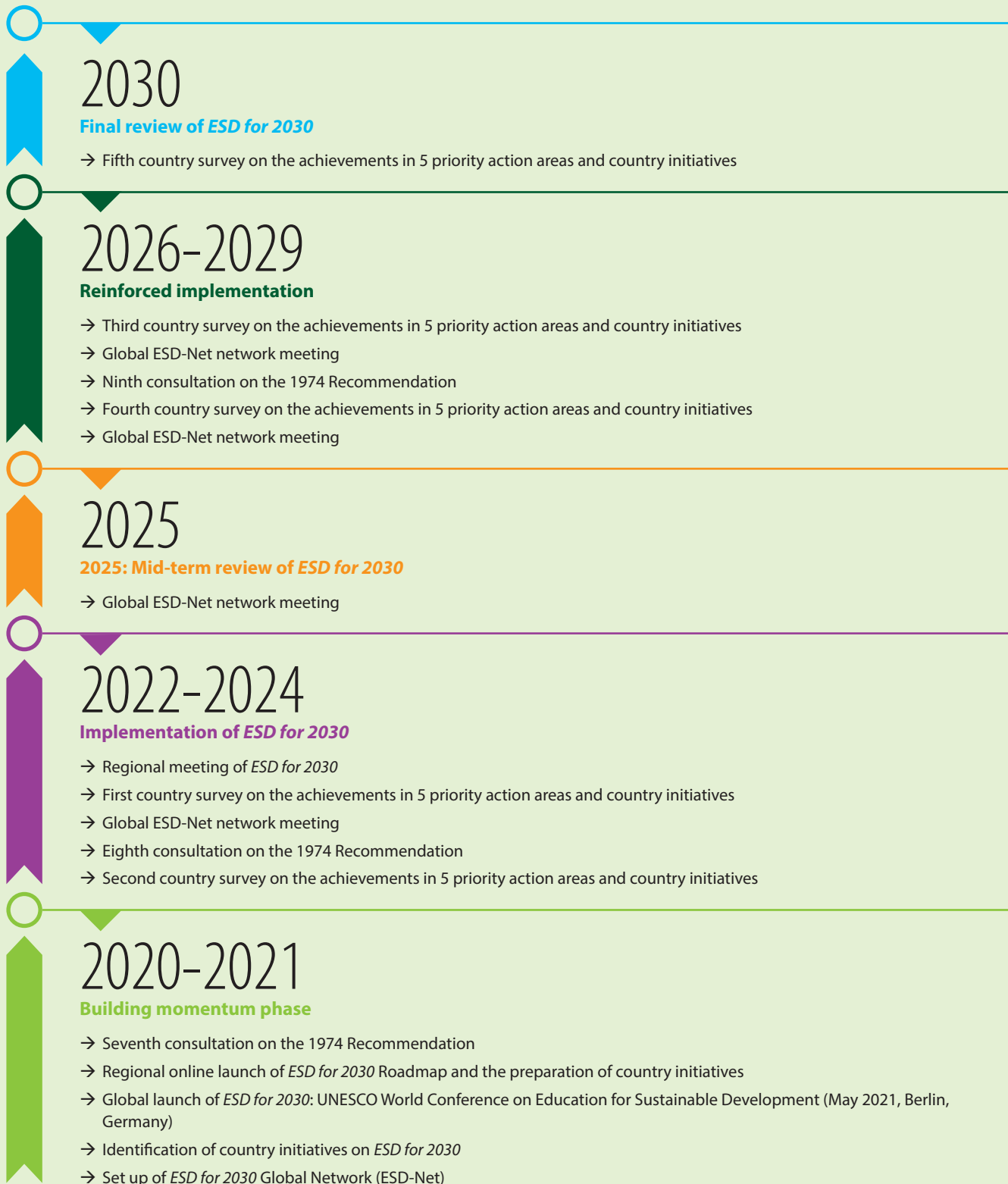
Extent to which *ESD for 2030* is implemented in countries around the world.

