



HIGH IMPACT
INITIATIVES



SEPTEMBER 2023

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

Learning to build a
better future for all

HALFWAY TO 2030

High Impact Initiatives at SDG Action Weekend, 2023

The SDGs are essential but we are off track

World leaders made a historic global promise to secure the rights and well-being of all peoples when they adopted the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. This Agenda recognizes that collectively, we can deliver a better future for all. However, the Agenda is a promise, not a guarantee.

Over the past eight years, the world has seen unprecedented mobilization around the SDGs and we have made significant progress on some fronts, laying the critical foundations for our future success. However, now halfway to the 2030 deadline, we are not halfway there – in fact, we are only 15% of the way.

To keep the promise, we need a fundamental pivot

It will take more than rhetoric or increased attention to deliver the promise. We cannot stay wedded to current ways of working. Everything we do, in every corner of our world, will need to evolve for us to advance.

The fundamental pivot we need at the core of the 2030 Agenda demands that countries reorient economies, ways of working and mind-sets to ensure the rights and aspirations of all can be achieved while preserving our climate and natural environment.

This change will take everyone

In many ways, the foundations for transformation are right in front of us - the technical know-how, institutional infrastructure, global financial resources and proven programmes – but we need to channel these resources more effectively. This is the critical moment for political leadership and bold action from national governments; for the international community to come together in common purpose; and for all partners on the SDG journey to take their contribution to the next level. We start tomorrow, by accelerating what works today.

THE HIGH IMPACT INITIATIVES AT SDG ACCELERATION DAY SUNDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER

As we look to the future, our goal is simple: to generate renewed momentum, strengthen political leadership and channel tangible, integrated and coordinated support behind national plans and priorities. As part of the global effort to meet this challenge, the United Nations development system is mobilizing behind 12 high impact initiatives which provide a platform to help take SDG progress to scale. This platform will enable us to learn, evolve and scale what works with greater coordination and collaboration. The platform cuts across three major areas: economic and social transitions, means of implementation, and a core aspect of the cross-cutting issue of gender equality.

- **Energy** Compacts: Scaling up ambition to deliver on SDG7
- Nature Driving Economic Transformation: Leveraging the power of **biodiversity and nature** to drive equitable economic progress
- **Food Systems** Transformation: Transforming food systems for a sustainable world without hunger
- Transforming **Education**: Learning to build a better future for all
- Global Accelerator: The Global Accelerator on **jobs and social protection** for just transitions
- **Digital** Public Infrastructure: Scaling inclusive and open digital ecosystems for the SDGs
- The SDG Stimulus: Scaling up long-term affordable **financing** for the SDGs
- Transforming **Trade**: Paradigm shift to boost economic development
- **Local2030** Coalition: Pushing key transitions and achieving the SDGs by 2030
- FutureGov: Building **public sector capabilities** for the future
- Power of **Data**: Unlocking the data dividend for the SDGs
- Spotlight Initiative: To eliminate **violence against women and girls**

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION VISION FOR IMPACT

Securing equitable access to quality and relevant education and lifelong learning for all is central to achieving progress across the SDGs. Today, however, progress towards the education-related targets of the 2030 Agenda is significantly off track; with the world going through profound and existential changes, education, as we know it, is not fit for purpose.

The twin crises in education – one of equity and access and one of quality and relevance – compounded by a lack of adequate financing, are having dramatic consequences for learners worldwide, especially the most vulnerable. Some 244 million children are out of school today¹. One in four young people are excluded from education, employment, or training². Over 770 million youth and adults are non-literate³ – the majority of whom are female⁴. In 2022, some 222 million school-aged children were affected by crises globally⁵. Worryingly, many of those in school are not learning foundational literacy and numeracy, let alone creative, critical, and scientific thinking, and digital and socio-emotional skills.

At the Transforming Education Summit (TES) in 2022, countries and partners came together to tackle this crisis and generate new momentum for action. More

than 130 countries made national commitments to transforming education. Several initiatives and calls to action were launched, addressing areas like foundational learning, education in crisis situations, greening education, digital learning, gender equality in and through education, disability-inclusive education, education financing, the teaching profession, and movement building with youth and civil society.

Since then, countries and partners have shifted focus from commitments to action, under the guidance of the SDG4 High Level Steering Committee. The High Impact Initiative on Transforming Education is designed to sustain and strengthen momentum towards effective implementation, demonstrating that education transformation is feasible at scale. It will lay the groundwork for the 2024 TES Stocktake in the context of the UNESCO Global Education Meeting.

This High Impact Initiative will drive progress not only on SDG4, but across all SDGs. Education is a crucial instrument for responding to the 2030 Agenda's defining principle of leaving no one behind. Furthermore, education is critical for empowering individuals and societies to be active in the pursuit of social, economic, and environmental justice.

