

ENVISION 4.7: ROADMAP IN SUPPORT OF SDG TARGET 4.7

1. Preamble

We, the participants¹ of the Envision 4.7 event held in Helsinki, 6th and 7th November 2019, wish to contribute to the achievement of Target 4.7 of the universal Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).² Urgent action is required in Europe to meet our responsibilities to reach this target.

We call on the European Union, Council of Europe and European countries to be forerunners in adopting and implementing policies which respect human rights and address key global challenges of the 21st century, such as climate change, poverty, inequality, resource depletion and quality of life. In the adoption of such policies, we envisage the implementation of transformative education for sustainable development as a life-long learning process and a public good: promoting change and the necessary development of individuals, communities and systems. Transformative education fosters engaged, active and critical learners and builds constructive and democratic approaches to difference. Situated in and responsive to local contexts, transformative education for sustainable development requires both learning and unlearning by participants.

Actions to reach SDG Target 4.7 are fundamental to achieving the SDGs by assisting people, communities, and state and non-state entities to fully assume their responsibilities as actors in a single interdependent world.³ In Europe, this involves addressing the global issues directly linked to our local contexts and exploring how as individuals and societies we can act to tackle broader issues and resolve complex problems

The implementation of Target 4.7 can build on existing commitments across Europe⁴ that recognise the positive role of different forms of education in families, schools, workplaces and elsewhere, and throughout the lifecycle.

Envision 4.7 has developed the following policy recommendations and considerations which in the collective opinion of participants, should form the basis of frameworks supporting life-long learning linked to sustainable development through formal, non-formal and informal education.⁵

2. Key issues to inform European and regional frameworks that address SDG target 4.7

General recommendations

- A pan-European overarching strategy for Target 4.7 needs to be developed at the latest by 2021. In order to guide this European strategy, a multi-stakeholder group with relevant expertise needs to be established.
- Building on existing progress embedding transformative education through participatory and learner-centred approaches and reflexive processes, European, national and sub-national educational policies should take into consideration the need for formal, non-formal and informal education to have a coherent and inclusive approach emphasizing intergenerational and intercultural learning across all levels of education.

2.1. Transformative Education for Target 4.7

Target 4.7 reflects the transformative power of education by promoting global citizenship, sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, peace, and appreciation of cultural diversity. To effectively achieve Target 4.7, the strengths of each of its components must be built upon, common ground identified, and past and ongoing successes and failures learnt from.

As Target 4.7 draws from various components of transformative education, it necessarily requires multifaceted and multiple approaches. This includes utilising different disciplines to build capacity in order to engage with the complexities and uncertainties that define key interdependent global issues. The following recommendations build from those put forward in the Brussels Declaration⁶

Specific recommendations

1. Support a process that creates national, European and, where appropriate, sub-national and regional coalitions reflecting the strengths and expertise of different components of transformative education and identify common interests, messages

and actions that connect different actors in new ways to deliver outcomes of SDG 4.7

2. Further enable and create new opportunities for capacity building and upskilling of practitioners and learners linked to transformative education for sustainable development, including, revisiting assumptions and worldviews, unlearning and learning, holding and exploring differences and ensuring the meaningful inclusion of people who are systematically underrepresented and marginalized⁷.

2.2. Recognition of the value of life-long learning supported through formal, non-formal and informal education

Learning plays a central role in addressing the challenges of the 2030 Agenda and must be recognized as an important force to transform and sustain society. Equally valuing all forms of education and supporting life-long learning opportunities is the first step towards achieving the 2030 Agenda vision. Drawing inspiration from the Strasbourg Outcome Document⁸, we recognise that life-long learning and education play an essential role in furthering equal opportunities, social inclusion and social cohesion, as well as a sustainable future.

Specific recommendations

1. Life-long learning policies and competencies should acknowledge formal and non-formal adult education, and informal learning. All European countries are encouraged to produce and implement legislation, develop structures and ensure finances for adult education. As most of the SDGs focus on formal and youth education, the inclusion of a comprehensive understanding of adult education is recommended, with a particular focus on citizenship education and sustainable culture, in addition to upskilling and reskilling.
2. In developing life-long learning policies to implement SDG Target 4.7, we call on the European Union, Council of Europe and European countries to commit to meaningful partnerships with non-formal education providers, including relevant civil society organisations as partners in policy development processes and increasing civil society's capacities through the provision of adequate resources and essential infrastructure.

