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The SDG4-Education 2030 Global Coordination Mechanism & Global Education Forum (Forum) - How They are Linked

The SDG4 Education 2020 Steering Committee and Global Education Meeting

The SDG 4-Education 2030 global coordination mechanism, working within the wider 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development architecture, is the totality of the relevant structures and processes, including the SDG4-Education 2030 Steering Committee (SDG4-Education 2030 SC), the Global Education Meetings (GEMs), regional meetings and the Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030 (CCNGO) ([Education 2030 Framework for Action](#), para. 93).

The [SDG4-Education 2030 Steering Committee](#) is the global multi-stakeholder mechanism to provide strategic guidance to Member States and the education community in achieving the SDG 4-Education 2030 Agenda; review progress through UNESCO's Institute for Statistics (UIS) and the Global Education Monitoring Report (GEMR); recommend key priorities and catalytic actions to achieve the SDG 4-Education 2030 agenda; monitor and advocate for adequate financing; and encourage harmonization and coordination of partner activities. Its primary objective is to harmonize and strengthen support to Member States and their partners to achieve SDG 4 and the education-related targets of the global agenda. The SDG4-Education 2030 SC meets to provide strategic advice on priority issues.

The periodic **Global Education Meetings** are convened by UNESCO every 3 or 4 years, aligned with the meeting schedule of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), in consultation with the SDG-Education 2030 SC, to review the SDG 4-Education 2030 agenda. All Member States and other stakeholders that are part of the coordination mechanism participate in the GEMs.

In October 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNESCO, with the Governments of Ghana, Norway and the United Kingdom, convened an [Extraordinary Session of the Global Education Meeting Education](#). The meeting brought together Heads of State and Government, ministers and delegates, representatives of United Nations agencies, humanitarian and development partners, international and regional organizations, civil society organizations and the teaching profession, members of research communities and the private sector, to discuss how to prioritize education (and what and who to prioritize) in building back from COVID-19.

The resulting [2020 GEM Declaration](#) represents a consensus and reaffirmation of UN Member States and the international education community's support for the global SDG 4 agenda. It presents their commitment to protect education finance and **four priority actions**: safe school reopening, support to teachers, skills development, and connectivity and digital learning. These priority actions build on and distill the [Save Our Future White Paper](#)'s detailed seven action areas identified for multilateral and bilateral donor support in response to COVID-19.

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The Global Education Forum (Forum)

The Global Education Forum aims to bring together leaders at the ministerial level from key donor countries as well as multilateral institutions supporting SDG 4.

As agreed at its inception meeting, the Forum's role and efforts are to address existing challenges in the education financing architecture and develop greater collaboration between and coordination of education donors, and to advocate for investment and the acceleration of progress towards SDG4.

The objectives of the Forum, as agreed at its inception meeting, are 1) to develop a clear message around the urgency of the education emergency; 2) to strengthen coordination of international support – bilateral and multilateral – to ensure predictable, sustainable and coherent financing and deliver economies of scale and scope, and greater efficiency and impact on the ground and 3) in furtherance of the second objective, to work with leaders from selected countries, at their request, to mobilize international support for their national objectives and country plans.

The Forum was established in 2019 with the support of the UN Deputy Secretary-General and is co-chaired by Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO; the Rt Hon Gordon Brown, UN Special Envoy for Global Education; Graça Machel, former Minister of Education of Mozambique; Mari Pangestu, Managing Director of Development Policy and Partnerships of the World Bank; and Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Senior Minister of Singapore. **The Forum convenes twice a year,** in April around the WB-IMF Spring meetings and in September around the UN General Assembly.

In September 2020, the Forum provided a platform for donors to discuss the [Save Our Future White Paper](#). The paper, produced by the Save our Future Campaign in collaboration with key multilateral organizations and funds together with major civil society organizations, highlights the urgency of the crisis and presents a common narrative and priority actions for the international community to pursue in response to the COVID19 pandemic. The White Paper built on the UN Secretary General's Policy Brief on the education response to COVID and beyond. The actions were discussed and supported by the Forum membership in September 2020 and subsequently formed the basis for the GEM Outcome Declaration of the Global Education Meeting in October 2020.

Moving forward – The Role of the Global Education Forum

UNESCO leads the reform of the SDG 4-Education 2030 global coordination mechanism, with a view to strengthening the SDG4-Education 2030 Steering Committee's education policy steering.