Table 1. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of ESD for 2030

	What	Who
Overall progress in ESD	UNESCO as the custodian agency for the global indicator 4.7.1 of SDG Target 4.7, will use data collected through the 1974 Recommendation reporting process to monitor Member States' progress on ESD.	UNESCO with Member States
Progress of ESD for 2030 implementation through country initiatives	The achievements in the five priority action areas by country initiatives on <i>ESD for 2030</i> will be monitored.	UNESCO with Member States
Progress of ESD for 2030 implementation through the activities of other partner organizations of ESD-Net	The achievements in the five priority action areas by the <i>ESD for 2030</i> activities of other partner organizations of <i>ESD-Net</i> will be monitored.	UNESCO with other partner organizations of <i>ESD-Net</i>
Additional quantitative and qualitative information on ESD progress and impact	In addition to formal monitoring, UNESCO will conduct selective monitoring efforts to capture evidence on the impact of <i>ESD for 2030</i> .	UNESCO

How	Indicators
<p>Every four years, Member States report to UNESCO on the implementation of 'the Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms' adopted at the 18th UNESCO General Conference in 1974. The findings of the progress on the 1974 Recommendation provide important insights into the progress towards Target 4.7 of SDG 4 on Education, which concerns ESD among others.</p>	<p>Global Indicator 4.7.1: Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies; (b) curricula; (c) teacher education; and (d) student assessment</p>
<p>UNESCO will support Member States involved in <i>ESD for 2030</i> to set their targets and baselines in each of the five priority action areas to which they plan to contribute.</p> <p>Countries will be invited to participate in regular surveys every two years to measure relative progress on the five priority action areas against the baseline set at the outset. The result of the survey will be discussed at the biennial Global Partners Meetings.</p> <p>Following each biennial review, stakeholders will be invited to reassess and progressively increase their targets in the course of 2020-2030.</p>	<p>The biennial surveys will monitor the progress of one indicator per priority action area and one indicator on the general progress of <i>ESD for 2030</i>. (See the list on page 49)</p>
<p>UNESCO will support other partner organizations in <i>ESD-Net</i> to set their targets and baselines in each of the five priority action areas to which they plan to contribute.</p> <p>Partner organizations will be invited to participate in regular surveys every two years to measure relative progress on the five priority action areas against the baseline set at the outset. The result of the survey will be discussed at the biennial Global Partners Meetings.</p> <p>Following each biennial review, stakeholders will be invited to reassess and progressively increase their targets in the course of 2020-2030.</p>	<p>The biennial surveys will monitor the progress of one indicator per priority action area and one indicator on the general progress of <i>ESD for 2030</i>. (See the list on page 49)</p>
<p>UNESCO will conduct secondary analyses of existing evidence and data, in collaboration with other relevant UN agencies and partners to gain further insights on the progress of ESD.</p> <p>Thematic surveys will be conducted to identify and analyse key issues, trends and developments, to complement the normative monitoring of Target 4.7. (See section 4 on tracking issues and trends)</p> <p>UNESCO will continue to monitor the qualitative impact of ESD by collecting and highlighting testimonies and best practices.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

4.7. Planning for the next 10 years



Annexes

A. One-page summary of ESD for 2030 framework



Vision

ESD for 2030 aims to build a more just and sustainable world through strengthening ESD and contributing to the achievement of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals

Strategic objective

Promote ESD as a key element of quality education and a key enabler of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals with special attention to a) individual transformation, b) societal transformation & c) technological advances