2.3. Cross-sectoral Cooperation

The scale and ambition of SDG Target 4.7 requires multilevel and cross-sectoral partnerships at various levels to ensure its achievement. There is a need to bring together and engage local and national governments, members of parliament, the private sector, civil society, European Union, Council of Europe and United Nations system, academics, media, youth, educators,

and other actors in order to mobilize all available resources for better results. This kind of engagement will address the need for improved cooperation and coordination at cross-European, national, regional and local levels and across different policy areas.

Specific recommendations

1. In order to support and monitor the implementation and transparency of actions to achieve Target 4.7 at European Union and Member State levels, existing multi-stakeholder group(s) should be strengthened by ensuring wider representation, including from European Union Member States, private sector, business, civil society, EU Directorates-General (for instance including DG Education and Culture as well as DG DEVCO).
2. SDG networks should be fostered at national, and in some contexts sub-national, levels to promote and work towards achieving the SDGs, including Target 4.7⁹
3. The establishment of cross-sectoral and multilateral or multi-stakeholder groups linked to SDG Target 4.7 should be supported in each European country. With financial support being provided by both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Education, such groups should initiate and support the co-creation of relevant policy proposals linked to the implementation of Target 4.7.

2.4. Indicators for 4.7

Measuring progress is challenging given the multidimensional nature of Target 4.7 and the fact that there are different understandings of the focus of this target at global, national and sub-national levels, as well as among various stakeholders. While the diversity of interpretations of the Target are inspiring, this can also present a communication challenge and can complicate measurement efforts.

In measuring progress, greater clarity is required about how Target 4.7 relates to local contexts, this will assist in determining the purpose of relevant monitoring and assessment indicators and the types of indicators that are most relevant in capturing the depth of efforts and quantitative and qualitative changes required.

The current Global Indicator 4.7.1. measures inputs to the education system (i.e. the extent to which GCED and ESD are integrated in national policies, curricula, teacher education and student assessment).¹⁰ It is largely, but not exclusively, related to the formal education system. Efforts should be made to ensure that education undertaken in other settings (non-formal and informal) and during the life cycle are also fully recognised and that measurement ultimately supports learning.

Governments should not be discouraged by the complexity of the Target, but rather aim to rise to the challenge and commit

to monitoring the ability of education, in its various forms, to engage people with worldwide issues and challenges.

Specific recommendations:

- 1. Actors at the European, national and sub-national levels involved in the implementation of Target 4.7 should work with existing relevant monitoring frameworks as a starting point in the development of local approaches. This would help to ensure economy of effort and the establishment of consistent and related monitoring practices across Europe.*
- 2. The local development of Target 4.7 indicators and monitoring processes should be authentically participatory in order to reflect all of its components and the diverse stakeholder groups concerned with the Target, including those engaged in formal and non-formal learning environments. At national level, this could include initiating a multi-stakeholder dialogue between key actors (involving for example government, statistics agencies, civil society organisations, education specialists, academics, etc).*
- 3. Action should be taken to build the capacities of various actors at European, national and, where relevant, sub-national levels to monitor and measure progress on Target 4.7 implementation against global indicators.*
- 4. A commitment should be made to evaluate, and review agreed indicators with a view to ensuring that they continue to be fit for purpose, in the spirit of Target 4.7 in its multiple dimensions.*

2.5. Competencies for 4.7

Competencies linked to Target 4.7 relate to learning, engagement and critical reflection, and the use of cognitive, affective and behavioural skills and understanding. Such competencies are common to all of the components referred to in the Target and enable people to play active roles in the transformation of society at the global, national and local levels.