OVERVIEW: TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

To achieve this vision, the Transforming Education High Impact Initiative will advance across three pillars:

Pillar 1: Political Leadership: highlight those countries that are taking positive steps towards the realization of their education commitments and stimulate other countries to follow suit. To do so, the initiative will establish a Transforming Education Front Runner Coalition that will serve as the vanguard of a global push for transforming education between now and 2030, and it will launch a dashboard by UNESCO to monitor progress on the Transforming Education commitments.

Convened by the TES champion countries, the coalition will consist of a small but growing number of front-runner member states that have demonstrated tangible progress on the transforming education agenda in recent years and are committed to lead the way from now to 2030. The Coalition will serve as a vehicle for acceleration on the many facets of the TES vision – including foundational learning, greening education, digital learning, education in crisis, inclusion, etc. Coalition members will rally other states, share successes, and collaborate on challenges in service of a common goal.

Pillar 2: Accelerate ongoing work on education financing and strengthen global support for developing countries.

Framed around a goal of securing increasing resources, investing them more equitably to reach those most vulnerable and investing them more efficiently to achieve effective learning outcomes, this pillar seeks to reinforce the fact that education

must be seen as a long-term investment. It will seek to strengthen the many strands of education financing that present a promising path forward by highlighting the case for widening domestic fiscal space through progressive tax reform; dealing with debt issues; examining ways to boost multilateral financing for education; and ensuring more effective, relevant and cohesive support from international partners, particularly the UN development system, at the country level.

Pillar 3: Strengthen the global support for movements of youth groups, teachers, civil society, and others to advocate for transforming education at the national, regional, and global levels.

Building on ongoing efforts, the Transforming Education initiative will seek to highlight and tackle the bottlenecks that hinder meaningful engagement by youth, teacher, and civil society movements as partners in education decision making – and undermine their capacity to ensure advocacy and accountability to accelerate government action on education.

PLANS FOR 2023 SDG ACTION WEEKEND

The Transforming Education session at this year's SDG Action Weekend intends to strengthen the momentum from the 2022 Transforming Education Summit and provide a platform for demonstrations that such a transformation is feasible at scale. The session will bring together member states to share their experience of implementing a transformative education agenda. This will lead to the creation of a Transforming Education coalition as a new vehicle for TES acceleration. In addition, the session will bolster and push forward the conversations on investing more, more equitably and more efficiently in education while providing greater visibility for youth, teacher, and civil society movements.

ROADMAP TO 2030

Long-term plans will evolve as we learn and circumstances change; below is our current approach to acceleration through 2030 after SDG Action Weekend.

In the push to 2030, the initiative will work to increase the number of member states with: demonstrated progress delivering on SDG4 and TES goals; larger, more equitable and more efficient educational budgets; and whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to education decision-making, including the voices of youth, teachers, and civil society.

Timeline and deliverables for progress: Following the SDG Action Weekend, the Transforming Education initiative will move at full speed to achieve the following milestones:

- *October 2023:* Further the conversation on education finance at the World Bank's Marrakesh meetings
- *December 2023:* Under the leadership and convening of TES champion countries, assemble Transforming Education coalition of 20 front-runner member states
- *May / June 2024:* Convene member states and partners at 2024 Stocktake on the sidelines of the

Global Education Meeting; report back on progress towards the TES agenda

- *June – August 2024:* Expand the Transforming Education Coalition to include second wave of member states
- *2024:* Support efforts to increase education budgets at national levels through tax agreements and debt reduction policies to expand fiscal space
- *2025 – 2030:* Measure progress on TES initiatives on foundational learning; digital learning; greening; equity; gender; teaching profession; and financing to support member states in achieving their ambitions

Metrics for success: At annual High-Level Political Forum meetings, the Transforming Education initiative will share updates on its metrics for success – including the following key performance indicators:

- Number of countries in Transforming Education Coalition; and reporting progress on TES agenda
- Increase in uptake of TES initiatives, products and programs by member states

Roles and responsibilities of partners: The initiative will be led by the UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser on follow-up of the Transforming Education Summit.

- The SDG4 High-Level Steering Committee will remain the forum for decision-making and reporting on progress of the TES follow-up
- TES Champion countries (Argentina, European Commission, Japan, Qatar, Sierra Leone) will convene and lead the Transforming Education Coalition
- UNESCO will support this initiative in as co-lead of the HLSC as well as the UN entity for education
- UNICEF will support this initiative as the UN entity for children, with a wide network of in-country presence
- Other partners will be engaged based on context – e.g., UNHCR, ITU, UN Women, etc.



COLLABORATING AGENCIES



For more information on Transforming Education, please contact Special Adviser Leonardo Garnier (leonardo.garnierimolo@un.org) or Asif Saeed Memon (asif.memon@un.org)

For an overview of the High Impact Initiatives, visit the [Transformative Actions](#) action tab on the [SDG Summit](#) website