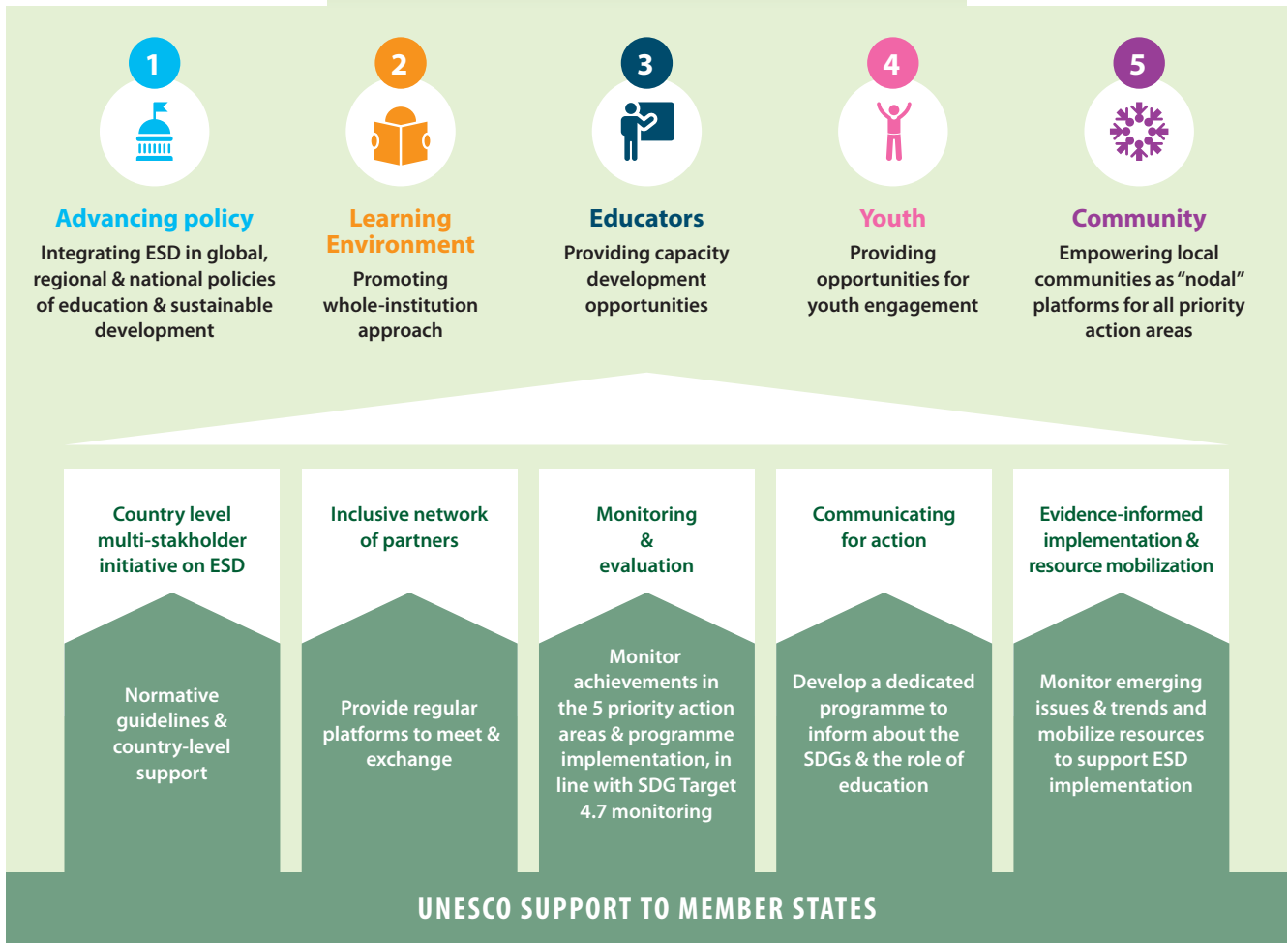
Priority action areas

- 2) Transforming learning environments
- 3) Building capacities of educators
- 4) Empowering and mobilizing youth
- 5) Accelerating local level actions

Target groups

Policy-makers, institutional leaders, learners, parents, educators, youth & communities

ACTIVITIES BY MEMBER STATES: COUNTRY LEVEL MULTI-STAKEHOLDER INITIATIVE



B. Framework for the implementation of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) beyond 2019: *ESD for 2030*

Education for Sustainable Development: Towards achieving the SDGs (*ESD for 2030*)

Framework for the implementation of Education for Sustainable Development beyond 2019

1. Why this framework?

- 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 United Nations 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 launched⁸ 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 recognizing ESD's role in empowering learners and the societies they live in.⁹ To build on the efforts made by the DESD for advocacy and awareness-raising,

the GAP, acknowledged by the United Nations General Assembly¹⁰ 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, mobilizing youth, and accelerating sustainable solutions at local level were identified as the five priority action areas for implementation.