Specific recommendation

- 1. With reference to recommendations in para 2.3 above, to establish sub-national, national and European-wide multi-stakeholder partnerships to identify and further develop from existing global and European competency frameworks¹¹:*
 - a. those transformative competencies that are necessary to support sustainability, including dealing with uncertainty, the transformation of unequal power relationships, and the establishment of an inclusive and democratic society;*

and to provide guidance and support for:

- b. the recognition and implementation of these competencies through all forms of life-long learning (including formal, non-formal education and informal learning),*

- c. pre- and in-service training for teachers and other formal and non-formal educators to support the teaching of these competencies,*
- d. the development of formal sector curricula from Primary School to Higher Education levels that will include the teaching and learning of relevant competencies,*
- e. the independent monitoring of the implementation of recommendations (a-d) mentioned above at sub-national, national and European levels.*

2.6. Resources for 4.7

As Target 4.7. is key to the wider implementation of the 2030 Agenda, sufficient resources need to be ensured to enable and achieve its implementation across Europe. Such resources will include prioritisation of target 4.7., dedicated and adequate funding, appropriate technology and the development of relevant capacities and capabilities.

Specific recommendations

- 1. By 2023 coherent, multi-annual and long-term funding strategies should be designed to deliver the achievement of Target 4.7 at European and national levels. Such funding should be accessible to small, medium and large civil society organisations and based on at least 3% of ODA12 plus other relevant funds from, for example, education and environmental budgets.*
- 2. Resources, both financial and non-financial, should be made available in each European country to ensure that the key stakeholders focused on implementing Target 4.7 possess, maintain and can further develop the relevant capacities (e.g. tools, human and financial resources, values, equal access, skills, knowledge, network, materials) to carry out their work.*
- 3. By 2023 establish EU, national, sub-national (where relevant) and local strategies by key stakeholders, and ensure the availability of space (funding, time, mental space and other capacities) so that European Commission, EU Member States and local authorities are able to contribute to the achievement of Target 4.7.*

Notes

- 1 Envision 4.7 participants including national, European and global civil society actors, government representatives, politicians, academics
- 2 SDG Target 4.7: “all learners acquire 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 See UN General Assembly Resolution 72/222
- 4 See for example: https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/outcome_statement_strasbourg_oct_2018_final.pdf; <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000366394?posInSet=1&queryId=f00bbeb5-caf0-495d-9782-e4caad1e9e0f>;
https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC117987/jrc117987_lifecomp_technical_report.pdf
- 5 In this context ‘formal education’ refers to the teaching and learning that takes place through education and training systems and institutions leading to formal certification or qualification that is recognised by relevant (usually national) educational authorities, ‘non-formal education’ refers to any type of structured, organised learning activity (be it through volunteering, through businesses, organisations, communities) that is intentional but does not lead to certification or qualification organised or recognised by educational authorities, while ‘informal education’ refers to any learning that takes place through social or work related interactions outside of a formal or non-formal education setting.
- 6 See recommendation seven in the declaration: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000366394?posInSet=1&queryId=f00bbeb5-caf0-495d-9782-e4caad1e9e0f>
- 7 This action point builds from the aims of global citizenship education as articulated in (see page 12) UNESCO’s (2014) ‘Global Citizenship Education: Preparing learners for the challenges of the twenty-first century’: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002277/227729E.pdf>.
- 8 https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/outcome_statement_strasbourg_oct_2018_final.pdf
- 9 Inspiration for this can be found, for example, in the Scottish SDG network: <https://globalgoals.scot/>
- 10 “Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in: (a) national education policies, (b) curricula, (c) teacher education and (d) student assessment”: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg4>
- 11 See amongst others: Council of Europe <https://www.coe.int/en/web/education/competences-for-democratic-culture>, UNESCO: ‘Sustainable Development Goals Learning Objectives’ <https://www.sdg4education2030.org/education-sustainable-development-goals-learning-objectives-unesco-2017>, UNESCO: ‘Global Citizenship Education topics and learning objectives’ <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000232993>, OECD: ‘PISA 2018 Global Competence’ <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2018-global-competence.htm>
- 12 Already in 2005 a call to reserve 3% of ODA for education and engagement of Europeans in global development issues was raised by, for example, the ‘European Conference on Awareness-Raising and Development Education for North-South Solidarity’, held in Brussels 19-20 May 2005, building on previous suggestions by UNDP (see https://gene.eu/wp-content/uploads/Gene_EuropeanPolicyFrameworks-BrusselsConference2005.pdf). Since then the call has been reiterated at various international and national levels.