Focusing on advocacy and coordination between donors, the Global Education Forum will support the SDG4-Education Steering Committee's education policy steering:

- Coordination – The Forum's coordination work is among donors and includes finding common ground in their shared effort to support SDG4 in line with the Aid Effectiveness Declarations, and if requested to do so offering support to individual countries seeking to make progress and highlight good practice.
- Advocacy – The Forum's role in global advocacy for increased education financing is seen as a critical pillar of the reformed global education coordination mechanism and its agenda.

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In the immediate term, the Forum will convene dialogues between its donor members *with a focus on the COVID recovery package* and the priority actions identified in the 2020 GEM Declaration and the Safe Our Future White Paper: safe reopening of schools, supporting teachers and education personnel; investing in skills development; narrowing the digital divide.

In the medium term, the Forum would continue its work of coordination and advocacy and support the work of the SDG4-Education 2030 Steering Committee and the Global Education Meetings.

Annex 1 – Link between GEM Declaration and Global Education Forum/SOF White Paper Priorities

GEM Declaration	Global Education Forum/Save Our Future White Paper
<p>Our commitment to protect education finance at the time of COVID-19 and beyond</p>	
<p>Increase or maintain the share of public expenditure on education towards the international benchmarks of at least 4-6% of GDP and/or 15-20% of public expenditure.</p>	<p>ACTION AREA 5: Protect education budgets and target public spending at those left furthest behind.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National governments to commit to maintaining or increasing public spending on education through prioritizing education as part of recovery discussions and planning. Development partners to engage across sectors to ensure prioritization of education in national country development plans and provide technical and other assistance to incentivize and make the case for countries to maintain or increase expenditures per capita in their domestic budgets allocated to education in line with targets in the Education 2030 Framework for Action. - National governments, in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders, to develop credible financing plans to fully finance education following principles of progressive universalism, including adopting equity financing formulas that reflect the needs of the most marginalized children. Development partners to prioritize funding for countries and programs which take a progressive universalism approach and support efforts to develop better data on education financing, estimate costs, track resource availability from all sources, and provide tools to guide equitable spending. - National and international education actors work more closely with other sectors to prioritize action on growing domestic revenues (e.g. through progressive taxation and efforts to stem illicit financial flows) and strengthening of public financial management systems and data systems to improve equity and efficiency in planning, budgeting, and expenditure, including in the production of education-focused Public Expenditure Reviews. - All actors to work together to harness innovative financing and alternative financing options where possible in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and post-secondary education to enable public funds to be more focused on foundational learning. Donors to support these efforts by establishing an innovative financing task force to help identify and test such financing options.
<p>Ensure that national recovery stimulus packages include allocations to: a) support measures for recovering all</p>	<p>ACTION AREA 5: Protect education budgets and target public spending at those left furthest behind.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Governments and civil society to work together to ensure education is included as an essential sector for COVID-19

<p>marginalized students’ learning loss and socio-emotional impact during educational disruption; b) (re-)enrolment campaigns and targeted support for learners who are at risk of not returning to school, especially, girls, those living in poverty, persons with disabilities, refugees and persons affected by conflict, crises and natural disasters; and c) training and skills development to increase employment opportunities for people affected by job losses.</p>	<p>response in national, global, and regional multisectoral development finance conversations and include a wide range of stakeholders in decision-making to improve education policymaking and build the case for urgent support to education. Establish a COVID-19 recovery financing taskforce to develop strategies and concrete proposals to ensure education is considered in negotiations of COVID-19 recovery packages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All levels of governments to use cash transfer programs and other targeted efforts to reduce barriers to re-entry and ensure the most vulnerable children, in particular adolescent girls, refugees, and students with disabilities, return to school and receive support to learn. This could also include working with other sectors to declare remittance transfer services as essential and easing taxes and regulations on those transfers.
<p>Increase the volume, predictability and effectiveness of international aid to education by: meeting the benchmark of 0.7% of donor GNP for official development assistance (ODA) to developing countries; b) increasing the share of ODA to education as a percentage of total ODA; and c) ensuring that international aid for education is aligned to national education plans that integrate COVID-19 response and recovery and in accordance with aid effectiveness principles. Aid should target countries and populations most in need, including those who are not reached by government programmes.</p>	<p>ACTION AREA 6: Mobilize international resources to fully finance education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education development partners to work with other sectors to support calls for increased and more targeted international aid including through the call to meet the 0.7 percent of gross national income (GNI) aid commitment, with a focus on least developed countries (LDCs) by disbursing at least 0.15 to 0.20 percent of GNI on the most vulnerable countries; encouraging the IMF to utilize its Special Drawing Rights (its global reserve asset) to be channeled toward the countries that need it most; and improving access to concessional finance to countries most in need by revising access criteria. - Aid donors and international institutions to mobilize additional resources for education including by collectively increasing the share of education in international aid. Some agencies involved in this report advocate specific targets, including a 15 percent floor on education’s share, matching the recommended efforts by national governments as highlighted in Action Area 5. Given that sector allocable aid from international donors is currently at \$150 billion per year according to the OECD-DAC, this would mean \$22.5 billion per year allocated to education from those donors. Others question whether a single target applied to donors in different positions is the right approach. But all signatories to this document agree increasing the overall amount of donor finance provided to education is critical during this period. This includes allocating an increased share of humanitarian funding to education interventions. - Based on current spending trends and funding targets, multilateral agencies engaged in this report (MDBs and UN organizations) as well as the education funds (ECW, GPE, IFFEd, EOF) could—with necessary support from official and private