- 1.3 The five-year cycle of the GAP is due to end in 2019, and in order to build a post-GAP position that contributes to Agenda 2030 thereafter, this framework was being prepared.

2. How this framework has been prepared

- 2.1 **Review of the GAP:** The review of GAP implementation, covering the period 2015 to 2018¹¹, revealed that good progress was being made in the implementation of the targeted objectives set by the Key GAP Partners.¹² 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, the insufficient visibility of the engagement made by governments 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 framework, UNESCO planned and organized four brainstorming symposia with more than 250 experts and stakeholders involved. They were held in Brazil, Germany, Japan and South Africa from 2016 to 2018, and comprised of interviews and visits to concrete actors and their practices on the ground. The discussions focused on what made people living under different contexts act in favour of sustainable development and provided

⁸ As endorsed by the 37th session of the UNESCO General Conference (37 C/Resolution 12).

⁹ The Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development states ESD can empower learners to transform themselves and the society they live in by developing knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies and values required for addressing global citizenship and local contextual challenges of the present and the future, such as critical and systemic thinking, analytical problem-solving, creativity, working collaboratively and making decisions in the face of uncertainty, and understanding the interconnectedness of global challenges and responsibilities emanating from such awareness.

¹⁰ Resolution A/RES/69/211.

¹¹ 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 framework, there would be a gap of about one year before the new post-GAP framework is launched, which requires institutional processes involving the Governing Bodies of UNESCO and the United Nations. 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 204 EX/Decision 28 of UNESCO's Executive Board, which calls for 'seamless follow-up to the Global Action Programme and continued UNESCO leadership in ESD beyond 2019'.

¹² 2018 GAP survey: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-sustainable-development> According to the GAP Key Partner Survey (2015-2018), it is estimated that GAP partners (and their cascaded networks of partners) supported over 900 strategic policy developments, while more than 1,400 programmes were developed and implemented to support countries' policy development on ESD. Around 151,000 schools and 26 million learners were estimated to have been supported by the partners along with 2 million educators and 48,400 teacher training institutions. The partners also supported around 3.4 million youth leaders and trained around 762,000 as trainers. Finally, it is projected that over 5,600 civil society organizations conducted ESD activities and that over 2,300 local ESD activities were established.

important insights into the observations described in the Required Reflections part of this framework.

- 2.3 **Consultation process:** Based on the observations drawn from the above processes and several internal reviews of UNESCO's ongoing ESD activities, UNESCO prepared a zero draft of this framework. The first version was shared with and reviewed by GAP Key Partners during a meeting organized by UNESCO in April 2018 in San Jose, Costa Rica. The second version was submitted to a Technical Consultation Meeting with government representatives and experts from 116 Member States, held in July 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand. A wider online consultation with United Nations agencies and other international bodies as well as an online public consultation with a wide range of stakeholders were carried out 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, among others, institutional support is needed in order to scale up and maintain these momentous initiatives.
- 3.2 The GAP (2015-2019) filled these shortcomings. 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 mobilizing youth, and accelerating sustainable solutions at local level. Their sectoral networking was supported by the five Partner Networks set up for the five areas.
- 3.3 The mid-term review of GAP implementation in 2017 reported on the good progress that the Key Partners were 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, although 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 governments was not visibly demonstrated in the current phase of 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 2016¹³, for example, over 91% of the responding Member States reported on the increase of their emphasis on ESD in the policy arena. In the post-GAP framework, therefore, 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 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 and ESD has

13 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 SDG4, where ESD is an integral element.

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 ESD and Global Citizenship Education (GCED) are at the core of SDG 4 Target 4.7, which aims to 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.
- 3.9 The SDGs provide an excellent opportunity to strengthen our perspective on ESD. UN General Assembly Resolution 72/222¹⁴ recognized ESD as 'an integral element of SDG 4 on education and a key enabler of all the other SDGs'. The 17 SDGs cover the key environmental challenges (e.g. climate change, water, ocean and land), and also the fundamental issues that need to be taken into consideration in development discourses, such as poverty, gender equality¹⁵ and equity.¹⁶
- 3.10 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. Among the 17 SDGs, prioritization depending on national and local needs can be considered. For example, climate change remains one of the key focus areas. 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, held from 2016 to 2018 around the world in 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 stages of transformation. With the acquisition of knowledge and information, learners come to be aware of the existence of certain realities. With 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 and their sense of identity. A tipping point arrives where a compassionate mind is set on the path of empowerment.¹⁷
- 4.4 The pedagogical implications of this understanding are many and various. 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

14 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.

15 For example, ESD is an instrument to achieve all the SDGs, and each of the SDGs comes with specific gendered challenges. ESD takes on a cross-disciplinary and systemic approach that enables the question of gender equality to be linked to the various issues of sustainable development. There is, for example, a gendered facet of vulnerability to hazards induced by climate change. When disasters occur, more women die than men because social rules of conduct mean that, for example in the case of flooding, women often have not learned to swim, and have behavioural restrictions that limit their mobility in the face of risk. It should therefore become a priority to provide women with access to ESD. In this regard, ESD actively promotes gender equality, and creates conditions and strategies that empower women.

16 Note that the concept of sustainable development and its challenges include a vast array of complex issues and views that may not have been fully represented in the SDGs.

17 One does not necessarily go through the stages of transformation (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 process and the pace at which individuals go through these stages can also vary.

learners to have the space to experiment with new 'disruptive' ideas, which can facilitate critical perspectives as well as bring about a tipping point. Formal education alone is not enough. Non-formal education and informal learning, including intergenerational lifelong learning taking place in the community, provide learners with critical opportunities to relate them to the realities that concern them and to be influenced to take the necessary actions.

- 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 support 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 values and 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 and a culture of sustainability.
- 4.7 ESD in action is basically citizenship in action. It evokes the lifelong learning perspective, taking place not only at school, 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 it. 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 therefore 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 societies, such as sufficiency, fairness and solidarity. The emerging interest in a circular economy and a sharing economy represents one of those alternatives.¹⁸ ESD can provide training for key stakeholders in the private sector and raise financial literacy to support sustainable economic practices. ESD also has to affect the unsustainable production patterns of current economic structures more directly. This means that 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 or refugee situations). There is some truth to this in that the full complexity and relevance of the concept of sustainable development does not immediately resonate with people trying to survive on a daily basis, but

18 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.

- this does not negate the importance 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. 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. This cannot be done without addressing the wider political, historical, social and economic contexts from which their suffering springs and is perpetuated.
- 415 **The technological future:** According to a report published in 2015 by the World Economic Forum, by 2025, or within less than just ten 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 and higher consumption. 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 new sorts of disasters, the impact of which could be even more widespread than in a less connected world. Applications of Artificial Intelligence are already strongly influencing human behaviour in consumption or social interaction.¹⁹ 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 '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 foremost 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

19 The relationship between frontier technology, such as digitalization and Artificial Intelligence, and ESD should be explored.

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 framework to support the post-GAP position is Education for Sustainable Development: Towards achieving the SDGs (*ESD for 2030*). It aims to make clear the aspect of continuity from the current phase of the GAP to the post-GAP position, while highlighting its alignment with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.
- 5.2 **Goal:** *ESD for 2030* aims to build a more just and sustainable world through strengthening ESD and contributing to the achievement of the 17 SDGs. *ESD for 2030* will achieve this through a threefold approach.
- 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 SDG 13 on climate action, ocean life in SDG 14, biodiversity in SDG 15 as well as clean energy in SDG 7, sustainable cities and communities in SDG 11, responsible consumption and production in SDG 12, and education in SDG 4. The contributions of these long-standing ESD activities to the achievement of the SDGs are evident and they deserve continuing support.
- 5.4 Meanwhile, 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 SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production, for example, needs to be addressed in connection with SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth and there are structural quandaries to be resolved between the two. SDG 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure needs to consider issues related to SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities and the achievement of both of these demands a balancing act. ESD in the *ESD for 2030* 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 phase of the GAP, reorienting societies towards sustainable development has remained as the ultimate aim of ESD. The 17 SDGs, which encompass the 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 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 SDG 4 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 humanity.