	<p>donors—at a minimum deliver an estimated \$9 billion in aid for education annually in the immediate term. This includes support for education as well as related services (health and nutrition) channeled through these organizations. Additional support is needed to meet this minimum. This does not include much needed additional financing that could be mobilized through the MDBs' non-concessional windows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Donors to establish and support mechanisms that can quickly leverage additional affordable financing for education by expanding the capacity of MDBs, including through the innovative use of guarantees in combination with grants as proposed by IFFEd. - Development partners to increase efforts to diversify funding for education including by increasing non-DAC and nontraditional donors' commitment to education; by further exploring innovative financing approaches; by ramping up calls for support among philanthropists and corporations; and by working across sectors to leverage investments in other critical development sectors for education (e.g. by engaging in Voluntary National SDG Reviews and exploring opportunities for education and skills training in large-scale projects in complementary sectors).
<p>Our priority actions to accelerate progress towards SDG 4 in the COVID-19 context and beyond</p>	
<p>Safely reopen educational institutions based on scientific evidence and considering local contexts; prioritizing the health and safety of students and educators through closer inter-sectoral collaboration; strengthening and restoring access to services such as school meals, health, WASH, social protection, etc.; and ensuring that reopening plans are equity-oriented, gender-responsive, inclusive and targeted. These measures should be adequately funded at all levels and prepare education institutions to continue service provision when normal school opening is disrupted.</p>	<p>ACTION AREA 1: Prioritize reopening schools, deliver vital services to children, and treat the workforce as frontline workers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All levels of government to take all possible measures to reopen schools safely as soon as possible based on balanced and contextualized analysis that considers international and national safety guidelines and dialogue with the education workforce and their representative organizations. Measures should be taken to ensure women's participation in dialogue and decision-making. Taking all possible measures to reopen safely includes upgrading hygiene services, implementing physical distancing measures, and ensuring the needs of children and members of the workforce with disabilities, refugee children, and girls are explicitly considered and that policies do not prohibit pregnant girls or mothers from returning to school. - Governments, donors, agencies, and civil society to ensure that all children, particularly the most marginalized, are able to return to school through the roll out of communications campaigns, scaling up school meals, and targeted cash transfers. - School leaders, teachers, and other members of the education workforce (through their representative organizations) to actively participate in planning and preparing for school

	<p>reopenings, prioritizing their students' and their own health and well-being needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Country governments and international organizations – working with partners in the ACT Accelerator, including WHO, GAVI, and CEPI as conveners of the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility – to advocate for teachers and the education workforce to be treated as essential workers, initiating dialogue with multisectoral coalitions to ensure teachers are included in priority access to COVID-19 testing, treatment, and vaccines. National governments to monitor school reopenings, including tracking COVID-19 cases for students and the education workforce, and ensuring a decision model is in place for reclosing and reopening schools as needed where transmission rates increase in accordance with international human rights (e.g. right to privacy, right to education) and standards. - All levels of governments to ensure vital services such as school feeding, WASH, physical and mental health services, and child protection services are delivered as soon as schools are reopened, especially to the most marginalized.
<p>Support all teachers and education personnel as frontline workers, consulting their representatives in decision making, and ensuring their safety, well-being and decent working conditions.</p> <p>Urgent attention is required to address the shortage of trained and qualified teachers aggravated by the COVID-19 crisis. Their professional development needs at all levels, including digital and pedagogical skills for learner centred quality education, is a matter of urgency.</p>	<p>ACTION AREA 1: Treat the workforce as frontline workers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National governments to treat the education workforce as frontline workers and ensure their safety; physical and mental well-being; labor rights, including decent work and regular and timely pay, whether they are in the public or private sector; and capacity building so they can support safe school reopening. Measures should consider gendered dimensions of school closures and reopening. <p>ACTION AREA 3: Strengthen the Education Workforce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local education authorities and schools in collaboration with teachers, communities, and other sectors to take immediate steps to maximize support for student learning by creating student-centered learning teams — for example, by supporting teachers with existing teaching and learning roles (such as teacher trainees); teaming the most experienced and strongest teachers with those with less experience; and recruiting and training community members and parents as "community education workers" to support differentiated instruction, continuity of learning, and the welfare and inclusion of all children. - All levels of governments to work with teacher education institutions to provide rapid evidence-based professional development for the highest-need teachers (based on evidence such as learner assessments and other data). This could include content knowledge, strategies for differentiated instruction, effective pedagogy (particularly for building foundational skills), no- and low-tech ways of teaching and learning remotely, and working in learning teams. School-centered and collaborative