- 5.9 **Structures:** The principal aim of the current phase 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 phase of the GAP proven effective, *ESD for 2030* recommends its main structural components be maintained, while a few adjustments and updates are suggested, based on 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 *ESD for 2030* activities.
- 5.11 Second, the five Partner Networks have been instrumental in reaching grassroots actors. The concept deserves continued support,²⁰ but the collaboration among the Partners should be reinforced. To that effect, programme support to each Network should be provided for activities involving different groups of Partners across the network.²¹ Furthermore, that the five Partner Networks should be merged into one inclusive Network of Partners, with five groups of Partners specialized 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 organizations, 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 at 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 SDG 4 on education, Member States should 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 and policies 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, emphasizing 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 need 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-development 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.

20 The current membership of the Key Partners Network, however, needs to be renewed, as their terms of reference finished at the end of 2019. A new process to identify partners and the terms of reference for the network will be revised in line with *ESD for 2030*.

21 The partners referred to in this document concern 95 partners identified at the global level within the current phase 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. Young people must be recognized as one of the key actors in addressing sustainability challenges and be mobilized on key decision-making processes concerning sustainable development. 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, while not overlooking the acute needs of rural communities. In that regard, *ESD for 2030* 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 areas, especially that on youth.
- 5.19 In implementing activities for the priority action areas, Member States are invited to mobilize the concerned stakeholders working in the areas and support their collaborative networking under a coordinated strategy, related to the national framework on the SDGs. More concrete efforts should be made to develop communication and advocacy actions to reflect the SDGs in educational practices and frameworks, while nationwide multi-stakeholder initiatives can be set up to support *ESD for 2030* at the country level.
- 5.20 **Activities by UNESCO:** As was the case with the current phase 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 support that could serve to motivate further scaling up on the ground. *ESD for 2030* will maintain the same stance, within which UNESCO will support the following areas of work.²²
- 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 on *ESD for 2030* at the country level, which could include their roadmap for 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 include representatives and actors from both government and private sectors and from the donor, development and SDG communities, as well as stakeholders working in the five priority action areas at national, regional and global levels.
- 5.23 Third, the implementation of *ESD for 2030* 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 analytical work 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 the SDGs. At the national level, this will be part of the nationwide initiatives for *ESD for 2030*. At the global level, UNESCO will develop a dedicated programme to inform concerned communities about the SDGs and learners and educators about the crucial role education can play in supporting the achievement of the SDGs. The UNESCO-Japan Prize programme, if it continues, 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

22 A full implementation of the post-GAP framework will require a substantial amount of extrabudgetary resources to be raised.

- the wider sustainable development and SDG community. The cooperation and coordination with UN DESA and other United Nations entities responsible for the management of the SDGs²³ at global and regional levels need to be reinforced.
- 5.26 Partnerships with other key players are also required, 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 especially be explored.²⁴
- 5.27 Within UNESCO, the Education Sector will further strengthen its inter-sectoral partnership with other Sectors, especially Culture and Science, integrating the implementation of *ESD for 2030*, where possible, into their relevant programmes. These include, among others, World Heritage sites, intangible cultural heritage, the network of Biosphere Reserves, Geoparks, Small Island Developing States, and local and indigenous knowledge. The Education Sector will also further enhance its intra-sectoral collaboration on ESD and encourage the contribution of its relevant programmes and networks to *ESD for 2030*, including the UNESCO Associated Schools Network (ASPnet), UNESCO Chairs, UNEVOC Centres on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), the Learning Cities Network, as well as the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee.
- 5.28 Finally, various types of monitoring and evaluation will remain an important task for UNESCO, as outlined below. In light of the lessons from the GAP, concrete monitoring measures must be pursued and improved with the aim of achieving Target 4.7 by 2030.
- 5.29 First, the scaling-up of actions in the five priority 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 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 4.7.²⁵ It is proposed to integrate the effort to measure progress of countries' scaling-up of actions in the five priority 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 embed critical insights, with evidence and data, into the most strategic and effective pedagogies to implement *ESD for 2030*. 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 *ESD for 2030*, periodic evaluations of the progress of the implementation of the framework will be undertaken.

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

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

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

UNESCO General Conference Resolution 40C/Resolution 14

Framework for the implementation of education for sustainable development (ESD) beyond 2019

The General Conference,

Recalling 204 EX/Decision 28 and 206 EX/Decision 6.II,

Also recalling United Nations General Assembly resolution 72/222, which reaffirms UNESCO's role as the lead agency for education for sustainable development (ESD) and recognizes ESD as "an integral element of the Sustainable Development Goal on quality education and a key enabler of all the other Sustainable Development Goals",

Having examined document 40 C/23,

1. Takes note of the broad support expressed by Member States for the *ESD for 2030* draft framework;
2. Endorses the *ESD for 2030* Framework and invites Member States to actively implement it and mobilize funding for education for sustainable development (ESD) activities and programmes at the national, regional and global levels, as appropriate;
3. Requests the Director-General to bring the *ESD for 2030* Framework to the attention of the United Nations General Assembly at its 74th session for consideration and appropriate action;
4. Encourages the Director-General to mobilize all UNESCO programme sectors and networks to enhance their contribution to education for sustainable development (ESD) and actively engage in the implementation of the *ESD for 2030* Framework;
5. Expresses its gratitude to the Government of Germany for its support and generous contribution to hosting the international launch event for the *ESD for 2030* Framework in June 2020 in Berlin.

Resolution adopted on the report of the ED Commission at the 16th plenary meeting, on 25 November 2019.

C. Selected paragraph from UN General Assembly Resolution 72/222 (2017) Education for Sustainable Development in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The General Assembly, (...)

2. *Reaffirms* education for sustainable development as a vital means of implementation for sustainable development, as outlined in the Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development, and as an integral element of the Sustainable Development Goal on quality education and a key enabler of all the other Sustainable Development Goals, and welcomes the increased international recognition of education for sustainable development in quality education and lifelong learning; (...).

<https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/72/222>

D. Selected paragraph from UN General Assembly Resolution 74/223(2019) Education for sustainable development in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The General Assembly, (...)

7. Encourages Governments to increase efforts to systemically integrate and institutionalize education for sustainable development in the education sector and other relevant sectors, as appropriate, including through, inter alia, the provision of financial resources, the inclusion of education for sustainable development in relevant policies and the development of the capacities of policymakers, institutional leaders and educators, as well as through the strengthening of research and innovation, and monitoring and evaluation on education for sustainable development in order to support the scaling up of good practices; (...).

<https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/74/223>

E. History of ESD at a glance

1972

United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm

- The Declaration of the UN Conference on Human Environment proclaimed “to defend and improve the environment for present and future generations has become an imperative goal for mankind”.
- **Recommendation 96 of the 1972 Stockholm Conference** sees environmental education as a critical means to address the world’s environmental crises. **Principle 19 of the Stockholm Declaration** states, *inter alia*, that ‘Education in environmental matters, for the younger generation as well as adults, giving due consideration to the underprivileged, is essential in order to broaden the basis for an enlightened opinion and responsible conduct by individuals, enterprises and communities in protecting and improving the environment in its full human dimension.’

1977

First Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education in Tbilisi, Georgia

- The Conference laid out the role, objectives, and characteristics of environmental education, and provided several goals and principles for environmental education.
- Tbilisi Declaration noted ‘the important role of environmental education in the preservation and improvement of the world’s environment, as well as in the sound and balanced development of the world’s communities’.