	<p>approaches including coaching should be used where possible and technology harnessed where proven and available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All levels of governments to provide school leaders with resources, evidence for decision-making, and clear and timely guidance to successfully navigate crisis responses and professional development that enables safe school reopening, undertaking immediate learner assessments, remote and blended learning, and facilitating collaborative professional development. - All levels of governments to use data-driven approaches to improve the quality and availability of teachers in the most marginalized areas, for example through incentives to address workforce needs and gender, inclusion, and specific subject gaps; improve attendance; re-allocation of qualified teachers at a local level; and sharing shortage expertise and specialist skills across schools in person and remotely, supported by technology where appropriate. - National and local governments to create the policies and structures, including legislative measures, to ensure fair, inclusive, and effective social and policy dialogue with members of the workforce in both public and private sectors and proactively engage the workforce in formal decision-making, including in Local Education Groups or their equivalent. This dialogue should be continuous so it can respond in a timely way to changing contexts. - All levels of government, with support from development partners, to commit to longer-term strengthening of the workforce — including transforming initial teacher education; exploring alternative routes into teaching to address teacher shortages; providing evidence-based collaborative professional development for all members of the workforce; establishing the policies, funding, and structures to uphold the rights of the workforce, ensuring social and policy dialogue with them and their representative organizations; collecting key data on the workforce to aid decision-making and evaluating what does and does not work.
<p>Invest in skills development, including social and emotional learning and well-being, for inclusive recovery, decent work and enhanced employability, and sustainable development through reskilling and upskilling opportunities for all young people and adults who have lost or are at risk of losing their jobs.</p>	<p>ACTION AREA 2: Make education inclusive, engaging, and adaptive – building the skills children need to flourish</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government agencies responsible for education workforce and curricula to commit to driving inclusive, interactive, and adaptive pedagogy and, with support from development partners, to adapt the system to ensure this is delivered (see also Action Area 3). - All levels of governments, with support from development partners, to support schools to execute simple, rapid assessments of all students’ learning levels upon their return to school and as regular practice and to urgently implement differentiated instruction to ensure all children achieve foundational learning.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Governments globally to endorse and support the process led by UNESCO to develop and adopt intermediate benchmarks for SDG indicators as a key driver of the focus on learning. - CSOs and development partners to build broad cross-sectoral coalitions to gather and publicize learning outcome data; to amplify the urgent need to address the learning crisis to the broader public, and to step in to provide interventions (through formal and/or non-formal education) to build critical skills and knowledge to contribute to the SDGs. - All levels of governments, with support from development partners, and in consultation with employers to perform analyses on alignment (or misalignment) of systems/stakeholders’ incentives and related accountabilities; to strengthen their data systems and capacity to measure learning and access (disaggregated for marginalized groups); to ensure that results are used to improve the teaching and learning process; and to take advantage of upcoming cycles of reform to reorient curricula and pedagogy to build the knowledge and skills needed to drive sustainable development and meet the needs of the labor market.
<p>Narrow the digital divide in education, develop quality open educational resources and build digital commons as a complement to face-to-face learning, with a view to enabling inclusive and equitable technology-supported learning. In so doing, protect learners’ privacy, foster digital citizenship and reaffirm education as a public good.</p>	<p>ACTION AREA 4: Focus education technology (EdTech) where it is proven to be effective and most equitable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development partners and all levels of governments with existing EdTech programs to carry out analysis and appropriate action to ensure they are not exacerbating marginalization, to consider the opportunity costs of focusing on EdTech solutions, and to consider pivoting to user-centered approaches which are likely to generate maximum benefit for the most marginalized. - National governments to use open curricular content and to ensure that there will be low- or no-cost ways for teachers, parents, and students to access content digitally, offline, through radio, through television, or in print. - Multilateral and bilateral organizations, national governments, and the private sector to co-create mechanisms to share openly licensed, printable, and editable content for the core curriculum, including teacher guides, structured lesson plans, textbooks, workbooks, teacher professional development materials, and other resources in accessible, user-friendly formats and local languages, differentiated for learning level. - National governments, multilateral and bilateral organizations, and the private sector to engage creatively in mechanisms and partnerships to increase funding for connectivity (without impacting education budgets), including the use of licensing and renewals to internet service providers on provisions of allocating connectivity to under-resourced schools and households. - National governments with support from development partners to strengthen education management information system