1987

‘Our Common Future’ (Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, (also known as the Brundtland Report))

- ‘Sustainable development’ defined as ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’

1992

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio Summit, Earth Summit)

- Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 consolidated international discussions on the critical role of education, training and public awareness in achieving sustainable development.
- ‘Education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people to address environment and development issues.’
- **Climate change:** Article 6 of the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change** is dedicated to education, training, public awareness and access to information related to climate change.
- **Biodiversity:** Article 13 of the **Convention on Biological Diversity** calls for ‘developing educational and public awareness programmes, with respect to conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity’ and its programme of work on Communication, Education and Public Awareness, notably *Priority activity 10: Strengthen formal and informal education on Biodiversity*

2002

World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Summit)

- A proposal for a Decade of Education for Sustainable Development was included in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.
- UN General Assembly Resolution 57/254 designated 2005-2014 the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) and UNESCO as lead agency.

2005

UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014, DESD) UN Decade on ESD has ‘activated hundreds of thousands of people to reorient education globally towards a central goal: to learn to live and work sustainably.’

- **Disaster risk reduction:** Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, and the subsequent Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

2009

UNESCO World Conference on ESD in Bonn, Germany

- Bonn Declaration emphasized ESD as a ‘life-saving measure’ for the future that empowers people for change, and recommended promoting ESD as ‘an investment in the future’.

2012

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20)

- *‘promote education for sustainable development and to integrate sustainable development more actively into education beyond the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development’*
- **Sustainable consumption and production:** Sustainable Lifestyles and Education Programme of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production 2012-2021

2014

UNESCO World Conference on ESD in Aichi-Nagoya (Japan)

- Launch of the Global Action Programme on ESD (2015-2019). The Global Action Programme aims *‘to generate and scale up action in all levels and areas of education and learning to accelerate progress towards sustainable development’*. It focuses on five priorities, considered key leverage points to advance the ESD agenda.
- **Aichi-Nagoya Declaration on ESD** adopted at the UNESCO 2014 World Conference on ESD reaffirms ESD as a vital means of implementation for sustainable development.

2015

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for global transformation

- **Target 4.7** urges that *‘by 2030 all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development...’*
- **Target 12.8** asks to *‘ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature.’*
- **Target 13.3** calls to *‘improve education, awareness raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change...’*

Incheon Declaration on Education 2030: *‘Our vision is to transform lives through education, recognizing the important role of education as a main driver of development and in achieving the other proposed SDGs’.*

Global Action Programme on ESD (2015-2019) *‘Building on the achievements of the Decade, the GAP aims to generate and scale up concrete actions in ESD’*

Paris Climate Conference of Parties (COP 21). Articles 11 and 12 of the Paris Agreement, the outcome document of COP21. Article 12: *‘Parties shall cooperate in taking measures... to enhance climate change education, training, public awareness, public participation and public access to information...’*

2016

Sustainable cities and communities: New Urban Agenda adopted at the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III)

2017

UN General Assembly Resolution 72/222 -- ESD’s role as ‘an integral element of the SDG on quality education and a key enabler of all other sustainable development goals’ explicitly recognized.

Oceans: UN Ocean Conference Call for Action and UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030).

- *‘to support plans to foster ocean-related education, to promote ocean literacy and a culture of conservation, restoration and sustainable use of our ocean’.*

2019

40th Session of the UNESCO General Conference : Adoption of Framework for the implementation of ESD beyond 2019 ‘ESD for 2030’ (2020-2030)

UN General Assembly Resolution 74/223 – ‘Encourages Governments to increase efforts to systemically integrate and institutionalize education for sustainable development in the education sector and other relevant sectors’



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Education
Sector

Education for Sustainable Development

A roadmap

#ESDfor2030

This roadmap sets out the urgent challenges facing the planet and underlines the implementation of the new Education for Sustainable Development: Towards achieving the SDGs (ESD for 2030) framework, which was adopted with the aim of increasing the contribution of education to building a more just and sustainable world. ESD for 2030 will step up actions on five priority action areas on policy, education environments, building capacities of educators, youth and local level action, stressing further ESD's key role for the successful achievement of the 17 SDGs and the great individual and societal transformation required to address the urgent sustainability challenges. The roadmap also underlines the key areas of implementation of the ESD for 2030 framework. ESD is widely recognized as an integral element of Agenda 2030, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), and a key enabler of all the other SDGs.