	<p>(EMIS) data collection to ensure enrollment, attendance, transition, and learning data is measured for all students (including those who are currently "invisible"); ensure data is collected on all roles within the education workforce; and ensure data is disaggregated for marginalized groups and available in a timely manner to education stakeholders for data-driven, evidence-based decision-making while maintaining high standards of privacy and data protection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Researchers, development partners, and governments to rapidly test technology-based approaches to scale up effective workforce professional development and collaboration (e.g. to facilitate peer collaboration, strengthen school-based communities of practice, and disseminate open educational resources [OER]) with a focus on effective teaching practices for improved learning outcomes. • Governments with support from development partners and researchers to test and evaluate child-centered approaches to learning for the most marginalized with emphasis on contextualization, needs identification, relevance, and cost-effectiveness. - Ministries of education, local governments, and development partners with support from national governments to support, train, and capacitate households (parents) to actively and appropriately engage with their children’s distance learning experience. - Governments with support from development partners to strengthen and contextualize research and testing on tech-enabled solutions, including generating a robust and relevant evidence base for such interventions, testing solutions with a wide variety of local stakeholders and possible end users, as well as ensuring inclusion at the core of the design and delivery of such solutions.
<p>Way forward</p>	
<p>We will monitor the implementation of these commitments over the next 15 months, collect and exchange good practices, and report on the fulfilment of commitments at the next ordinary session of the Global Education Meeting planned for 2021 (2021 GEM).</p> <p>We request UNESCO and its partners, together with the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee, to assess the</p>	<p>ACTION AREA 7: Use resources better by improving evidence generation, coordination, alignment, and effectiveness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National governments with support from development partners to improve donor coordination at a country level with the aim of reducing administrative burden and transaction costs for countries, enabling alignment with country priorities. This could include exploring the use of pooled funding mechanisms at country level. - Development partners and humanitarian partners to commit to improve coordination around education in crisis at country level through multisectoral coordination through UN structures and conventions, and close coordination of LEGs and Education Clusters from the outset of a response, and better harmonization

<p>impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the progress towards the achievement of the SDG 4 and other education-related targets, examine the strategies and priorities to recover and accelerate the progress and propose relevant and realistic benchmarks of key SDG 4 indicators for subsequent monitoring.</p> <p>We invite UNESCO to expeditiously design and lead a consultation in coordination with relevant stakeholders in order to develop a proposal to strengthen the SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee to be able to effectively steer and coordinate the global education cooperation mechanism in line with the Education 2030 Framework for Action and in the post-COVID-19 context. We agree to extend the mandate of the current SDG-Education 2030 Steering Committee members during the consultation process as a transitional measure, until an agreement on a strengthened global education coordination mechanism is reached at the earliest convenience, and not later than the GEM 2021.</p>	<p>and sequencing of efforts including around budgets, resources, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNESCO to convene a working group to lead a consultation on a global education coordination mechanism. - Development partners to commit to more evidence-informed practice by including a full and transparent appraisal of evidence considered in planning documents for projects, investing in evidence-based policies, practices, and interventions and limiting investment in projects which have generally not achieved their expected impact except where there is strong evidence that they will succeed where others have failed. - National governments, with support from development partners to develop capacity in effective evidence generation, implementation, and evidence-informed policymaking. Donors to invest in global public goods that can support and leverage reforms at country level. Donors to continue to explore, pilot, and evaluate the most effective ways to maximize impact including through results-based approaches where financing is linked to outcomes.
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GEM Outcomes Statement: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374704>

SOF White Paper Exec Summary: https://saveourfuture.world/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/SOF_White-Paper_Executive-Summary.pdf